

Lol After his 321h birthday, Jep Gambardella, an aging intellectual and one-time writer, decides to dedicate his life to the search of a meaning.

On the background of a mysterious and wonderful Rome, our main character slowly rediscovers beauty under the monotonous, empty shell of a lifetime between sinners.

Following a boring night spent between the sheets of a boring and egocentric rich woman from Milan, Jep decides to stick on a quieter quality of life, but several, casual, meetings will force him to reconsider his priorities.

A stripper on the verge of breakdown, the ex-husband of his first love, a bizarre magician and a living Saint from a far away reality, will soon allow Jep to discover his own, personal, *Great Beauty*.

THE GREAT BEAUTY

Original title: La Grande Bellezza
Screenplay by Paolo Sorrentino and Umberto Contarello
Story by Paolo Sorrentino

Paolo

Sorrentino

Movie (2013)

Script

**Travel is useful, it exercises the imagination.
All the rest is disappointment and fatigue.
Our journey is entirely imaginary.
That is its strength. It goes from life to death.
People, animals, cities, things, all are imagined.
It's a novel, just a fictitious narrative. And besides,
anyone can do as much. You just have
to close your eyes. It's on the other side of life.**

Louis-Ferdinand Celine

Journey to the End of the Night.

You're a real pain in the ass!

Enough! They even have
cocktails with cherries.
Remember?

Hey, jerks! I'll screw you! I'll
screw you!

Have you seen Ermanno?

I'll screw you! Now!

Get lost! What the hell are you
doing? My phone's been stolen!

I'm starring in two TV dramas...
I'm playing a Pope in one, and a
junkie on the road to recovery in
the other.

Impressive! No theatre work?
I'm supposed to do Shakespeare
with Pietro, but... it has to be at
least three hours long, be an
ambitious project, and no more
small cities! I'm trying to write
a piece for theatre, and the
concept is...

What about you?

I might give up acting.

In this shitty country there are
never any good female roles. I'll
write my first novel, a Proust-
style piece.

Really? Proust is my favourite
writer! Along with Ammaniti...

What a coincidence.

Who is that woman? Don't you
recognise her?

It's Lorena.

Who?

An ex TV showgirl, now in full physical and mental decline.

Never seen her! But then I've never had a television. Viola, I know you don't have one. You tell me all the time.

What does she do now?

Nothing, of course.

Happy birthday, Jep! Happy birthday, Rome! La Colita!



To this question, as kids, my friends always gave the same answer... pussy. Whereas I answered... the smell of old people's houses. The question was: «What do you like most, really, in life?»

*I was destined
for sensibility.*

*I was destined to
become a writer.*

*I was destined to
become*

Jep

Gambardella.

You paid no attention to me tonight! Romano, don't start moaning, we're not an item.

You liked that guy?

I like everyone and no one. But I wonder why you're always with me when it's no one's turn.

Will you take me to the airport?

Sure. What time are you leaving?

In three hours.

Three hours? Then I should
crash on your sofa... Go home, I
need to pack and I don't want
anyone around.

But I live miles away.

See you at 8:00. Goodnight.

Guys?

Guys?

Children!

Run along!

Catellani?

The best, of course. Did

Catellani the tailor make your
suit? There was no doubt about
Malagna's shady intentions. The

girl should be rescued at any cost, without loss of time. Sir, you drank! Just enough to forget my birthday.

You want infusion?

Heavens, no!

I got you a present.

How sweet! This is a lucky charm from my country. Good thing it's lucky, because it's pretty ugly. Keep it on your bedside and stop complaining!

I will! And thanks. Wake me up
at 15:00, you rascal.

You're funny when you call me
that!

I don't love you!

Brilliant!

Did you enjoy the performance?

Parts of it. That violent head-
butt made me understand many
things.

Let's start from the beginning.

Or the end? You know, Talia Concept loves to provoke. Don't bother, there are more important things than provoking me. And this habit of speaking in the third person is unbearable. What are you reading?

I don't need to read, I live on vibrations, extra-sensory ones.
Extra-sensoriality aside.

What do you mean by vibrations?

The poetry of vibrations cannot be described with the vulgarity of words.

Well, try at least.

I'm an artist, I don't need to explain jack shit. So I'll write:
«Lives on vibrations, but she doesn't know what they are.»
I'm starting to dislike this interview.

I sense conflictuality in you.

Conflictuality as a vibration?

As a pain in the ass. Let's talk about my mom's abusive boyfriend.

No! I want to know what a vibration is. It's my radar to intercept the world.

Your radar... meaning?

You're a pain in the ass. We got off to a bad start... Talia Concept wants to be interviewed by your paper, it has many readers. But you're biased.



Write about how she has sex
with her fianc 11 times a day,
he's a talented conceptual artist,
he covers basketballs with
confetti! He's sensational!

Talia Concept is talking about
things that are meaningless to
me. All I've heard is
unpublishable fluff.

You can't charm me with things
like: «I'm an artist, I don't need
to explain». Our paper has a
core of cultured readers that
don't want to be taken for fools.
I work for that core.

So let me talk about my eventful, difficult but necessary journey as an artist! Necessary for who? For heaven's sake, madam, what is a vibration?

