

# **WE'RE THE RIGHT ONES**

by Lalitha Del Parente

## Notes

*"Every adoption carries out an implicit violence, in that it involves the existence of human beings stripped from birth of their most basic rights. In order to save them from a future of misery and abandonment, a manipulation of the destinies that were written for them is in a sense accomplished by tearing them away from their natural roots and culture."*

G. Modonesi

Siamo quelli giusti (We're the right ones) is one of the many attempts to talk about the puzzle pieces that embody the adoption journey.

The following play could be a dream, a day dream, or a mysterious legend.

The characters:

The Host, a very popular Giuseppe Tartini's Sonata in G minor

Giada, Anton Bruckner's Adagio from Symphony No. 9

Fabio, opening from Richard Strauss' Don Juan

Vera, opening from Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 "L'Italiana"

Kathrine, opening from Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4, following bars (staccato eighths)

Alma, Overture from Felix Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream

Attilio, Overture from Gioacchino Rossini's "Il Signor Bruschino"

Masho, "Duo Des fleurs" from Léo Delibes' Lakmé

All the characters are black while the little girl is white. The action takes place in a television studio.

There are adaptable geographic references, the audience recognizes the participants as part of an affluent, western, provincial, petty, bourgeois world.

In case of any doubts (even musical ones), then call a violinist.

Nothing is more interesting than truth: It is infinitely stranger than fantasy without being related to it. As a premise. this will have to suffice.

*OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the seventh episode of "We're the right ones," a show designed, produced, and presented entirely by me.

Join us every Friday night on TeleSuono! The game: 4 sets of aspiring parents compete by answering my twisted questions. Only one will be crowned as the winner, and have the chance to make their dream come true: Build a family.

Tonight's final prize is a girl, who has traveled from far away. The winner will take hooooome..... the sweet Masho!

Let's get to know tonight's contestants.

Straight from Carona, they define themselves as a dynamic and flexible duo. They have been married for six years, and they love homemade pizza evenings in company of their family and friends.

Their motto is, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Meet Giada and Fabio! Let's welcome them with a round of applause!

*JINGLE – STRAUSS, DON JUAN, ALLEGRO, BARS 1-7*

THE HOST Giada and Fabio will challenge another explosive couple.

From Melano, where they have been living in an eco-friendly loft for ten years. Their favorite vacations are trekking tours around Asia, the latest being in the Ladakh region. Their motto is "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Give a warm welcome to Vera and Kathrine!

*JINGLE – MENDELSSOHN, SYMPHONY NR. 4, PRELUDE*

THE HOST Outstanding. And now there's only one thing missing: Drumroll.... the super precious.... Mashooooooooooooo.

*JINGLE – DELIBES, DA LAKMÉ, DUO DES FLEURS*

*Masho is lowered from the ceiling on a swing. She wears a pink linen dress and holds her stuffed, battered bunny, Paki.*

*General "OOOH" and applause from the audience.*

THE HOST Masho, did you enjoy flying over the stage with your little friend?

MASHO His name's Paki. Paki says No.

THE HOST Can we show him to the audience at home?

*Audience's "OOOH".*

THE HOST This bunny is the best. Masho, do you know we're here tonight to find you a family? A family, all for you!

MASHO ...

THE HOST Are you happy?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Gooooood. Dear contestants, look at her skin: Peachy with a hint of strawberry on the cheeks. And her eyes: As clear as Verzasca's water. And her hair: A cascade of lemon meringue's curls – my favorite dessert... who wouldn't want to take such a bundle of joy home?

I would like to remind you that the audience at home who will cast the vote, Masho's preference will not count. So please, let's hear it for today's contestants! Let's go!

Let's start with the first question. What would you feed little Masho for a snack?

GIADA We prefer locally sourced produce: Carrots and apples from our garden.

FABIO Carona's climate is ideal for orchards.

THE HOST Right on! Healthy and organic food. Kathrine, Vera what about you? What would you pick?

VERA A slice of bread and some chocolate, like my granny used to give me.

KATHERINE I am a food critic, and I have a soft spot for chocolate: Bitter, milk, filled with marzipan or hazelnuts, with love dedications, without love dedications, coffee flavored, salted caramel... My favorite is the dark cream chocolate with pastry crunches from our Bedretto Valley. All this is to say: A slice of bread with some chocolate was also my childhood snack. Oh God, I am a little excited, sorry.

FABIO Well, we would also pair a sweet treat for the afternoon snack. Giada's apricot pies are delicious.

GIADA I started my journey to becoming a vegan, but for little Masho I would make an exception and bake pies.

THE HOST You're making my mouth water! But who knows what Masho likes best... Audience at home, we need you! Carrot and apples versus bread and chocolate. Vote vote vote vote! Votes will be cumulated throughout the first round and will determine which couple will continue.

Well well, just out of curiosity: Masho what would you like to eat for snack?

MASHO Paki wants pizza.

THE HOST Paki is the smart one, eh? Every time is the right time for pizza. Studio, could we have some candies? Cool! Before we continue with the second question, what do you think of the name Masho? Do you want to find her a nicer one? More correct?

FABIO Sara? Emma, Giulia? Sofia?

GIADA Penelope? Since she's been waiting for someone. I mean us, or you, of course.

VERA Actually, I don't think changing her name would be fair, but if we had to... a name similar to hers.

KATHERINE What does Masho mean?

THE HOST "The least worst." You'll have to agree with me that this marshmallow deserves better.

FABIO Samantha, spelled with an H.

GIADA I like short names: Lara, Alma, Luce, Zoe/

KATH Zoraida? After a character from Don Quixote.

GIADA Nina, Luna, Zara, Chloe, Rumi

VERA What about... simply Masha?

GIADA Febe, Cora, Anna, Dora, Gaia

FABIO Like Masha and the Bear?

