

Third Part
Transplant

Chapter One

The Important and a stab in the soul

Inside Hospital Important everything was modern, with a vast array of economic, technical and human resources.

The dialysis liquid was prepared with highly purified water; therefore the infections caused by pyrogens were no longer present.

Next to each patient, they had a device that was as small as useful, with it they measured the level of coagulation of the blood, which enable them to rapidly take the corrective actions needed in each case, and hence the problems for excessive or insufficient coagulation were no longer present either.

These ones and other technological advances of the Important were implemented a while later in the European, but to honor of the truth, not every service was superior.

For example, at the European the check-in and check-out timetable of hemodialysis was respected. I remember I would arrive at 6:30 a.m and at 7:00 they would connect me (alongside everyone else who was at that shift) and disconnect me at 11:00. At the Important, though, it was common to have to wait, sometimes until two hours. So, to the four hours of treatment you had to add two more of waiting.

At the European they raised the patients' consciousness about not using their relatives as sticks; we had to try to be self-sufficient in spite of the sickness, to work and go alone to hemodialysis, getting there by bus, train or whatever mean of transport that was necessary. At the Important the same behavior was recommended but without insisting much on it, therefore, in actual facts, the access hall to hemodialysis would fill with relatives that were waiting for someone, chatting between them always about the same themes: the blood pressure, the potassium, the urea. Then they would enter the room to be with the patient for a while and kept on with the

same themes in an endless succession of repetitions that I judge as obsessive and harmful. Lastly, most of the patients would go back in ambulances whose cost was paid by the health insurance companies.

— What need do I have to travel uncomfortably by busses, spending money of my own when I can do it by a free-of-charge ambulance, comfortably and to the very door of my house? — The patients said.

The argument was irrefutable, especially in the case of those who lived far away and didn't get out of hemodialysis in good conditions so as to travel by their own means, but not all cases were like that. Besides the problem came when at the exit of hemodialysis, you had to wait for the ambulance up to two hours sometimes, so the day would turned into:

2 hours of waiting to start treatment

4 hours of treatment

2 hours waiting for the ambulance

8 hours in all

Don't you think this was living for hemodialysis when it should be the other way around, to undergo hemodialysis in order to live?

I knew I would do this treatment for a little while at the Important since the preparations for my transplant were rapidly moving forward. Meanwhile, due to the technological advances that this hospital had I was saying goodbye to hemodialysis without almost any inconvenient; except for a sad day when unexpectedly, I received a stab in the soul.

A new patient entered in the room, Josecito, only seven years old, he was placed right in front of me. Awful scenes I witnessed since that moment. The screams of Josecito begging his mother to save him, to not allow anyone to prick him, to take him out of there... It was a devastating picture which anguished me up to the point of tears. Everyone in the room suffered similar feelings. What would Josecito's mother feel like? We found out he was not going to be transplanted soon due to medical reasons but they firmly believed they could do it in the future.

The truth is that from that moment, my treatment transformed into a punishment. Josecito wasn't adapting, the scenes repeated themselves, screams, weeping, supplications, runs, sedatives, nerves' crispation...

This wouldn't end here, I'll tell you later.

Chapter Two

He woke up and freaked out (told by “CS”)

For a while I'll tell the story in José's place.

When the so longed for moment of the transplant came, the days turned out to be endlessly brief in comparison with the almost twelve years that had happened to José, forever fighting renal insufficiency and all its direct or indirect consequences. Everything speed up in front of José's and his families eyes. Finally, the transplant was produced.

The doctors forgot to warn José, about how would his wakening would be after the general anaesthesia, a new experience for him. He felt really cold, he wanted to say it but his tongue kept getting stuck and at the same time he saw everything distorted around him, as if it was out of focus. Somebody gave him a good piece of advice that he got to hear: “Don't fight the anaesthesia, don't make an effort to wake up, sleep, sleep”.

Later on he came back to his senses, in a more natural way, but he found himself facing a situation, that regardless how absolutely normal it was, it took him by surprise because nobody had told him about it either. He was filled with wires, rubbers and hoses everywhere. José freaked out very much and asked startled:

— What happened? Am I okay? Was I transplanted? Is my mother okay? Why do I have so many stuffs on me?

At first, as a response José heard a “bip... bip... bip...”; the room was glooming, someone with a chinstrap, cap and gloves, that is to say covered to his head, only with his eyes uncovered, came closer and due to his voice he identified the nurse, he talked to José and calmed him down.

This way, things got clearer. It was night already. He had a serum placed in a neck vein (the jugular) so as not to immobilize any arm.

The liquids draining from the wound came out by a little hose named “drainage” and they were accumulated in a recipient which hung at the other side of the bed. The wire-net he had on his chest was the one which connected to the monitoring device and that device was the one making the characteristic “bip... bip... bip...” that José was hearing and which stayed with him for a while.

The nurse also informed him that his mother was all right, that the surgery had gone well and that now they just had to wait for everything to evolve okay.