I don't know.

You don't know. You are an obsessive jerk! I'll tell your editor to send me a journalist of a higher stature.

A piece of advice: when you speak to my editor, go easy on the stature business. She's a dwarf, you know. Jep, this interview is a hoot!

Maybe, but don't send me to interview someone who head-butts walls again.

You know what the trick is?

Foam rubber. Amateur dramatics isn't dead.

Did you get offended about the stature comment?

Don't be silly! That's the funniest bit! I'm a dwarf, it's no secret. It's the first and last thing everyone says about me.

You're a spectacular woman,
Dadina. You've had the career
you deserve. But you haven't
had the career you deserve.

Maybe I don't have much to
say...

Bullshit, you're lazy. You never
leave Rome. Go to Giglio to do
that report on the Concordia.

I've asked you to do 50 times.
Re-heated rice is always tastier
than freshly cooked rice. The
old is better than the new. Plans
tonight, chrie? As the great De
Blasi, my predecessor, said:

«Tonight I'll do two things, eat
soup and have a shag.»

Two things that contradict each
other. That's what I'd say too,
and she'd reply, in a serious
tone:

«No, Dadina, they don't,
because they're both hot.»

There's a publishing house in
Ancona, it's not that small, they
want an interview book about
you. Another interview book?
We're obsessed with interviews!
Can't you hear them?

«As I always say»

... to who? Forget it! And honestly, who'll buy a book called:

«Visions and revisions. Jep Gambardella's Galaxy»?

It's a serious title! Unfortunately in this country, in order to be taken seriously, you have to take yourself seriously. I only wrote one novel, 40 years ago.

Impossible to find too...

Bullshit, «The Human

Apparatus» was a masterpiece!

It even won the... what was it?

The Bancarella prize.

Shit, the Bancarella prize!
You're very kind, but forget it...
it'd be too pompous. I can't,
you'll put me in an awkward
position. I've agreed and I've
even accepted an advance...

How much?

1,500 euros.

Give it back, I'll give you 1,500
euros. By the way, I spoke to the
theatre people. They'll give you
three nights but you pay for the
lights. Who cares about that!

Jep, this is great news. It's really great news.

Thank you!

Are you still up?

It's time to go to bed.

That's Viola Bartoli, Bartoli's widow. The guy who was killed, the actual Bartoli. Viola has a 50 metre yacht that belonged to Himmler, the Nazi. You know what I call Viola?

No, what?

«To-good-to-poo».

I don't understand.

Because she's pernickety.
Usually pernickety people don't
poo. When I introduced
Trumeau to my family, my
father said: «Miss, before
marrying my son, have you ever
seen him poo?»



How gross!

It's not as bad as you think.
Actually, my wife and I are the
only couple in Italy who are in
love. Orietta, watch out for
Lello.

Yes, I know. He's the world's
greatest salesman, he cons
everyone.

In no time he'll get you to spend
every penny on whatever he's
selling. You always flatter me.
Just because I express myself

well doesn't mean I'm always working!

What do you do?

I sell toys. Not just in a shop, he's a wholesaler on a global scale, he even sells to the Chinese! What about him? Don't you know him?

Sebastiano Paf, perhaps Italy's greatest poet. He wrote: «Up with life, down with reminiscence.»

He's on the Dukan Diet, so Dadina won't leave him. Is he

with her?

He is, but she...

Like at high school. Why doesn't he ever talk? Because he listens.

Stop sniffing up with your nose?

Bugger off. Jep's found a theatre for me. Do you want the lead role? I'm no longer an actress, I'm a writer now. Maybe... Maybe I'll direct a film.

Viola, darling!

Help me, I'm worried about my son.

What can I do?

Why don't you talk to him? You always say you're good with strangers... That's the problem, I'm too good.

Is he seeing a therapist?

Yes, but he wants to stop going. Take him to a psychiatrist, they're pragmatic: Ativan, Prozac and so on. That stuff makes him feel worse.

Relax, he's always been odd, he is what he is. By the way, have you tried this rascal's endive quiche?

It's the first time she's made it and it's better than my mom's, please, you must try some! You changed your hair colour. I feel Pirandello-esque lately...

Great jazz, no?

Not really. The Ethiopian jazz scene is the only interesting one today. I'm from Milan, to be honest... I find Romans... unbearable! The best people in

Rome are the tourists. Take
Italy...

What are we famous for
overseas?

Fashion and pizza. A country of
weavers and grocers. How can
someone who sells toys,
bringing joy to the world, be
such a pessimist and a defeatist?
You're dark.

Dark?

Yes. I heard Gisella Montanelli
went to loans sharks to pay her
hairstressing debts.

Jep says I'm dark!

Gisella's really sunk that low?
Rome is the only city in the
world where Marxism has truly
existed. You can't excel over
others for more than a week,
you're immediately brought
back to mediocrity.



Rome is pure collectivism. Pure
collectivism. Stefania, what
utter nonsense! Do you know
that Flaubert wanted to write a
book about nothing?

If he'd met you, we'd have had
a great book, what a shame!

You're a misogynist.

It's not all about you, I'm not a
misogynist, I'm a misanthropist.
When hate's involved, one must
aim high.