THE HOST Like the one on Big Brother! What a splendid name! Simple, yet beautiful.  
*[Masha = Italian Big Brother participant, ca. 2000, n.d.t.]*  
 Masho, do you like the name Masha?

MASHO NO.

THE HOST Greeeeeeeat. Before we continue with the next question, let's see a brief introduction to get to know our contestants better. Let's start with Giada and Fabio.

### **Video recording of Fabio and Giada**

*BACKGROUND – BRUCKNER, SYMPHONY NR. 9, ADAGIO, BARS 57-64*

FABIO Good evening, my name is Fabio, and I am an insurance agent. I've been married to my sweet Giada for five years, and we would like to have a family.

*Fabio kisses Giada on her forehead.*

- GIADA Good evening!!! I am Giada, and I work as a representative for organic, cruel-free cosmetics. We are so happy to have been selected to participate in “We’re the right ones”! We have been on the international adoption list for five years!
- FABIO The bureaucratic process is endless!
- GIADA First we considered artificial insemination: I underwent some hormone treatments.
- FABIO We saw the best specialists: Semen analysis, testicular exams, hormone tests, pff... And let me tell you: What a treat!
- GIADA With the money spent on medical treatment, we could have bought a third house!
- FABIO Sbiru look, if we win, we’ll get that third house! Let me take care of the numbers.  
*[Sbiru = Italian affectionate nickname, n.d.t.]*
- GIADA Oh babe! Anyways, we are irredeemable optimists. I haven’t given up the hormone treatments yet. We’re passionate hikers, mountains are our favorite adventures: In summer, we always try to hit at least three or four huts. Last summer we explored Blenio Valley.
- FABIO Hello baby, hi little one! Whoever you are, whatever color, background, culture, we are waiting for you with open arms! We can’t wait to take you through the mountain trails and forage mushrooms!
- FABIO AND GIADA Bye!

*Fabio and Giada blow kisses with their hands.*

GIADA *(low voice)* Fabio, do I have lipstick on my teeth?

### **Video recording of Kathrine and Vera**

*BACKGROUND – MENDELSSOHN, SYMPHONY NR. 4, PRELUDE*

- VERA Good evening, my partner Kathrine and I are overjoyed to have been to be here. The possibility of adoption for us is not a given. It has been a much debated issue for years.
- KATHERINE Good evening. We are really happy. We have been together for ten years now, and the desire to expand the family is all but dormant. Thanks to “We’re the right ones”, having a baby is no longer a utopia.

VERA I am a psychologist and Kathrine is a food critic. Both of us are fulfilled professionally speaking, we're stable, and feel ready to welcome a kid.

KATHERINE I have SO MANY cooking recipes.

VERA And I have such comfortable chaises, not too bad for napping either.

KATHERINE We have a tidy loft waiting to be turned upside down and filled with toys, rocking horses, and mountains of legos and stuffed animals.

VERA As the Talmud wonderfully put it, "A mother is like a mountain stream, nourishing the trees on the mountain from their roots, but a woman who mothers another's child is like a cloud gathering moisture to travel a great distance to nourish a lone tree in the desert".

KATHERINE When we read it, we realized that how important this TV show is for us, because it will give us a real chance to build a family.

VERA AND KATHERINE Our Family.

*Kathrine and Vera look at each other and smile. They hold each other's hand.*

VERA (low voice) My voice was so shaky, I was nervous!

*OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Do you like our aspiring parents?  
Gooooood. And you, how was seeing your introduction videos again?

*All contestants nod emotionally.*

THE HOST Ahhh. Simply fa-bu-lous. Fabio, Giada who's cheering you on from home?

FABIO My mother! Hi mom! I love you! Vote for us!

THE HOST Excellent. What about you, Kath, Vera? Do you have a fan club?

KATHERINE Our friends, who by now are probably enjoying Happy Hour somewhere. Hopefully they'll vote on time!

THE HOST Supeeeeeer. Let's get back to us. Second question: To you, what is a HOUSE?

KATHERINE Home is where I can relax. My cooking magazines, my herbs. Home is the wooden table - stained by the ink of Vera's pen, scratched by the paws of dwarf rabbit Tippy, marked by circles of wine glasses sipped with Madama Butterfly in the background. Home is Vera, coming home at the end of the day and shouting "Boil the pasta!" That's home for me.



*Kath and Vera kiss. The Host, Giada, and Fabio clap.*

FABIO I, on the other hand, built my house brick by brick with my architect brother. On the second floor, that's where I have the still life's collection on display: My mother started it, and I add a piece every year. Oh, every painting is insured! That wall connects two generations. To me, that is home!

*Giada and Fabio kiss Hollywood-style.*

THE HOST You're SO adorable! Masha... snicker-doodle, what is HOUSE for you?

MASHO To me it's Mom and Dad.

THE HOST No, you didn't get it. What is it for you? What does it mean?

MASHO To me it's Mom and Dad.

THE HOST Yeeeeeeeees. Audience at home, it's up to you now. Vote! Still life or stained wooden table?

FABIO Well, still life pictures.

THE HOST Exactly. Outstanding. Now it's time to have a little talk with Masha. Oooh - that's so cute, you were eating the candies, huh?

*Masho talks to Paki. The contestants assist the scene with heart-shaped eyes.*

MASHO ...

THE HOST Masha, how old are you?

MASHO ... Eight.

*Vera squeezes Katherine's hand, Giada's eyes lighten up.*

THE HOST And what about Paki?

MASHO Paki says six.

THE HOST Where is he from?

MASHO Paki says from Sami's bed.

THE HOST And who's Sami?

MASHO Paki says he's Masho's little brother.

THE HOST And where is Sami now?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Where is Sami?

MASHO ...

THE HOST So, Paki is a very special little animal for you, isn't he?

MASHO Paki sees everything. He's a magic bunny.

THE HOST Oh! There's no hiding the fact that he's magic! Like Harry Potter's animals!

MASHO Paki has a magical belly.

