

Uncontentable

“*Chi troppo vuole nulla stringe,*” she said, reciting another proverb in her millionth attempt to convince me.

Fucking fantastic message to tell somebody you claim to love: *Ask for too much and you'll end with nothing.*

“Even my name,” she said. “I *am* Felicita. I’m your happiness, only you don’t see what’s in front of your eyes.”

My problem lay in my nature, she reasoned. I was *incontentabile*. Woe to anyone who tried to make me happy, since I was incapable of contenting myself with what I had.

I turned cruel, and hated myself for it. When she patted my face, I said she touched as though she had bought her hands at a flea market without an owner’s manual.

“I should start calling you Icarus,” she said. “Pining for freedom, imagining it will bring you the bliss of passion. At our age, passion doesn’t matter. You had passion with your wife, and look how that ended. Passion with your artist friend. Don’t you see? All you got was burned.”

I tried to be convinced, until the night I drove alone from the coast, back toward Siena. Mozart on the radio. “*Bei Männern welche Liebe fühlen,*” a duet from *The Magic Flute*. Pamina and Papageno, singing a gorgeous childlike melody about the love they craved. They weren’t even a couple, just two people who understood each other.

The dark road blurred. I realized I was crying, thinking *I can’t live like this.*

So the next day I put on my wax and feathers. I flapped, rising from the ground.

My wings didn’t melt. I flew off into the glorious sky, soaring toward Papagena.