You're a dark man.

I'm a transparent person,
without a doubt!

Lello! Aren't you stopping
tonight? Mom!

When I see you I blush!
Andrea...

You're crazy.

No, mom, I'm not crazy! I've
got problems.

«As the light flashed, love sat
down in the corner. Shy and
distracted as it was. This is why

we could tolerate life no
longer.»

Gosh, no one's quoted me for years! I read your book as a teenager, I've never forgotten the end.

Stop right there, you're stroking my ego in a dangerous way.

You must've been deeply in love when you wrote it. Moravia made the same comment, more or less. Even though he worded it a bit better. I once saw Piazza Navona covered in snow.

Really? What was it like?

White! When I come to Rome I live there. Deep in the outskirts...

What job you do?

Me? I'm rich.

Great job. You didn't enjoy it.

I know I'm not very good.

Why do you say that? Plus it's so sad being good, you risk becoming deft. It didn't seem like you cared much. You're

very beautiful, Orietta, very,
very, very beautiful. I take
photos, you know. Of myself. At
all times of the day, to get to
know myself.

With the self-timer, with my
phone...

Interesting. My Facebook
friends say I take great photos. I
bet there are some of you
naked...

A few.

I knew it! Do you want to see
them?

Of course.

I'll get my computer. The most important thing I discovered a few days after turning 65 is that I can't waste any more time doing things I don't want to do.

When I came to Rome, at the age of 26, I fell pretty swiftly, almost without realizing it, into what might be defined as the whirlpool of the high life. But I didn't just want to live the high life.

Sacconi should be in charge.

Antonini's a fucking pain in the ass! I wanted to be the king of the high life. And I succeeded.



I didn't just want to go to parties. I wanted to have the power to make them a failure.

Gambardella? Sorry for showing up like this, without warning...

I'm Alfredo Marti.

Nice to meet you, I'm Jep, but my house is this one.

I don't want to bother you. How can I help you?

I'm Elisa De Santis' husband.
Did you have children?

No. I couldn't. But I could. I
could. I'm sorry. Forgive me.
She could too. Elisa died.
Yesterday.

Alfredo, if you need anything,
you know where I live.

Don't leave me alone, please.
Don't leave me. We were
married for 35 years... but Elisa
always loved you.

What are you saying? Elisa and
I went out together when we

were kids. She left me, I think, it was so long ago I don't remember.

Yes, she left you. On September 8th, 1970. Exactly... You're distraught now, that's normal. I'm not distraught. Elisa only ever loved one man.
You.

How can you say that? I never saw Elisa again, you were together for a lifetime!

I found a diary of hers, with a lock. And I broke the lock off.

I write for a living, believe me...
when you write, you give life to
fantasies, imagination, lies... I
was only a good companion.
That's all she wrote about me.
35 years together... and I'm
mentioned in two lines as a
good companion. Here, Alfredo.
What'll you do now?

What I've always done. I'll live
in adoration of her.

What's he doing? Stop! Jep!
Well done! He made it!

Have you seen my daughter?

Your daughter? No. Francesca!
Who are you? Who am I?

I am...

No, you're nobody.

Nobody? But I...

Francesca, where on earth are
you? I've been looking for you
for over an hour!

Are you sad, sir?

No. Sir is strange. I don't like
that, I prefer you to be sad.

Are you going to bed?

Last night I went to bed at 22:30. Now I don't know what to do. Morning is an unknown object to me. Unknown. Sir can help me clean the house then.

Sir can't, sir feels strange.

Sir is a rascal.

«Is there a new nation struggling within the walls of the city? From the crevices of that soil a feverish vapour ascends like smoke and works like a magic philtre in the blood

of some men producing a form
of heroic madness unlike any
other.»

What do you think? Shit, it's
powerful, don't you think? Why
the hell do an adaptation of
D'Annunzio for the stage?
D'Annunzio has always been
paradigmatic...

You think that certain
intellectual feats give you
dignity, and that others are
better than you, but you're
wrong!

Try and write something of your own, like... a feeling, or sorrow...

I've known you ages but you've never been here. Don't get big-headed, you've got a room in a student flat...

Are you going out with that gloomy girl you're always with?

I wish! I've tried it on 7,000 times. I've never even had a kiss, not one!

She's a bitch.

No, she's not.

She's complicated.

She's a bitch. Trust me, you're too kind. I can tell her type from a mile off, I don't even need to meet them.

What are you doing with that hat?

My morning exercise.

That's exercise?

Yes!

Do you know how many women
you've been with?

No, I'm rubbish at maths. I've
always been good at maths. It's
six, I introduced you to them.
Seven.

- Seven?

Seven.

When did number seven
happen?

Last summer. A friend of my
sister's back home when I went

to see my folks. She runs a shop...

She's nice.

That means she's a dog. What about you and Orietta?

Who's Orietta?

Don't you know? She was at your house... A real beauty. At my age, a beauty isn't enough. I might take up writing again.

That's great news!

Has something happened?

Why?

You want to write again after all these years, something's happened. Something always happens in Rome.

Nothing's happened.

What are you looking at?



Come here.

They met at university 10 days ago. They haven't stopped kissing for 10 days.