THE HOST And what does his magical belly do? Does he eat bad guys?

MASHO Paki takes me home.

THE HOST And why are you still here and not home?

MASHO Paki always takes me home. Every night he takes me home.

THE HOST Ooooook! Masha, who do you like most, Vera and Kath or Giada and Fabio?

MASHO Paki misses Sami.

THE HOST Yes, but these people have beautiful homes, full of beautiful things.  
Do you know that you are on television tonight? Do you know that our audience is watching you?

MASHO Paki asks if Sami is also watching tv?

THE HOST But of course! Paki do you want to say hi?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Does Paki want to say hi to anybody?

MASHO Paki says hi.

THE HOST To whom?

MASHO ...

THE HOST To whom is Paki saying hi to?

MASHO To Sami

THE HOST That's it?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Does Paki not want to say hi to anybody else?

MASHO Mom and Dad.

THE HOST Ooooh Mom and Dad! You miss them, don't you? Cookie bear, you don't have to be sad tonight, because we'll find you other ones.  
Let's continue with the third question! So, you've been waiting for a long time to have a child: How have you been imagining it all this time?

FABIO I envisioned a boy: Playing soccer together, going to the stadium, and cheering Lugano on.

KATHERINE I, on the other hand, was thinking about baking Christmas cookies together, and

bedtime stories/

GIADA I imagined a gorgeous girl in a star studded leotard/

VERA As a kid, my favorite story was Alice in Wonderland, and I thought about reading it together/

FABIO I thought at the awkward questions kids always ask...

THE HOST How are children born?

GIADA Yes! Or where do we go when we die.

VERA Like we used to when we were eight?

KATHERINE I imagine that she must be feeling like a turtle now: Shyly deciding whether to pop her head out to take a bite off the lettuce leaf in front of her. Eventually, hunger will trump fear. I mean - Does that make sense?

FABIO I wonder if she's feeling like a shopping cart, instead.

GIADA Fabio... darling...

FABIO You know the shopping cart theory, don't you?

VERA E KATHERINE No.

GIADA Fabio, there's no time for that honey... The people will soon have to vote.

FABIO Everyone uses shopping carts, don't they? Why putting the cart away every time?

VERA To keep things tidy.

FABIO Vera, such a responsible citizen. I put the cart back to get my money back. If it wasn't for that incentive, I'd leave it laying around.

THE HOST Ahaha! Fabio Fabio Fabio... But, what does this have to do with Masha?

FABIO Well, one may think that that's what we're doing here: Put the coin in, take the kid around for a ride, and when we're done we take her back and get our coin back.

KATHERINE Like if we were doing something for ourselves, not for her. Better yet, could we "return" her?

GIADA I'm completely lost.

VERA Fabio, do you think that a kid... I mean, that it'll be a walk in the park?

KATHERINE Ohmygod! Do you think the kid thinks we're doing this just because?

FABIO No, I don't know - I mean, I wonder if she knows we wouldn't get our money back if we bring her back - unlike a cart. /

VERA So, you think Masha doesn't know that the adoption is irreversible?

KATHERINE Meaning... we can't go back?

GIADA She's not a cart! I mean, she's not our cart. I mean, she could if we'd wanted to /

FABIO Maybe the kid doesn't want to.

GIADA Oh God, maybe she thinks she is in danger! No no no child, you are not in danger! And we will never leave you, unlike your old family. We won't take you back like a cart.

THE HOST You are here to adopt a baby girl, and this show certainly represents the fast lane in the highway of a normal bureaucratic process. Secondly, the child is also here because she is looking for a family. At "We're the right ones", we redesign the fates of many kids without a family.

MASHO *(low voice)* Paki already has a family  
*(loudly)* Paki already has a family

THE HOST Do tell us! Dear audience, have your handkerchiefs ready, because emotions are getting real.

MASHO Paki has a family. They're home. Outside. Mom and Dad. They're sick, but they're there.

THE HOST Do you want to tell us why Paki is here?

MASHO ...

THE HOST MASHA, do you want to tell us why you are here?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Masha, why are you here?

MASHO *(loudly)* Paki wants Sami. I want Mom and Dad.

THE HOST Splendid!!! Let's move on. Could we get some strawberries or sour worms for the little one? Here you go!

GIADA I have a question...

THE HOST Do tell.

GIADA For Masha, I have a question for Masha.

THE HOST You can tell me and I'll redirect.

GIADA I'd like to know if... Ehm, why... Like, why does she not have a family yet, she's 8...?

THE HOST Masha... Why don't you have a family even though you're already eight?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Masha... Pumpkin, why don't you have a family?

MASHO I do have a family!

THE HOST I'm sorry Giada, the girl is confused, all these people watching.  
Eh, Masha? You're excited, aren't you?

MASHO ...

GIADA So, in the event that it doesn't work out, that the kid doesn't fit in... I mean, she certainly will, but in the event she won't - would the show provide us

compensation?

THE HOST Giada!! What an interesting question...Unfortunately we're running out of time. Don't forget to vote from home, we will declare the winner of this round after commercial break. Go to commercial!

## CONTESTANTS OFF AIR

*The contestants receive small bottles of water and ham sandwiches. They sit upstage with their feet dangling. They eat.*

KATHERINE Do you think she doesn't want to be with us?

VERA Of course she wants to be with us.

GIADA Did you imagine an 8-year-old?

FABIO I wonder if she knows what hockey is.

KATHERINE I mean, she's 8 years old, so big already...

GIADA It's not really a clean slate!!!

VERA She must have had such a difficult story.

GIADA Maybe this show only casts kids.../

KATHERINE Troubled kids/

FABIO Last week there was Aline, 11. Previously Luna, 7.

VERA Of course, everyone imagines to take home a baby when they adopt.

KATHERINE Okay, but maybe they're trying to give a chance to elder kids who encounter more difficulties being adopted/

GIADA That nobody wants.

