

THE ROSARY

Written by

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Based on the short fiction novel "IL Rosario" by
Claudia Marinelli

FADE IN:

1 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, WINDOW SILL - DAY 1

From the window sill we see a beautiful building courtyard closed within four walls. In the middle there are beautiful plants with flowers.

In the middle of a pathway, that links the four doors to the different parts of the building, we see the hallway opening.

A VACUUM CLEANER, can be heard, and THE SNAPPING OF HUNG CLOTHES, TWO WOMEN TALKING from their windows, and a FAR SIREN.

CLARA (30) gets out of the hallway and walks along the pathway towards the "A" stair door. She stops in front of the door and buzzes a button.

The front door RINGS, just before THE RINGING OF A CELL PHONE.

INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE - DAY

Clara enters the apartment through the half open door, and closes it. Lazy morning sunbeams, through the entrance glass doors, slide on the white marble of the floor.

ZIA MARIA (75) whose dark circles under her eyes, and the white roots of her hair spoil her good looks, has the phone to her hear. She beckons at Clara.

ZIA MARIA
Yes, right, I'll be waiting for
you. Thank you!

Zia Maria hangs up and hugs Clara.

ZIA MARIA (CONT'D)
Thank you Clara for coming. The
parish priest wants to come back.

CLARA
Really? Why?

ZIA MARIA
I don't know, to prey, to give his
last salute to Gianni.

Zia Maria puts the phone on a shelf.

ZIA MARIA (CONT'D)
And Gianni has nothing in his
hands, the people from the funeral
home told me that--

CLARA

But that's not important--

ZIA MARIA

Don Paolo will notice it right away! I have to find a rosary.

Zia Maria enters a room. Clara slowly follows her. Just outside the door she leans on the wall, first with her shoulder, then with her head.

The DOOR BELL RINGS. Clara stands straight and walks to the door. She opens it.

WENDY(80) walks in with doubtful steps, she wears a long dress, and a huge bag hangs from the arm.

Zia Maria walks out of the room to meet her.

WENDY

Maria, Così presto (so soon), my God! I am so sorry.

Her heavy English accent can't hide the emotions in her voice. The two women hug each other in an very affectionate way. Their eyes are watery.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Io ho visto te (I saw you), the other day, con (with) Gianni, I could have never imagined-

ZIA MARIA

Eh, I know the situation just deteriorated in a flash!

Zia Maria wipes her tears with a hand as she walks to the bedroom followed by Wendy and Clara. Zia Maria and Wendy enter the room, Clara hesitates for an instant, she breathes deeply, and then gets in.

INT. ZIA MARIA'A APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Zio Gianni's still body lays on the bed. He's dressed in a dark suit, the empty hands are crossed on his chest.

Clara looks at him intensely: the ridiculous cloth tied around the jaw and knotted at the top of the head, can't scrape away the calm and stoic expression of the face.

Zia Maria helps Wendy to sit on a chair, and whispers into Clara's ear.

ZIA MARIA

I don't have any rosary. And I don't want to deal with that problem now!

CLARA

Then, forget about it--

ZIA MARIA

I can't, the priest will notice.

Maria exits the room. Clara lifts her eyes to the ceiling. Wendy turns to her.

WENDY

I'm Wendy, who are you?

CLARA

I am Clara, Zia Maria and Alberto niece's, Alberto her brother.

WENDY

Oh, yes! Io giocavo con Albert (I used to play with Albert).

Clara is puzzled. Zia Maria comes back into the room. She sits on the bed.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Come sta il tuo papà? (How's your dad?)

CLARA

Grandpa is ok.

ZIA MARIA

I couldn't find anything.

WENDY

What's the matter, Maria? Che c'è?

ZIA MARIA

The priest is coming, Gianni has nothing in his hands, not even a rosary! I don't know what to do.

WENDY

A rosary? I have one, bellissimo (very beautiful). I'll get it!

Wendy gets up and exits the room, Zia Maria looks at her and then at Clara.

CLARA

I think she wants to go to her apartment to get the rosary.

ZIA MARIA

Ah! Go with her, she's absent minded, she forgets where she lives. Her apartment is in the other building.

Clara hides a smile, and she gets up unwillingly.

CLARA
Mrs. Wendy, wait, I'm coming with
you.

WENDY (O.C.)
Brilliant! Let's go!

4 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT LANDING - MOMENTS LATER 4

Zia Maria's front door opens. Wendy gets onto the landing with shuffling steps. Clara follows her and shuts the door.

Wendy reaches the elevator, Clara pushes the calling button. A SCRAP IRON NOISE, over their heads, announces the elevator.

Wendy stares at Clara, is she serious or hostile?

WENDY
Who are you?