This generation of youths horrifies me. Supported by this state for years, when they realise they're smart, they go study or work in America or London, forgetting about the support.

They have no civil vocation. As a young girl, in the occupied

arts department, I oozed civil
vocation.

Is that so?

Yes, why?

Come off it...

What do you know?

In those years you were in
Naples being a loafer with posh
girls and writing your only
novelette.

I didn't notice that history was
being made.

Novelette? It was a masterpiece
of Italian literature!

I confirm that Jep and civil
vocation never got along, he
was lazy and the other
hyperactive.

Romano, stop sucking up to
your idol, you're pathetic! «The
Human Apparatus» was a
narrow-minded, frivolous book
and pretentious too, like its title.
Jep knows that.

That's why he stopped there.

Sorry, what about you then?

I tried changing things with literature. I wrote 11 novels, and a book about the Party's official history.

You're forgetting your contribution to that reality show... «Girl Farm».

Television can be a very formative experience!

I always go when I'm invited. I get my hands dirty, I try things...
I don't spend my life being a snob.

Are you saying that a socially committed writer is advantaged, and safeguarded, compared to a novelist who deals with, how can I say... with feelings?

Of course she is! The cause someone commits their life to isn't secondary. Like creating a family, dedicating oneself with sacrifice to raising one's children day after day. Eusebio and I have four children, we plan the future together. I work hard to be both a mother and a woman, but at the end of the day I feel I've done something important.

So if we don't have children we should contemplate the idea of suicide?

I don't mean you, of course.

She means me. Dadina, I admire you greatly.

You're a badass.

Do you use «badass» in any of your 11 novels?

Yes, I do, I try to be modern.

Modernity is badass.

De gustibus. What great
conviction! Should I envy you
or be repelled?

Yes, I have convictions. I'm
53...

You'd never know.

Never.x I'm 53, I've suffered, I
bounced back, and learned lots
about life.

Well, I can see you have nothing
to say, at last. I was drinking...
As we care about you, we don't
want to embarrass you. You
know, all this boastful talk, all

this serious ostentatiousness, all
this ego...

These harsh damning judgments of yours hide a certain fragility, a feeling of inadequacy and above all a series of untruths. We care about you, we know you. We also know our untruths and for this, unlike you, we end up talking about nonsense, about trivial matters, because we don't want to revel in our pettiness.

What untruths are you talking about? Everything I said is true, it's what I am, what I believe in.

Please, I'm a gentleman. Don't destroy my only certainty.

Tell me exactly what my lies are and what my fragility is! I'm a woman with balls, tell me!

«Woman with balls» would be too much for any gentleman. All right, Stefania, you asked for it. In random order: Your civil vocation during your student days went unnoticed. But another vocation of yours is remembered by many, the one practiced by you then, in the university toilets.

You wrote about the Party because you were its leader's mistress. And your 11 novels, published by a small publishing house subsidized by the Party, reviewed by minor Party-affiliated newspapers, are insignificant, everyone says so.

I'm not saying my novelette was any better, I agree with you there. Your relationship with Eusebio... What relationship? Eusebio loves Giordano, everyone knows. He has for years.

They lunch every day at
Arnaldo's, under the coat rack,
like sweethearts under an oak
tree.

You all know but turn a blind
eye. Your dedication to your
children, with all the sacrifices
entailed... You work all week in
TV, you go out every night,
even on Mondays, when popper
dealers don't even venture out.
You're never with your children,
not even on the long holidays
you take. And plus you have a
butler, a waiter, a cook, a
chauffeur who drives the kids to
school, three babysitters, so...

how and when exactly do you make any sacrifices?

These are the untruths and fragility I'm talking about. Stefania, mother and woman. You're 53, with a life in tatters, like the rest of us. Instead of acting superior and treating us with contempt, you should look at us with affection.

We're all on the brink of despair, all we can do is look each other in the face, keep each other company, joke a little... Don't you agree? Son of a bitch!

Egidio, old chap! Bastard! I haven't seen you in 30 years!

I need to talk to you.

Later! I'm busy, can't you see?

Is this still your place?

Luckily not, I sold it. I'm still the manager though. You're famous! You're always in the gossip rags. You're at all the VIP parties, always with a girl! You never come here... Get lost, will you? We're having a serious talk!

Are you married?

Married, divorced.

I've got a daughter, Ramona.

Did you have to call her
Ramona?

You artists are all the same! I
tell you I have a daughter and
you complain about her name!

What's wrong with «Ramona»?

Nothing, it's a name that implies
ambitions...

There's my daughter, you see? She makes me so mad, I've told her a million times! You're too old for this! Now these hot young Polish girls rule the scene.

They're experts at turning tricks. She's 42 and she wants to be a sophisticated stripper. But the world's no longer sophisticated. Right, Jep?

I know, only you and I are. That's right, goddammit! But she wants to keep doing this job, for the money.

I don't know why she always
needs money and what she
fucking does with it.

For drugs? - I wish, we'd have a
common interest. She doesn't
even drink beer. I don't know
what she spends her money on,
she's always broke.

Do I seem like a loser?

No, why?



Because I can hear myself talk, I sound like a loser. I'm nearly 70 and I have to work till 6 in the morning every day. I swapped cocaine for heroin 15 years ago.