FABIO Excuse me?

GIADA I said, you get a child here that nobody wants.

FABIO But that's okay, we're okay with a toddler.

GIADA Are we?

FABIO Yes! No?

GIADA There must be a reason why no one wants her.

KATHERINE Like when puppies get abandoned on the highway?

GIADA I once saw a guy on a tv show that said he had a love affair with his car.

*OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Welcome back to "We're the right ones." It's time to see who will continue to the final round, but first: Masha, who would you prefer?

MASHO Paki wants mommy.

KATHERINE Sweet girl/

MASHO Paki wants pizza.

GIADA I told you, this child is too old/

MASHO ...

FABIO It's normal, nothing wrong with being afraid of the dark/

MASHO Paki wants mommy.

VERA Of course you want mommy! We could be your new moms/

MASHO ...

GIADA To me this story doesn't add up, she has a little brother/

MASHO ...

FABIO It's normal, she wants to be with his little brother.

GIADA Fabio, to you everything is normal!

MASHO Masho is not afraid. Masho is big.

GIADA Even she defines herself as big/

MASHO Masho doesn't want a mom and dad/

THE HOST The way children use their imagination! Let's close the vote from home!  
So..... According to your votes from home..... The winners of the first round are.....

*SUSPENSE – TARTINI, DEVIL'S TRILL, THIRD MOVEMENT, ALLEGRO ASSAI, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Vera and Kathrine!  
I am sorry Giada and Fabio. Would you like to say something?

FABIO Well no. Actually, we would like to know if there is, in the future, to be re-shuffled as contestant.  
I would also like to thank my mom and her friends who supported us so much.  
Kisses!

THE HOST Very well! Giada?

GIADA I would also like to say hello to my family and thank them/

FABIO Ah - I would also like to give a shout out to my work colleagues, who have

covered my shifts to be here tonight and have often assisted Giada throughout the IVF journey.

THE HOST So Giada, are you going to continue the hormone treatment?

GIADA Well I don't know if/

FABIO Sbiru, come on, it's covered by our health insurance.

THE HOST Giada, Fabio is such a wonderful man.

GIADA Yes, well, at times it's challenging. The hormone treatment is very demanding/

FABIO Sbiru, you know you can always count on me. And we chose the best specialists! Come on, hang in there. Even my mother is rooting for you, I mean for us!

GIADA Fabio - your mother is rooting for us!!!?

FABIO Of course love, she would like to be a grandmother.... that's all.

GIADA I understand Fabio, but have you seen us? You want to see us happy? Are we happy *now*? Will we be happier with a baby?

THE HOST (*quietly*) Studio - background music, lights on Giada and Fabio.

*BACKGROUND – BRUCKNER, SYMPHONY NR. 9, ADAGIO, BARS 57-64*

FABIO Sbiru, come on, don't be like that. Of course we are happy. There's no need to pick on my mother.

GIADA I'm not picking on your mother. Sometimes what you say makes me think you care more about making your mother happy.

FABIO Honey/

GIADA (*on the verge of screaming and crying at the same time*) Honey my ass. I'm exhausted, hormone treatments are the worst! Hair loss, sudden mood swings, one moment I'm happily reading a book, the next I lash out while eating ice cream because I'm thinking...I don't know what the fuck I'm thinking...I don't know... I get a lump in my throat, and I can't do anything, and I feel like the unhappiest person in the world. Does that sound normal to you? Not to mention the anxiety attacks: Every time we go to yet another doctor, who yet again reminds us about this fucking predicament. I am infertile, and not being able to give you a family kills me inside. Day in, day out. And you saying your mother wants to see us happy - I don't think I can take this much longer.

FABIO Hey, I'm here. I'm doing my best. I have chosen the best health facilities/

GIADA (*in tears*) Fabio, it's not enough, don't you understand? The financial sacrifices to support the procedures are not enough. The best health insurance, the reimbursement time, the quality of service, the optimal deductible-premium ratio... not enough! Do you get that? All the tests I've undergone have created an

immense emptiness inside of me, and none of your “best choices” make it less painful - do you understand? Do you *want* to understand?

*The Host hugs Giada, takes a handkerchief out of his blazer pocket, and hands it to her.*

FABIO           Huh! All right, now we really have to go and discuss a lot of things! Goodbye everyone, and good luck Vera and Kathrine!

KATHERINE AND VERA    Thank you, good luck to you too!

*Giada leaves the studio with firm steps, refusing to hold Fabio's hand. Fabio follows her, casts one last glance at the Host, and exits.*

THE HOST    Oooooook. Let's give them a round of applause!  
At this point I will ask you, Katerine and Vera, to please make yourselves comfortable in the backstage while Masha and I have a little chat. Masha.

MASHO       Paki wants to sleep.

THE HOST    Sly little Paki. Tell me... Tell me about Sami. Who is Sami?

MASHO       Masho's little brother.

THE HOST    Do you wish your little brother was here with you?

MASHO       ...

THE HOST    Do you wish your little brother was here with you?

MASHO       Yes.

THE HOST    Would you like your little brother to have a family?

MASHO       Sami already has a family.

THE HOST    A family of his own?

MASHO       Sami has a family of his own.

THE HOST    Is it like your own family?

MASHO       ...

THE HOST    Mashaaa, is it like your own family?

MASHO       ...

THE HOST    The family you said. Out there. Is Sami staying with them?

MASHO       Yes.

THE HOST    Aaah! So Sami has a family of his own! Well, too bad, otherwise we could have tried to bring him here and find a family for the two of you. But we can't, since Sami already has a family of his own. Too bad, such a shame.



Let's bring some more candy for Masha.

And now - let me introduce you to the new contestants! Well, I have to say... no I won't tell you yet... I will surprise you.

The next contestant is 35 years old. She commutes between Geneva and Lugano. Here is a short video presentation!