CLARA
I am Clara, Alberto's
granddaughter.

WENDY
Brilliant! Io giocavo con Albert (I
used to play with Albert) in
London, quando ero piccola (when I
was a child).

CLARA
But grandpa never left Italy.

As Wendy talks to Clara she pulls on the elevator door's handle without turning it, the elevator doesn't open. Wendy shakes the door that finally opens.

WENDY
Nonsense! Io giocavo hide and seek
con lui (I used to play hide and
seek with him), how do you say
that?... Nascondino.

The two women enter the elevator.

5 EXT. BUILDING COURTYARD - DAY 5

Clara and Wendy get out of the building door into the courtyard. Wendy stops and looks at Clara.

WENDY
Tu hai beautiful hair (you got nice
hair like Albert), come Albert.

The two women walk to cross the courtyard. Wendy holds on Clara's arm, Clara is surprised.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Tu sai quanti anni io sono qui? (Do you know how many years I have been living here?)

CLARA

No.

WENDY

Cinquantatré (53), exactly come (like) Maria! Io venuta per (I came for) holiday, e incontrato (and I met) Antonio, we fell in love, capisci (understand)?

CLARA

You fell in love and you stayed.

Wendy stops and smiles at Clara.

WENDY

Yes! He was handsome, and kind, very Italian, very passionate.

Clara looks confused: she didn't understand anything!

WENDY (CONT'D)

Lui bello, gentile, molto italiano, molto passionato! (He was Handsome, kind, very Italian, very passionate)

CLARA

Appassionato. (passionate)

The two women walk again.

WENDY

Yes! He was intense. Io lasciato (I left) Albert to marry Antonio and then came Joseph, bellissimo.

CLARA

Ah, you got a child.

WENDY

Exactly! Lui in Australia, adesso. (He is in Australia now)

CLARA

And do you visit him?

WENDY

Tu hai figli (do you have children)?

CLARA

No, not yet.

Wendy stops again.

WENDY

And you are so pretty! What are you waiting for?

Clara looks at her: she might have understood just one word.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Che aspettati? (what are you waiting for?)

CLARA

It's complicated... it's not easy--

WENDY

Nonsense!

Wendy walks away with faster steps as if she were a little angry. Clara is confused but then catches up with her.

WENDY

It's not complicated! Ti innamorì, ti sposi e hai un figlio. (You fall in love, you get married and you get a child)

The two women stop in front of the building B door.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Now, my keys!

Wendy rummages into the bag. She takes out some reading glasses, then a scarf, a big wallet, paper tissues and gives everything to Clara. She rummages again and takes out a huge set of keys.

She tries to open with the wrong key, then tries again with a second key, the right one and opens the door. She throws the keys into the bag and turns to Clara, she opens the bag wide.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You drop that.

Clara throws everything into the bag, they enter the building.

6

INT. WENDY'S APARTMENT, ENTRANCE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

6

Wendy and Clara get into the small entrance filled with furniture and pictures, badly lighted by a dusty chandelier.

CLARA
Is Joseph married?

WENDY
Of course!

Wendy takes a framed picture on a table and gives it to Clara. Clara looks at it. The picture is very modern.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Lui ha due bambini (he got two children): Lucy and Jack.
Beautiful!

CLARA
You're a happy grandmother, then.

WENDY
Very happy.

Wendy shows Clara a chair.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Sit. Aspetta (wait).

Clara sits, Wendy disappears behind a door. As Clara observes the many old photos, with two very modern ones among them, she hears Wendy slamming cabinet doors, opening drawers, shuffling on the floor.

The pictures show: a young Wendy and Antonio walking in the street, Wendy with a young child on the beach, and probably Wendy and Antonio's parents.

The NOISE OF A BROKEN GLASS distracts Clara.

WENDY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Shit!

CLARA
Wendy, are ui ok?

Clara gets up, what should she do? She peeks through the half closed door. There is a complete silence.

The door opens and Wendy gets out with a rosary in the hands.

WENDY
I found it, let's go!

She opens the front door and beckons Clara to get out.

7 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, ENTRANCE - 10 MINUTES LATER 7

Zia Maria opens the door, Clara and Wendy get in.

CLARA
Are we on time?

ZIA MARIA
Yes, yes.

Zia Maria shuts the door. Wendy shows the rosary to her.

WENDY
This is the rosary, ti piace (do
you like it)?

ZIA MARIA
Very much, thank you.

Wendy walks with shuffled steps to the bedroom with the
rosary in her hands. Zia Maria and Clara follow.

ZIA MARIA (CONT'D)
Thank you, without you--

CLARA
Look, she told me all her life: her
marriage, her son in Australia, the
grandchildren--

Zia Maria holds Clara's arm very tight. Clara stops.