What an asshole! A heroin junkie at 50! Could I be more of a loser? But I'm not important, it's her I worry about, I love her.

And I'm no loser there, I'm a father. And like all fathers, I'm worried. What'll she do in a few years? She can't be a stripper at 50!

Why don't you fix her up?

Me? Don't you know any rich guys who want a beautiful wife?

We could change her name, that's no problem. You'd do me a big favour.

I'm a writer, not a pimp.

Sorry, I was a bit vulgar.
Daddy's little girl, this is my good friend, Jep Gambardella.
I'll leave you to it, I need the toilet. Be right back!

Hi, I'm Jep.

Ramona.

If you want a girl, get a Pole.

Are you kidding? Who wants a girl? Not me. I really am an old friend of your father's.

Dad has no friends.

He used to.

When I came to Rome, I'd wait for my friends to leave to come here. Your father was a nice guy. He taught me loads of things, such as: vodka is uncouth.

How useful!

He asked me to find you a husband. He's obsessed.

I'm not looking for a husband.
Well, you should be.

A family's a beautiful thing.

I know. But I'm not cut out for beautiful things. What's wrong?

I feel old.

You're no spring chicken. One.

How are you?

Very well. Just got back from India, I had amazing dysentery. Come to my divorce party, I'll have burlesque dancers there. Of course. What present would you like? One big wish: for the wars in the Middle East to end.

I'll do my best.

Two.

700 euros.

Thank you. Tell me, darling. Perhaps... I was thinking, my mouth...

I'm scared, I've never done it before, professor. Don't call me professor. Call me «my friend» or «my love». We all need love. What star sign are you, deeply intense lady?

Aquarius.

I knew it! Want to go back 30 years, to when it rained at the end of August?

Done.

That's 700 euros. Three.

You've been to see Casagrande!

No, I don't even know him. You betrayed me, darling! We're undergoing a journey, and you've interrupted it. This is the last time. Go, go. Bye then.

Full price.

Five. 1,200 euros.

How's your mom?

She's fine, thank you.

Seven.

700 euros. Have you filled out, darling? You're always in my

heart. 700 euros.

As handsome as ever.

Ten.

You're my pride.

Thanks. Eleven.

Professor, I'm here about my
hyperthyroidism. Where does
this undesired perspiration
happen? On my hands.

Pray for me, sister.

You don't need my prayers. You
don't know how much of my
income I must surrender to the
tax man. Go, sister, go. That's
700, sister. Fourteen.

Spying on me?

No, I was going to knock.

When?

When you were more relaxed.

What brings you here?

Nothing, I'm just curious.

I told you what I think.

I've no hidden agenda. Do you think every guy who comes near you wants sex? Perhaps they just want to talk, driven by simple and harmless curiosity.

That's never happened to me.

It has now. Wouldn't armbands be more comfortable?

Yes, but they irritate my armpits. Any plans for lunch?

I'm going to my mum's with my dad.

So where's the dog?

What dog?

People buy houses like this so they can have dogs.

I had a Labrador, but 9 years ago he got fed up and left me.

Labradors are dumb. And Cooker Spaniels are dumb too.

Hi, Jep.

Hi, Antonello.

You know Venditti?

I know everyone. It must be
very satisfying knowing so
many people!

You're guaranteed to be
unhappy.

Have people let you down? I've
let them down. Andrea! Are you
with your mom?

She's parking.

How are you?

Not well.

Proust says that death may come
to us this afternoon.

Proust is scary. Not tomorrow,
not in a year, but this afternoon.
But it's evening already so it'd
be tomorrow afternoon.

Turgenev said: «Death looked at
me, noticing me.»

Don't take these writers so
seriously!

Who should I take seriously
then?

Nothing, apart from the menu,
of course. Things are too

complicated to be understood by
one individual. Just because you
don't understand doesn't mean
nobody can.

Your reply? My reply?

Jep!

Hello, Viola.

Good evening.

Viola. Darling, why don't you
get a table for us? How did you
find him?

He's better.

Good, very good. He's much better, I'm so happy!

Dinner on Thursday?

Of course! On Thursday I'm inexplicably free. Did you hear about Valentina Lemme? She's dating her personal trainer. Really? It doesn't show.

I invited her anyway.

Are you sure? She's nasty, you know. She's like the devil! Really? You think so? I see her at yoga twice a week.

You'll come?

Of course.

See you Thursday.

Okay. Goodbye.

Watch that table carefully, but
don't let them notice you
looking. Waiter? Champagne,
please.

Cristal. You can't imagine how
much one learns by living
alongside a cluster of religious
institutes. So that was your first
time?

Yes, he didn't think he'd been good, too quick, he said. So, out of anger or to let off steam, I'm not sure which, he got a football and played with it furiously!
And you?

I didn't enjoy making love with him, but seeing him with a football was an unforgettable thing!

He became really good, he played on the national team.

Your dad said you spend everything you earn. What on?
You can tell me.

Maybe one day. But why didn't you write another book?

Because I went out too much at night. Rome makes you waste a lot of time. It's distracting. Writing requires focus and peace. That's not much of an answer. You have plenty of peace here, it's like being in the country.