*Masho tries to eat the candies, but she doesn't like them and spits them out.*

## **Video recording of Alma**

### *BACKGROUND – MENDELSSOHN, A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM, OUVERTURE*

ALMA            Good evening! I am Alma, I am 35 years old, I live most of the time in Geneva, and thanks to my work I am in close contact with many different cultural realities. I am happy to have been selected in this show, I hope I'll be able to bring some original ideas that can birth new interesting reflections and discussions.

...

What else...? Bye!

THE HOST      Ahhhh!! Such a tough lady, and maybe a tad pretentious...  
And now.... Hold on to your seats, because the moment you've all been waiting for is finally here. You know how we like to invite a special guest every week: Last week we had the honor to host the famous computer scientist Steinsuppe, the guy who invented swipe-right-go-on-a-date / swipe-left-buy-an-alpaca app. Well, tonight we're happy to welcome a badminton legend. Can you guess? Yes, him! 7 times in a row world champion, New York Times' "Man of the Year", celebrated and interviewed in the 4valli Magazine and The Post Courier... Ladies and gentlemen, tonight, here, for the first time on TeleSuono, put your hands together fooooooor..... David Von Lächerli and his wife Nicole!!! Unfortunately, the couple will not be able to attend, due to the Seven Carpets Tournament in Abu Dhabi. Please welcome their legal representative, Mr. Attilio!!!  
Let's see a short presentation.

## Video recording of Attilio

### *BACKGROUND – ROSSINI, IL SIGNOR BRUSCHINO, OUVERTURE*

ATTILIO        Good evening, my name is Attilio, I am the legal representative of the Von Lächerli family. I work in Zug, and I will be executing my client's directives during the show. My client's three children are the ones who expressed their desire to widen the family after seeing Masho's brief introduction in last week's episode! We hope to win this game as well! See you in the studio!

### *OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST      Let's give a round of applause for Alma and Attilio! Welcome to my show!

ALMA            Good evening. I have a little gift for Masho. Hello Masho! Here, I brought you something from Bern.

THE HOST      You can give it to her, not sure if she'll like it.  
By the way, the girl's name is now Masha. It seems more fair.

*Alma hands Masho a baby Hang [musical instrument, n.d.a].*

ATTILIO        I have a little something too.

THE HOST      Masha! Attilio also brought you a present! Let's see what it is.

*Attilio brings Masho a giant package. Masho opens it: The latest Ipad on the market.*

ATTILIO        It's the latest model, limited edition.

THE HOST      Outstanding!!! Now that Masha has received her gifts, let's get started. Here's the first question.

What would you give Masha for her birthday?

ALMA            A box of colored pencils. I think children can express a lot about their lives through drawings.

THE HOST      Don't you think Masha could be able to remember her family? Are you sure this is a good gift?

ALMA            Having memories helps to build one's history: To become aware of the past, of one's roots, contributes to acknowledging the appropriation to other cultures throughout the whole growth.

THE HOST Mmm.... What about you, Attilio? What do you think? What would the Von Lackerli give her?

ATTILIO As a technology-oriented and well-traveled family, I think they would give her a camera. You know the colorful ones that print instant pictures?

THE HOST Totally!! I have one in my dressing room! We should take a souvenir photo later.

ATTILIO No problem. By this I don't mean that my clients want to erase the kid's past: Au contraire! They simply wish to give her a chance to build a better future and preserve it for posterity. This girl would have a family full of love.

ALMA And of babysitters, I suppose.

ATTILIO Certainly! Three babies and a famous daddy! A sparkling family life!

ALMA And how would they take care of Masho, too? By hiring her another babysitter?

ATTILIO And how would *you* take care of Masha while you're at work?

ALMA I would take her with me, make sure I get an assignment that would also allow me to care for her.

ATTILIO It doesn't sound much different than growing up with my clients.  
In fact, with my client she would have access to private teachers who would follow her everywhere and help her learn at her own pace.

ALMA The difference, perhaps, is that chasing tournaments around the world and being shown off as a trophy is not the ideal scenario for a child who already has a difficult background.

ATTILIO The difference is that she would have a mother, a father, and three little brothers.

ALMA And an Ipad.

ATTILIO And an Ipad, of course.

THE HOST Weeeeeell well, I see you hit the ball rolling. Masha, what would you rather get for your birthday?  
A box of colored pencils or a camera?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Audience at home, it's your turn!  
Colored pencils vs. camera. Vote!  
Let's continue with the second question... Attilio, when will you let me meet your client? Just kidding, I mean, we'll talk about it later... Ah ah ah ah!!! As I was saying, question number 2: Why do you want to adopt?

ATTILIO My client's children wanted another brother or sister. They watched your show, shared it with their parents, and made their case. Mr. and Mrs. Von Lackerli thought it a valiant request, especially because they would be saving a little girl

from her miserable life.

THE HOST Oh really!? They're watching me?

ATTILIO Of course!

THE HOST What about you, Alma? What makes you want to adopt Masha?

ALMA I saw the show on TV when I was in Geneva, and I thought I should participate and come clean.

THE HOST Come clean? About/

ALMA I am against this show.

*Silence.*

THE HOST AHAHAH.

*Silence*

ALMA Do you find that funny?

THE HOST To go on a show and claim to be against it? Yes, I find it quite funny.

ALMA I have my reasons, and ranting to a bartender wouldn't get your attention.

THE HOST So it's my attention you want? Well, here you have it. Let's hear it, I'm curious. Studio, can I please have a close-up of our contestant!

ALMA First thing: You're using these people/

THE HOST No no no no.

ALMA Let me finish. You exploit their weaknesses: Their desire to have a family despite the obstacles due to their sexual orientation, or infertility. Their pain brings them here. To you. Do you think it is easy to adopt?

Do you know how long it takes? Do you know how many psychologists' evaluations?/

THE HOST An adoption consists of two sides: The parents in need of a child to feel like a "family," and the child in need of the parents to be a child. That's what happens here at "We're the right ones".

