Casting and Broken Dreams (or How To Overcome Professional Rejection)

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Not long ago I met a little boy who loved acting. Whenever he could, he put on a different costume and went out to the stages of his imagination to play roles before audiences that did not exist, but that applauded him, got excited, yelled at him and gave him bouquets of flowers at the end of each non-existent performance.

His biggest dream was to become **a professional actor** . Then he would travel the world to appear in the most famous theaters and would captivate people of all faiths, of all races and of all ages. He would catch them with his voice and hypnotize them with his movements and then help them to leave behind their problems, their anguish and their pain. For a moment he would invite you to live with him the story of that boy who challenges the whole world in order to fulfill his dream of dancing ballet, or that of that man with a bruised and disfigured face who hides like a ghost among the corridors of the city. opera, hoping to see once more the soprano who one night stole his heart.

The little boy was not looking for fame or money. He acted because he was happy to do so. His dream was purer than any other. Truer. Aware that it is not enough to wish something for it to come true, in silence and without anyone noticing, he began to work. How many times could he raise his hand to be

considered in the staging of the room. He enrolled in the school theater workshop. He practiced his dance steps. With all determination he fought for the main roles and when he got them, he memorized lines and muttered them locked in his room until they seemed perfect.

Finding it difficult to get to the key of a song, Mom suggested that she take singing lessons. Every Tuesday, when he left school, he went with a teacher who little by little taught him to tame and understand her voice.

He was moved to see his parents cry in shock one summer morning as he played **Simba in *The Lion King*** the day after his eleventh birthday. He then asked them to sign him up for a theater workshop on Saturdays, taught by two professional actors. On his rest day he woke up at dawn anxious, unable to wait for the sun to rise. He would prepare to be ready and cross the entire city with Dad, always making sure to get to each rehearsal on time, because someone had once told him that discipline was part of the secret to being better.

The little boy did everything in his power to get closer to his dream.

The opportunity to fulfill it appeared one afternoon like any other, while he was going over the steps of a choreography in his head. Mom explained that, because he was part of the Saturday theater company, he had been called to an audition. His teachers had acquired the rights to mount Mexico *13: El Musical* , a Broadway play, and they were looking for child actors. The little boy’s emotion lit up the whole house like a flash.

March 14 would be a holy day. During the following weeks everything revolved around the *casting* . She asked her teacher for help putting together the song she would perform. On his own he rehearsed a choreography over and over again. Not knowing what the audition would be like, the boy anticipated:

over and over again he imagined the big day trying to tame the nervous insects that accumulated and fluttered in his abdomen.

March 14 finally arrived and although the morning seemed eternal, the boy suddenly found himself waiting for his turn in the crowded lobby of a theater. More than 400 people would audition that day. He was the smallest of all. He looked from one side to the other, fearing that the fortress might slip away. I was nervous. Too. He heard his name and knew that the moment had come. He entered a dark room containing a huge piano. Kind, his teachers greeted him and asked him to sing. Then they informed him that he would not be part of the project.

In a matter of minutes the audition was over.

What followed was a broken heart. The first in the life of a little boy who dreams of being an actor. A pain in the chest proportional to the effort made. What hurt the most was the brevity of the moment after dedicated preparation. He felt like he had been disqualified without hearing enough. For the first time he was facing a professional stumbling block. For the first time he realized how brave he would have to be if he really wanted to achieve his goal.

On the way home, Mom talked to him. He explained that just because he wasn’t selected didn’t make him a bad actor. That’s how auditions were. Rather, it hadn’t matched what the producers were looking for for the role. In addition, he was younger than the call itself indicated and the simple fact of having participated in his first professional audition was a huge triumph.

She told him that he had done really well and that she was very proud of him.

The little boy came back sad, but with his head held high.

When I asked him how it was, he only knew how to give me a big

hug. I thought then of writing this little text to him. To explain that sooner or later we will all be rejected. To tell you that along the way, many people, moments and situations will make you doubt yourself. Of his goal, of his talent. From the place where your dreams are really sheltered. I wrote to explain that obstacles and monsters will suddenly appear that you never imagined could exist. That the most dangerous inhabit it and that they are the ones that could really put everything at risk. That there will be days of doubt. Of despair. Moments in which it will seem more sensible to forget the scenes and walk on safer paths.

That the dream will still be there: always awake, always waiting for it. With the absolute power to make him smile, to exorcise fear, to take him to magical lands if he decides to believe and embrace him as he has done to this day: **with the faith of a child** . I wrote this so you know that you don't need auditions of any kind to play the part you already have. The most wonderful and unique: being himself.

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