I wrote in short spurts. I was a sprint-style writer. I told you about my first time... but you've told me nothing. It's your turn now.

On an island... one summer. I
was... 18, she was 20. At the
lighthouse, at night. I went to
kiss her, she turned away. I was
disappointed. But then she
turned to look at me. She
brushed me with her lips... she
smelled of flowers. I didn't
move, I wasn't able to move.
Then she took a step back... and
said... She took a step back. And
said... I'm going home, it's late.
Want to come to a party
tomorrow night?

Outstanding! Did you want us to
die tonight? You won't believe
it, but I love knife throwers. A

true likeness, especially the hips. A masterpiece, Geronimo. It'll look great on the mantelpiece. God bless you, Jep! This is Ramona. What a unique and marvelous creature.

Is he taking the piss?

It's hard to know. I was being honest. I'm just sorry you missed Geronimo D.

What a tragedy!

Come in, make yourselves at home.

Who is that asshole?

Lillo De Gregorio. The greatest modern art collector in this debauched country.

What's Jep's floozy friend wearing?

I don't know. Jep's proving to be a disappointment.

Good evening, countess.

Hello, you're looking well. I wish I could say that same about the count. Hello, ladies! Are you stupid? You're distracting my

artist. Dad, we're having fun.
Carmelina, come and do some
work. Mom, I want to play here.

Has this human being gone
mad?

We'll sort it out.

I'm not coming, I'm staying
here.

You don't mean that. Europe's
greatest gallery owners are
outside.

If you show them what you can
do then ours will be a happy

family.

But I'm already happy, I want to be a vet one day. Get to bed, you two! My kids are going to bed. Come.

I'll go to bed too. I'm a kid too.

She blushes and says: «Forgive me, I didn't know you loved me so much. My ignorance is obscene.»

He looks at her, reassuringly, and says: «Let me defend our love».

How's that for the start of the second act? You've written a pile of shit. That girl was crying. Nonsense! That girl earns millions! Excuse me a moment.

Hi, Stefano.

Hi.

The catering's gone downhill.

Rome's gone downhill. Steeply downhill! Do you have the case with you?

I always do.

You up for it? See that? Stefano has the keys to Rome's most beautiful buildings.

Is he a doorman?

No, he's not a doorman. He's friends with princesses.

Are you ready? Come with me.

Good evening, Princesses.

Good evening.

How come you have all these keys?

Because... I'm a trustworthy person. Did you see? It looked huge, but it's tiny.

Stay still, I'll take a photo of you. Don't move. That's no good. Laugh. Got it? Yes, that's good.

Many think that a funeral, is a fortuitous event, without any rules.

That's not true. A funeral is a high-society event par excellence. You must never forget that at a funeral you are appearing on stage.

Nice.

Nice, but try the other one. You must patiently wait for the relatives to disperse. Once you are sure that all the guests are seated... only at that point, may you offer your condolences to the family.

In this way, everyone will see you. You take the mourner's hands, and rest yours on their arms. You whisper something to them, a comforting phrase, said with authority. For example: «In the days to come, when you feel the void, I want you to know

that you can always count on
me.》

The public will ask... «What's
Jep Gambardella saying?》

This is definitely the right dress.
You're allowed to retire to a
corner by yourself, as if
contemplating your sorrow.

However, another matter must
be approached with shrewdness.

The chosen place needs to be
isolated but clearly visible to the
public.

Besides, a performance is good
when it is devoid of any
superfluity. So, the fundamental
rule: one must never cry at a
funeral.



You must never steal the show
from the family's sorrow. That
is forbidden. Because it is
immoral. Viola.

In the days to come, when you
feel the void, you can always
count on me.

Now I ask Andrea's friends to
come forward, so that the coffin
may be carried outside.

Your back!

It was nice not making love. It
was nice loving each other. I'd
forgotten what loving someone
was about, I'd forgotten that. I
spend all my money to cure
myself.

Your breakfast.

Come on, I'm taking you to see
a sea monster today.

Your breakfast.

Five more minutes.

Can you see the sea?

Where?

On the ceiling.

Yes, I can see it.

Who's going to look after you
now?

I'm sorry about your daughter.
My condolences.

I spent all my summers making plans for September. Not any longer. Now I spend the summer remembering the good intentions which vanished. In part because of laziness, in part because of carelessness.

What's wrong with feeling nostalgic?

It's the only distraction left for those who've no faith in the future! Without rain... August is coming to an end and September isn't arriving. And I'm so ordinary!

But there's no need to worry.
It's all right, it's okay.

Bravo! Thank you. What are
you doing here? Arturo! Why
are you here?

Don't you see? I'm rehearsing
my magic show. This is
tomorrow's special number: the
vanishing giraffe.

You can make this giraffe
vanish?

Of course I can make the giraffe
vanish! Then make me vanish
too. Jep, do you think that if I

could really make people vanish
I'd still be here at my age
playing these circus games?

It's just a trick. It's just a trick!
Romano, how did it go? Well,
they clapped. I'm glad.

So why are you so sad?

I'm not sad.

What's with the giraffe?

For a magic show.

I'll come and see you tomorrow.