ALMA That's quite simplistic, isn't it? What's this creature's story? Who are you to decide which parents are right?

THE HOST It is the audience at home who decides.

ALMA Based on what? On *your* questions?

THE HOST That's right! Now/

ALMA What makes a person *right* to adopt? Is it because the *right* university? The *right* job? The *right* salary? Can one afford a child as one affords a well-furnished apartment, the latest iPad, vacations in Sardinia... basically, a commodity?

THE HOST "We are the right ones"/

ALMA *Right* for whom? For what? Are we better suited than Masho's biological parents to raise this child?

THE HOST Let's not be naïve: In her country, she wouldn't have an education, she wouldn't have food, she wouldn't have toys, she wouldn't have a childhood!

ALMA While here she would!? We could buy her anything: We could get her sushi one night and tacos the next one. We could buy her clothes and pay for her tennis classes and ballet rehearsals/

THE HOST Food, education, and entertainment are the fundamentals for a child's decent life, at least in this land/

ALMA What about family? One's own family?/

THE HOST Well, my dear Alma, that unfortunately is not always a perfect match.

Sometimes one is born into a family where the father hop from bar to bar all the time, and it's up to the older child to get everyone through.

Coincidentally, these kids don't have such a carefree childhood, since they have to scramble to help out around the house and they have to defend their mother from her own choices.

These kids don't casually enjoy their Twenties: They don't think about seeing the world, or trying new restaurants, or pursuing a career.

Sometimes that's just how it goes, my dear Alma. Sometimes your own family is a shitty family. And, soon enough, you find yourself sinking into a pit of negative emotions and wrong choices.

Don't come here and talk about lost children: These kids don't know any better, they don't know that families shouldn't be shitty.

You tell me, Alma...

ALMA Loser! What a pathetic little story!/  
THE HOST I will not allow you to speak to me like this! This is not a game, it's not funny at all/  
ALMA At least we agree on that: It's not fucking funny/  
THE HOST Just leave the studio immediately, leave. This is my show!  
How dare you? Security! Security!

*Alma keeps screaming while she gets dragged out of the studio by the security guards.*

ALMA "We're the right ones", we solve the problems of orphaned children, we change destinies for the better. No! We exploit others, and we even have a fucking TV show about it. We even change children's names here! Fuck you, you are a clown, go home! We bring children to this fucking program, good for us! We know what is right for them. Fucking asshole!

THE HOST I'm told it's time to go to commercial!

*OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Aaaaaaand we are back on the air! Attilio what do you think about what just happened?

ATTILIO Frankly, when a child is put up for adoption it's because of a set of unpleasant circumstances: I don't know, maybe extreme poverty, or misfortune, single parents, or loss of both. Even here. Do you know how many parents disappear from their children?

THE HOST Preach, Attilio! Here, we only select participants who *want* to become parents. If one wants to stir dust, "Fatti Chiari" studio is just next door.

*[Fatti Chiari = mocking distortion of Swiss investigative tv show Patti Chiari, n.d.]*

ATTILIO Oh! I always watch Fatti Chiari!

THE HOST Masha, are you glad that the Von Lächerli are left in the competition?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Masha... Alma didn't really want you!

MASHO *(loudly)* She did not!

THE HOST That's right! Had she really wanted you, she would have stayed, don't you think?

*Masho begins to sob.*

THE HOST Awwwwww Masha! It must be difficult to be in your shoes right now! Look, how about you go backstage and get some rest? Can someone please take the girl? Attilio, Attilio... Were you expecting an easier journey?

ATTILIO No, not at all. I thought Alma would be a tough adversary, but she turned out to be just reckless.

*Masho exits the studio.*

**ON AIR**

THE HOST Attilio tell us a bit about your live close to the Von Lackerli.

ATTILIO What can I say, it's a great honor and highly satisfying. They have such a dynamic life. I follow them often, and feel like part of the family.

THE HOST You've practically been adopted!

ATTILIO Ahaha, yes! That's exactly what it feels like sometimes.

THE HOST And is it a good feeling?

ATTILIO Absolutely.

THE HOST Glorious! They're more than welcome here, anytime. What are the kids' names?

ATTILIO The girl is Apple, the little boys are Calvin and Patek.

THE HOST Attilio, have you ever thought about adopting?

ATTILIO Actually, no. My life is too busy to have a family of my own.

THE HOST Do you have a girlfriend?

ATTILIO One? Should I limit myself to having just one?

THE HOST AHAH Attilio!!!!

It's time to get into the final part of the game!

**BACKSTAGE**

MASHO I'm tired.  
I want to go home. I'm tired.

*Masho is crying.*

MASHO I'm sleepy.

MASHO I don't want the candy.  
I feel like throwing up. I want Mom and Dad.

*Masho hugs Paki and falls asleep.*

*OPENING SONG – SCHUBERT, STRING QUARTET NO. 14, BARS 1-4*

THE HOST Dear Audience. Despite tonight's unscripted bits, let's welcome back Vera and Kathrine! Are you happy to be competing in the final round against the Von Lackerli? How unique!

*JINGLE – MENDELSSOHN, SYMPHONY NR. 4, SALTARELLO*

VERA [*unimpressed*] Yes, well...

ATTILIO My clients are honored to be in the final round with you!

KATHERINE Thank you! We are very happy to have gotten so far.

THE HOST You know the rules. Let's start right away with the first question, are you ready?

*Attilio, Kathrine, and Vera nod.*

THE HOST Let's not forget about little Masha! Bring her in. Is she asleep? Wake her up and bring her in. I don't know, give her something to color.

*Masho is brought back to the studio. She is asleep.*

*JINGLE – DELIBES, DA LAKMÉ, DUO DES FLEURS*

THE HOST All right! Final round, first question. What would you give up for Masha?