Chapter Three

The first “rejection”

The transplanted organ is always rejected by the recipient organism because the defense mechanisms of the recipient identify it as something “foreign”, introduced in the body they must protect. Therefore, the defense mechanisms send “antibodies’ armies” to attack, reject what they believe to be the “invader”.

This dreaded “rejection” is avoided by supplying drugs to the patient (called immunosuppressant) which decrease the quantity of antibodies. As the antibodies’ army is not created, the attack is not produced, the rejection is not produced.

As the days go by, the recipient organism gets used to the presence of the transplanted organ, they start harmonizing together and little by little the quality of “stranger”, “invader” decreases. This is the opportunity to reduce the doses of the immunosuppressant drugs and carefully watch over the antibodies.

If the antibodies become bellicose against the transplanted organ, the immunosuppressant drugs must be increased.

On the other hand, when the antibodies are peaceful, the doses can be reduced.

To the more medication, the less antibodies, the less rejection risk. However, with fewer antibodies, the organism is cut down on its defenses and is exposed to get diseases without being able to defend itself properly. This is why José’s room was completely isolated from the exterior; the ones who got in had to do it in camisoles, shoe’s cover, gloves, chinstrap and caps (all sterilized); nothing from the exterior could be brought in, like magazines, newspapers, biscuits, even the food was sterilized, all with the sole intention of avoiding microbes inside the environment where José was staying with so low defenses.

In spite of all this precautions, something wasn’t right.

Hours went by and José couldn't pee.

They took him to test him in Gamma Room. José didn't know what that was about but right there the big doctors were standing, Doctors Policla and Catri, Doctor Maschi and others; everyone was looking at a console filled with television screens, where José's new kidney could be seen in colours.

The truth struck hard. There was a rejection.

The doctors left the room with a grim face. Doctor Maschi before doing the same, took José's hand and told him:

— We are going to fight it José, not everything is lost, you have to help with a good mood, we'll do our thing, and God will say...

This attitude from Doctor Maschi was a balm to José. He still remembers her eyes, because due to the clothes they all worn only eyes José saw.

What is the anti-rejection treatment?

If the rejection was produced, it was because the immunosuppressant medication wasn't enough to avoid the creation of an antibodies' army which attacked the transplanted kidney.

That antibodies' army had to be urgently distracted and its strength had to be reduced before it could seriously and irretrievably harm the kidney.

The procedure consisted of introducing alongside the regular serum, a horse serum solution. The horse serum solution is to the human body much more "foreign" than the transplanted organ, and so, the antibodies' army stops attacking the kidney and engages in a real battle with the horse serum. Of course the horse serum keeps entering, drop by drop, restlessly. The antibodies falter against an invader who does not cease to enter the bloodstream. When they have no more strength to attack the horse serum, they don't have it to attack the kidney either. The rejection is overcome.

All this internal battle does not go unnoticed to the patient. Irrepressible convulsions shake the whole body; teeth shiver; everything is so intense that the monitoring wires are detached from the thorax; but it's better to hold on, you have to hold on, it's just a few minutes and the antibodies' army will be decimated and the "rejection" will cease.

I believe it had only been ten minutes, then the nurse (whose name was Zodiac) introduced another medication in the serum and as if by magic, everything happened. A comforting warm run through José's whole body, convulsions ceased, just like the teeth stopped shivering. The battle had ended and this "rejection" as well.

Chapter Four

The scares continue

Hemodialysis again, until the kidney starts working. The treatment was carried out in the same room where I was staying, with handheld equipment that was particularly big in that time; it occupied the entire free space in the room, up to the point that the staff (from the different specialties) had to do pirouettes to move around.

Let's see a little more of how was a day for José, whose life became jollier when they brought him his radio (properly sterilized). He would listen to music and news until very late hours at night. In the morning, really early, his profound sleep was interrupted by the lights that were suddenly turned on and started the first chapter of his day:

— Good morning! Good morning! Phlebotomiiiiist! What a sleepy-head, let it not be said, anyone would say you've been partying all night! Eeeeeeeh? Well, well, it's done, I'll draw a little blood out of you and I'll leave, although it's not so little I must say, because you have an impressive battery of analysis! Well, it's done, see how fast I did? Phlebotomists like me are not found everywhere! Well... I'll let you sleep... see you laaaater.

The lights turn off. The door closes. Back to the glooming room and the silence with the "bip... bip... bip..." of the monitoring device.

When he could finally fall asleep, the lights were suddenly turned on again. In the second chapter of the day, it was turn for the thorax radiography. A thousand vicissitudes to set the equipment.

- Move the serum!
- Close that door!
- Where is the socket?
- Be careful here... and there... and in the other side...
- Help me to sit the patient

When the radiography was done, they would leave with the same problems they have when they entered. José was left alone again, now with daylight and the always present company of the “bip... bip... bip...”

A little later, the third chapter came, with breakfast, and later on, the fourth one with the entrance of one or two doctors who would check on the wound and made a puncture on the kidney, that means to prick it with a thin and long needle and draw liquid out, everything with supreme aseptic care.

A short interlude and the fifth chapter began: hemodialysis. The hours of the treatment were a break for José. He cheerfully chatted with the technician about irrelevant stuff, they would joke about everything, laugh at how bizarre the dialysis equipment was, about the chapters of the day, the choripanes that José was planning to eat when everything ended, etc., etc.