I'm not doing the show
tomorrow.

Why not? You said it went well.

I'm leaving, I'm going back to
my home town, for good. I
won't even pack up my things,
I'll leave it all. I've lived in this
city for 40 years. And in the end
I thought... the only person who
deserved a goodbye was you.

So you're leaving?

Romano... why are you leaving?

Rome has really disappointed me.

Bye, Jep.

See?

Want some coffee?

No, thanks. I know you're busy.
I need to ask you something.

Go ahead.

Why did Elisa leave me?



I don't know.

Didn't she say anything about it in her diary?

No, I don't think so.

Would you be offended if I asked to read it?

No, I wouldn't. In fact, I'd understand. But I'm afraid I can't let you read it.

Why not?

Because a few days after the funeral, I threw it away. May I introduce you to my girlfriend?

Hello, my name's Polina. Like Polina in «The Gambler» by Dostoyevsky.

What are you doing tonight?

Nothing.

Polina's going to finish ironing... then we'll drink a glass of red wine.

We'll watch some television and go to bed.

What about you?

I'll have a lot of drinks, but not so many as to become unruly. And then... when you'll be getting up I'll be going to bed.

What lovely people you are! I love doing the train!

I'll screw you. «Who am I?» That's how one of Breton's novels began. And of course in the book there's no reply.

Did you hear about Viola?

What? She's donating everything to the church. She works in the parish and is going to volunteer in Africa. The trains at our parties are the best ones in Rome!

You think so?

I do. They're the best because they go nowhere.

Well?

It's wonderful, thank you.

Come on, it's all gone.

Tell me why you left me, please.

I want an explanation, please!

Go away!

Get out! Get out!

You see all these people? They can't do anything. But I know how to do something.

We know how to do something.

How sweet! They've been asking me for years why I don't write another novel. But look at these people. This Wildlife!

This is my life and it's nothing.
Flaubert wanted to write a book
about nothing but he failed, so
could I do it?

It's nice.

Thanks, rascal.

What inspired this exhibition?

It wasn't my idea to do this
photo exhibition. It was my
father's idea. When I was born,
he starting taking photos of me,
every day. One photo per day.
He never forgot, not even once.
From the age of 14 upwards, I

continued. I photographed myself every day. Go ahead.

Cardinal!

Your Eminence! Cardinal, when will The Saint arrive in Rome? On Thursday, but please don't call her The Saint. She is a Saint but not technically. Tell me something, who is that cardinal?

That's Bellucci.

Bellucci?

The one in line to be...

Exactly. The papal throne awaits him. I met him at Giada Ricci's carnival party. Rumour has it that he used to be Europe's best exorcist.

Are you pulling my leg?

No. I never joke about the devil. Do you know I'm very, very bored. We're having a great, great time. You cut up the duck. Cook it on a high flame for 15 minutes. At that point... Cardinal, do you remember me?

Lello Cava. We met at Giada Ricci's party. I was dressed as

an escort. Come, they're starting
to serve lunch. I'd like you meet
my writer friend, Jep
Gambardella. A writer! This
country needs writers. Actually
I thought it was more in need of
priests. Help.

May I ask you a question?

Of course, my dear man. Well,
for some time now... from a
spiritual point of view...

Skunk hunt?

Of course, I'll lead the way! I
know the Tebaldi grounds well.

Jep Gambardella, the king of socialites! You're losing it. I've been losing it for 40 years. It's a steady decline. Tell me something, Stefania. Have we ever slept with each other?

Of course not!

That's an awfully big mistake!
We must make amends,
immediately.

Idiot.

Thank goodness. We still have something nice to do together.

The future is marvelous,
Stefania.

To be honest, Catellani hasn't
had many brushed fabrics in
recent years.

In my opinion, Rebecchi's still
the best tailor in Rome.

Who are you?

A hard-working man. One who,
while you play the artist and
have fun with your friends,
keeps this country going.

I keep this country going, but many people haven't understood that yet. Imagine that, Dadina, Giulio Moneta was my neighbour. One of the world's 10 most wanted men and I never noticed.

You've changed, you're always thinking.

Maybe I should do what Romano did. I'm not fit for this life or this city. Nobody's fit for shit, dammit. Take it from the queen of misfits. Everything around me is dying. People who are younger than me, things...

All before my eyes and I... And
you're suffering. And you don't
understand.

How's the soup, Little Jep?

The soup's good. Why did you
call me Little Jep? No one's
called me that for centuries.

Because a friend, every now and
again, needs to make their friend
feel like they did as a child.

How can I make you feel like a
little girl?

You don't need to, I feel like a little girl every day! I've seen the world from their viewpoint for 60 years. You know Sister Maria, the missionary, the one they call the Saint? Yes, she's coming to Rome to receive some honour. Exactly. In all her life, she's only given three interviews.

Yours will be memorable.

Yeah sure, think of Giulio Moneta! This is different. She studied in Italy and speaks Italian. She read your book and loved it. She wants to meet you

so I organized a dinner party at your house tomorrow.

Did I do well?

You did very well. Tomorrow I'll have the honour of dining with her.

At the Holy Father's?

No.

No, at Jep Gambardella's. You see, the Pope even invited the enclosed nuns.