VERA We would give up the electric bicycles.

ATTILIO My clients would give up the golf car.

KATHERINE I would give up the Montblanc fountain pen my brother gave me for graduation.

ATTILIO My clients would give up Calvin's babysitter, Carmen, who is still young and will easily find other employment.

*Masho wakes up. She starts busying herself with crayons and paper.*

VERA I'd give up my Barcelona chairs by Mies van der Rohe.

ATTILIO The Oscar de la Renta.

KATHERINE The bottle of Barolo Monfortino, 1956, special reserve.

ATTILIO The trophies he won last year.

VERA Our little bunny Tippy.

ATTILIO The chalet in Davos.

KATHERINE My collection of vinyl records.

ATTILIO The Tex Willers.

VERA The J. Koons's dog painting.

ATTILIO Next March's vacation to Lapland.

*Improvisation. The Host wanders among the audience asking: What would you give up for your son? Meanwhile, Attilio calls his customers on the phone.*



ATTILIO Was habt ihr noch? Das Haus in Dubai... aber ihr braucht das. Dein Rolex? Ja ok! Die Bentley nicht, die Ferrari nicht... sollen wir die Porsche geben? Oder einfach keine Ferien in Engadin? Kein Rechtvertreter? Ehm... ICH bin der Rechtverteter. Ich kann schon eine bessere Lösung finden. Tschüss, tschüss.

VERA Maybe we...I mean, Kath....

KATHERINE Do you think we should... one of us should...?

VERA Give up work?

KATHERINE Oh! I could... maybe I could work from home?

VERA Oh God! Kath, no. Maybe I could give it up!

KATHERINE No.

VERA Maybe it'll be necessary!

ATTILIO My clients would give up the cook, I mean the chef.

THE HOST Ah Attilio! Such humbleness.

ATTILIO Yeah.

VERA That's not fair! We can't compete against what they can offer.

THE HOST Are you saying that you are at a disadvantage?

VERA ...

THE HOST Let's ask Masha who she prefers! Masha. Who do you prefer?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Masha! Masha, there are some people who would give up cars so they could have you, others who gave up a pet bunny!

*Masho doesn't respond and continues to draw.*

THE HOST All right!!! Let's see the beautiful drawings you've been making.  
Mmmhh! Adorable. So/

VERA Can we see it too?

THE HOST Actually, it's quite abstract, not necessarily attention-worthy.

VERA I would like to see it. As a psychologist, I think children's drawings reveal a lot about their moods. Kath, try to get the papers.

THE HOST Ladies please!

*Attilio approaches from behind and steals the crumbled papers from The Host's hands.*

ATTILIO *(reading)* Dear Mom and Dad, I'm here. They want to give me to people I don't

know and make me eat only candy. I feel like throwing up.

I want to go back home. I love Sami. But I stole his bunny. I stole Paki before I left. Some people took me to a place where there are many kids like me. A lot of kids, no mommies and daddies. No one wants us.

I hate everyone. Why can't I go home? Why wasn't I good enough for you? Why didn't you want me? Why didn't you keep me with you? I don't want a new family, I want you. Why did they change my name? Why don't you come for me? Mom, Dad, I love you!

I promise I will be good, no more complaining, I will take care of Sami, I will give Paki back. I want to go home. Everyone here is black, you are white, like me.

THE HOST Ahahahah!!!! Is't just a joke.

KATHERINE Oh my God.

VERA I don't think it's a joke.

ATTILIO Who are the bad people who took her from her family?  
Anyway the child is racist, she needs to be re-educated.

KATHERINE Did her family know she was going to be adopted?

VERA Was she kidnapped?

THE HOST (*loudly*) STOP! This is my show, and I don't know where this came from, but there will be consequences!

ATTILIO I have to protect my clients' reputation. I have to leave the studio for a moment.

THE HOST Attilio, please, it's just a bad prank.

KATHERINE I am scared.

VERA Maybe we need to investigate further.

THE HOST What are you afraid of, Kathrine? Don't you want a daughter?

KATHERINE Is she telling the truth?

VERA Attilio is calling his client. Where did this child come from?

THE HOST From an orphanage, like many other children.

KATHERINE But she said she still has a family.

THE HOST Ahahahaha.... Children and their vivid imagination! However, and I'm repeating myself here, if the child is here, it's because her family did not want her. And if you are here, it's because you're evidently encountering difficulties in you adoption journey.

VERA Shut up!

THE HOST Oh, am I wrong?

VERA We want the kid!

ATTILIO My client also wants the kid.

THE HOST Very wellllllll! Let's continue.

KATHERINE I don't want the kid!

VERA Of course we want her, but we have to make sure she wasn't taken from her family against her will!

*Vera takes a notebook out of her pocket. She jots something down some. Katherine sits on her stool, thoughtful and sad. She pulls the lever under the stool and shifts down, then pulls it back all the way up.*

THE HOST It is the parents who belong to the children, not vice versa. If the child is here, there must be a good reason.

ATTILIO Maybe her parents were simply poor and were forced to give her up for adoption to ensure her a better future.

VERA I want to be sure that the biological family agreed to give the daughter up for adoption. What about Sami? The little brother? Who is he? Where is he?

ATTILIO For all we know, he could be a byproduct of her own fabrications.

VERA And Paki? Paki is supposed to be Sami's toy.

THE HOST Do you want to interrogate a stuffed bunny? Let's do it. Paki. Paki, where did you come from?

MASHO Paki is magic. He comes from home.

THE HOST Paki can you show me on the map where your home?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Paki do you know the name of the country where you come from?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Paki who is Sami?

MASHO He is Masho's little brother.

THE HOST Is Sami older or younger than Masho?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Is Sami staying with his Mom and Dad?

MASHO Yes, he is at home.

THE HOST With Mom and Dad?

MASHO ...

THE HOST Is Sami with Mom and Dad?

MASHO ... YES.