ZIA MARIA
In Australia? Her son died years
ago in a car accident.

Clara covers her mouth with her hand, she's dismayed.

8 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY 8

Wendy puts the rosary in Gianni's hands. She sits on a chair.

Zia Maria gets into the bedroom and wipes a tear away. Clara
follows. Wendy seems to look into the void.

The FRONT DOOR RINGS. Clara exits the room.

9 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER 9

Clara walks to the front door and opens it.

DON PAOLO (30) tall and lean, *clergyman* dark shirt, stands on
the landing. He holds a missal.

DON PAOLO
Good morning, I am Don Paolo.

CLARA
Nice to meet you, I am Maria's
niece.

Don Paolo gets in. Zia Maria walks towards him.

ZIA MARIA
Good morning, thank you for coming.

Don Paolo shakes Maria's hand, does he have watery eyes? He holds Maria's hand with care.

DON PAOLO
I am very sorry.

Zia Maria wipes a tear away and walks towards the bedroom. Don Paolo and Clara follow her, they all enter the bedroom.

10 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 10

Don Paolo, Zia Maria and Clara stand near the bed.

DON PAOLO
He was such a nice brother, we'll miss him.

ZIA MARIA
He was gone so fast.

DON PAOLO
I know, it's God's will.

ZIA MARIA
He told me when I had to call you, the other day. He said: "Maria, it's time". He figured out his time was near.

DON PAOLO
Gianni accepted whatever life gave him, he was an example for all of us.

ZIA MARIA
I'm happy he enjoyed his grand daughters for a few years, and some time off as a retired person.

DON PAOLO
Yes.

ZIA MARIA
He was a wonderful grandfather.

Zia Maria's words die in the silence of the room. Don Paolo takes his missal.

DON PAOLO
Let's pray.

Zia Maria, Wendy and Antonio join their hands. Clara crosses her arms.

DON PAOLO (CONT'D)

Our Lord, open your arms in Your mercy and welcome in Your peace Gianni, in the hope he will one day, reunite with her long life wife, in Your love. For Christ our Lord, amen.

ZIA MARIA, WENDY, ANTONIO, CLARA

Amen.

Don Paolo shuts the missal. There is a complete silence for a few minutes, then Don Paolo turns to Zia Maria.

DON PAOLO

I can't stay longer.

ZIA MARIA

Of course.

Don Paolo exits the room, followed by everyone.

11 INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER 11

Zia Maria walks Don Paolo to the front door, she opens it. The priest gets out. Zia Maria closes the door and turns around.

Wendy and Clara stand near the bedroom door. Zia Maria leans to the door with her back and hides her face with her hands.

Clara and Wendy walk near her.

CLARA

Zia Maria, just sit down for a moment.

Zia Maria chokes her sobs.

WENDY

I am so sorry!

Wendy takes her friend's arm, they walk to another door.

INT. ZIA MARIA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is bright. There is some family furniture and two couches.

Zia Maria sits on a couch, Clara sits next to her on one side, Wendy sits on the other couch.

Zia Maria sobs. Clara takes her arms. Wendy holds her hand.

A car HORNS outside the windows and interrupts the sobs.

ZIA MARIA

I just wanted to say, Clara, that yesterday I didn't even notice you. I was so confused.

CLARA

Of course! Maybe I was out of place here, maybe you wanted to be alone with Zio Gianni--

ZIA MARIA

No, I was glad you were here, you called everyone, I didn't know what to do, you know--

Sobs stop Zia Maria from talking.

ZIA MARIA (CONT'D)

I just felt that I had to be near him, in silence, because he was so private, I felt it was the only thing I had to do.

WENDY

Tu hai fatto bene (You did good)

CLARA

Yes, you did the right thing.

ZIA MARIA

And now, I have to do all these things ... silly things, the priest the condolences--

WENDY

And the rosary.

Zia Maria looks into Wendy's big eyes.

ZIA MARIA

See.. I... I don't know how to live without Gianni; now.

Zia Maria looks at Clara, then at Wendy.

WENDY

I know.

ZIA MARIA

I don't know what to do. How can I live?

Clara holds Zia Maria's arm, Wendy fondles her hand.

CLARA

I love you, Zia.

WENDY
Yes, we love you.

Zia Maria's looks at Wendy.

ZIA MARIA
How should I live?

Wendy looks at Maria's hand and keeps fondling it.

ZIA MARIA (CONT'D)
What should I do?

Wendy keeps fondling Maria's, then she looks at Maria with wide opened eyes.

WENDY
Just forget.

Zia Maria looks into Wendy's big eyes, does she see the abyss in them? Then a faint smile appears on Wendy's lips, and a flash of a knowing look.

The DOOR BELL RINGS.

FADE OUT