Sisters, sisters, sisters!

Sisters, sisters...

Yes, perfect!

Ah, the Red Cross nurses! Well-toned! Okay, great... What handsome young men! Great! Let's go! The Saint's assistant called me. The Saint would like Count and Countess Odescalchi to come too, as they treated her like a sister when she lived in Italy.

Do you know them?

Of course, but they are not in Rome. All the nobles are in

London, at Philip's great-niece's wedding. Let's call the Colonnas of Reggio. The nobles for hire? They're dead.

Nonsense, they're immortal. The Saint won't even notice, 70 years have gone by! This piece of furniture looks great...

Who would've thought!

It looks great, like a new bathroom! Count Colonna speaking. Yes, we are available. For tonight. Our rate is 250 euros per person for the evening. Plus the cost of the car hire.

This would be somewhat humiliating for us... We are willing to be hired as the Colonnas of Reggio. But as for pretending to be the Odescalchis... I don't know... We were at war for two centuries. I feel it's immoral. Cut at least twelve pieces of rabbit! Set aside the kidneys, liver, head. Gently brown. Don't forget thyme, laurel leaves, rosemary... Then red wine, Ligurian olives... pine nuts. And after an hour, you have Ligurian-style rabbit!

Sister Maria, what convent are
you staying at?

Actually, we're at the Hassler
Hotel at the Spanish Steps. To
be honest, Sister Maria finds it
uncomfortable. Never heard the
Hassler described as
uncomfortable! It's very
comfortable but Sister Maria
isn't used to sleeping in a bed.
She sleeps on the floor, in a
cardboard bed. Do you have any
visits planned? Sister Maria will
climb St John's Basilica's Scala
Sancta on her knees.

Have you?

I'd have liked to, but... I have a bad knee... Orthopedic problems are unimportant, compared to the partial indulgence granted by the Scala Sancta. That's true! Another specialty of mine is lamb with...

Does Sister Maria still help the
sick?

22 hours a day, every day. She washes them, feeds them... You ought to see her. Despite her age, she doesn't walk, she runs. Now she's tired, but that's because she's not with her patients. How old is she?

She'll be 104 in October.

That's impressive.

I thought she was older!
Longevity too, like all things, is
not accidental. About Sister
Maria's interview with Jep...

Her interview? There must be a
mix-up... Sister Maria hasn't
given any interviews since
1971, after the reason for her
mission in Chad, was
misunderstood by some.

Of course, but considering her
admiration for Jep's work...

You told me she enjoyed «The Human Apparatus».

She found it beautiful and fierce. Like the world of men.

Great! There would be no risk of any misunderstanding, Sister Maria can review the text...

No, I'm sorry.

Don't insist. I don't wish to raise any false hopes, there's absolutely no question of any interview. Sorry, but why do you always answer? Why not let Sister Maria talk? Madam... I

took a vow of poverty. And you can't talk about poverty... you have to live it. Such true and real words! Powerful words! Do you need anything, madam?

She needs the bathroom.

It's on the left. The change of diet isn't good for her. Sister Maria, in Mali, only eats 40 grams of plant roots a day. Me too sometimes, in the evening, as a light meal,

I have some splendid roots with
lemon.

You clean the roots by scraping them with a knife and you cut them into small chunks. 

Cardinal, remember when we met at that wedding? You were there too... I felt the need to ask you about matters close to my heart.

Matters regarding faith... regarding the strength of spirituality... But then you got distracted. You can ask me now.

No, I don't see the point.

Why? I'd be very disappointed to discover that you have no answers. I'm only saying it's a possibility... I think that... Never mind... I apologize for earlier. There is one question I really want to ask you. Are the rumors about you true? That you were a truly great... exorcist? Sister Maria... Sister Maria!

Sister Maria!

Saint...

Have you seen her?

No, she's not there.

Sister Maria!

Saint...

Sister Maria!

Saint!

She's called Sister Maria.

Sister Maria... Where has that
bitch got to? Sister Maria! Sister
Maria! My goodness! My
goodness!

Come, Elisabetta, let's go to
bed.

You go ahead, I'm going upstairs for a moment.

Don't be late. In this room, in 1930, Princess Antonietta gave birth to her only daughter, Elisabetta Colonna of Reggio.

The princess died after giving birth. Young Elisabetta, in these opulent rooms, had a happy and carefree childhood. But shortly after, the financial hardship endured by Prince Erminio, forced him to sell the property.

They're migrating west... but now they are resting. Did you know that I know the Christian names... of all of these birds?

Why... did you never write
another book?

I was looking for the great
beauty, but... I didn't find it.

Do you know... Why... I only eat
roots?

No, why? Because roots are
important. Now there's
something I want to show you.

This is how it always ends. With death. But first there was life. Hidden beneath the blah, blah, blah. It is all settled beneath the chitter chatter and the noise. Silence and sentiment. Emotion and fear. The haggard, inconstant flashes of beauty. And then the wretched squalor and miserable humanity. All buried under the cover of the embarrassment of being in the world. Beyond there is what lies beyond. I don't deal with what lies beyond. Therefore... let this novel begin. After all... it's just a trick. Yes, it's just a trick.