THE HOST What is Mom's name?

MASHO ...  
THE HOST What is Daddy's name?  
MASHO ...  
VERA Did your parents know you were coming here? Did they say goodbye to you?  
MASHO ...  
VERA It's important, try to remember. Did your parents tell you that you were coming here?/

*The Host snatches Paki from Masho's hands. The child screams to get him back.*

THE HOST Enough! I'll be asking questions here. As you can see, there is no proof that Masha was kidnapped. Enough with the conspiracies. Furthermore, one doesn't have to be an orphan to be put up for adoption. Sometimes, even puppies' owners drop them off at the pound.  
VERA Kath!

*Katherine cries. Masho sneaks into the audience and looks for her Mom and Dad. Masho lingers longer by the white people.*

THE HOST Kathrine, would you like a glass of water?  
ATTILIO O my goodness! Katherine, don't beat yourself up.  
VERA Kath, honey, please. You'll see, we'll soon have a family.  
THE HOST (*affected*) Dear Kathrine, we have reasons to believe that Masha will be better off with the winner of "We're the right ones" than with her family, who gave her up for adoption. It's for the child's sake, then finally she can forget about her past and focus on her new beginning.  
A family with a parenting model already set in place and siblings to play with might be the answer. Or an eco-friendly loft.  
Now now, no need to cry.  
KATHERINE Vera, that child deserves a mom and dad. Nay, she deserves her own parents, since she apparently does have parents.  
VERA Kath, we don't actually know if she has parents. How can be sure? What if she does have parents, but their socioeconomic condition is so dire that they actually decided to separate from the child for her sake.  
KATHERINE Vee, I don't know. Maybe we should think about long-distance adoption. Maybe we should help her stay with the family she already has.

VERA What about *us!*? We've been talking about adoption all our lives, now suddenly you start talking about long-distance adoption. What's next? Shall our Christmas card show an undernourished child with another family? And maybe even build a well for drinking water in the village?

KATHERINE Vee... Do you ever think about later?

VERA What do you mean?

KATHERINE Suppose we get the kid: What if she doesn't want us? What if she thinks we are inadequate? What if she gets bullied. Or maybe she'll be a bully because she doesn't feel accepted. What if the other moms won't want us in the parents-teacher association /

VERA That last one, I'm really not worried about /

KATHERINE What if she disrespects the teacher and we get summoned by the principal to talk about our oh so troublesome daughter.

VERA That can happen to anybody. I mean, look at our godson... Mom is an English teacher, dad is a lawyer, the pinnacle of family perfection. Yet, he decides he wants to be an influencer. So what? That's okay too. It's the kid's decision/

KATHERINE What I guess I'm saying is that maybe we used to imagine a daughter to bake Christmas cookies with, and instead...she'll be into Hockey... which is okay too, I guess...

VERA Yeah...!!

KATHERINE Maybe one day she'll slam the door behind herself and go back to her country without telling us....

Maybe she'll find a boy we don't like, and we won't know what to do, and we'll take her to a therapist, and she won't talk to us anymore.

Maybe she'll sell the electric car we'll buy for her because she needs drug money.

Maybe she won't be happy with us.

Do you ever think about that? What if she is not happy with us?

VERA She might become an alcoholic and steal our money while we are at work. And never come home again.

KATHERINE Oh God... She'll tell us that she feels unhappy, inadequate, and misunderstood....

VERA ... estranged. She'll tell us she doesn't acknowledge us as moms, that she feels empty inside /

KATHERINE Oh God, maybe she doesn't want two moms. Or she'll want to go look for her biological mother.

VERA We will explain to her that love knows no limits. That it has no rules. Love is love.

KATHERINE And she'll tell us that she loves being a bully.

VERA What if we can't buy her anything to fill her emptiness?

KATHERINE As if "We can't buy her happiness"?

Yet, if you listen to her, it seems easy: She wants a Mom and a Dad. Which she already has.

VERA Enough, that's enough! One can never know what one's child is going to get into. One tries to do one's best, do the right things, like throw themed birthday parties. One can never know. Love has to be enough.

KATHERINE A while ago I heard about an adopted boy who took his own life....

*Odd silence.*

VERA What if everything will go well? And Masha should be just fine?  
But where is Masha?

*The contestants notice that Masho is missing. Attilio, Vera, and Kath search the studio. Paki is abandoned on stage.*

THE HOST (*disguising embarrassment*) Dear audience, tonight you have an opportunity to give our Masha a better future. Here, we can change someone's destiny and make it splendid and full of love! Vote now! The winner will be announced after the commercial break.

*Katherine sees the Masho and points at her. The contestants and The Host try to grab her. As if a spell was cast, the lights go off and everyone - except Masho - fall asleep. Masho retrieves Paki.*

MASHO Rabbit eyes, drooling slugs, turn The Host into gummy worm!

*The Host swells out of proportion and bursts into a shower of candy.*

*BACKGROUND – SPARTACUS KHACHATURIAN, ADAGIO*

MASHO Dear Sami,  
I am Masho. I am eight years old. When I grow up I will be an explorer. I will

travel the world and come find you. I will call myself Masho The Explorer, or maybe I will be a travel blogger. Sorry I took Paki, I needed your magic bunny. I miss you so much. Sometimes I am afraid I will forget you, then I think of the games we used to play together. I think about your laughter and cries. I sing our songs. Are you a grown up now? Do you still love me? Sami, do you remember that you have a sister? Do you remember that we were a family for a while?

*Masho eats a candy.*

MASHO I close my eyes and remember all of you: I hear Dad's laughter, and Mom's singing as she makes breakfast, and your tantrums. I remember Mom telling us that the stars would protect us, and that wherever we were, we'd always see the same sky. So, at night, when the sky is clear, I look for the big wagon. Seven stars. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven.

*Masho lies on the floor. Candies falling from the starry ceiling raining gummy candy.*

*Dark.*