Sixth chapter: lunch, which sometimes coincide with hemodialysis.

The seventh one usually corresponded to Gamma Room. The transfer to that place was cumbersome; he was almost carried with a scuba on his face in order to avoid catching any disease by breathing the air of the hallways. Once in the Gamma Room, he was placed lay down, under a big device, he was injected a radioactive liquid and he had to be as still like that for over an hour, while the machine registered everything that was happening to the kidney. José used that time to take a little nap. A new application of another radioactive liquid, a few more minutes in observation and the great operation to go back to his room began.

Eighth chapter, the afternoon snack time and one day a “mysterious” ninth chapter was added, starting with the operation transfer. José asked if he was being taken to Gamma Room again, they told him no, without any other explanation. Although this one was a very common attitude in medical environments, José hadn’t got use to it. He disliked them taking him without being told where or what were they going to do to him; when they got annoyed by his questions and then telling him everything but the truth. I repeat it is a very frequent attitude and it’s present in the most common things such as taking the fever or the blood pressure and refusing to tell the results to the patients or their relatives.

— Hi “CS”!

— What are you doing here José? Hadn't you let me tell a bit of your story?

— Yes, but I couldn't resist the temptation to interfere when I heard your narration questioned things just like I knew how to do it in other opportunities, when you from your highness always took care of stopping my anger.

— I recognize José, the benefit of reacting to the unfair, however, anger usually doesn't solve anything, and even more it can harm your liver.

— That's the other thing. I interfered in your narration because I wanted to point out one example. When the Great Professor (years ago) indicated me the studies I had to do in a particular laboratory, the results were sent to me in a “close envelope” addressed to the Great Professor. Those results were MINE because it was MY blood and because I had paid for them with my own money, nevertheless I had no right on them, I had to pick up the envelope and take it to the Great Professor without committing the indiscreet act of “peeking”. This was an unbearable alienation of yourself!

— The medical professionals argue that not all patients are in conditions to correctly evaluate the results and can fall into a serious depression if they found something they consider “bad”. Therefore, they would be protecting them by not allowing them to know the results of the studies.

— It's a possibility, but in many cases they do it for other not so unselfish reasons... My opinions are usually very harsh to the medical professionals because I feel the need of pointing out the mistakes, of not hiding them so as not to be his accomplice. This critical attitude does not disable me to recognize, admire and thank the good doctors that exist too. I had the pleasure of meeting some of them, like doctors Esteban, Policla, Catri and Maschi, among others. True men of Science, honorable, dedicated with deep Love to their profession. This kind of people who don't fall in attitudes as the ones I question. Those attitudes are the proper ones of mediocre people. For example, out of the many times I had been hospitalized at the European, due to pyrogens or when they made me the fistula, I remember that one time they took me in a stretcher, relatively immobilized because of the serum, completely naked, covered only by a sheet; they left me in the hall, the stretcher-bearer left; the minutes went by, camisoles with legs that came and

went, they weren't even looking at me, until one of them stopped and asked me:

— What are you waiting for?

— I have no idea.

— Hey you... —another camisole called— what case is this one?

— I don't know, I think he is from hemodialysis.

Then he moved the sheet, saw the fistula in my arm, touched it and left, forgetting to cover me again with the sheet.

I remained like that, no documents, no chain in my neck, no wedding ring, naked, exposed, feeling cold.

A feeling of helplessness, powerlessness, in a complete dependency, being handle like a thing, with no right to anything.

— It's a bone of contention, José. Would you prefer to get down on its analysis?

— No, no, I just wanted to expose part of these concerns, seizing the moment of your narration. Continue "CS" with the mysterious chapter nine.

Let's continue then. I must say that José was mostly very well treated at Hospital Important, and they always gave him explanations because they knew it was good for him to be aware of the situation, however in this opportunity, they were taking him without telling him where or why.

They went through many doors until they got to a room which was almost empty. They placed him on a bed that could elevate, they lift him up to an eccentric machine and entered half of his body in it. Then everybody left. José was left alone, in complete silence, not even the "bip.. bip... bip..." could be heard. José was intrigued, and he told himself: "This must be similar to the Gamma Room, I'm sure I'll be like this for over an hour. I'd better relax and sleep a little, it's the best way to spend time"

However a sudden detonation, like a blast, similar to the noise of the hydraulic brakes of big trucks, though increased by the surrounding silence and the unexpected, made José jump in an indescribable way. The reading of any word takes more time than this sudden situation. It was such a scare that José began screaming asking for help. The doors opened and one by one all the camisoles entered, alarmed, asking: What happened? What happened? Later, José found out that was cobalt, and the untimely noise was the normal shoot of the machine.

When the adventure of the ninth chapter was over, came at last the most awaited of the chapters for José, the tenth, the arrival of his wife, who came visiting every night after work. Relaxation, news' exchange, dinner in-between, and, sadly, the goodbye moment too.

Immediately, the eleventh chapter began: listen to the radio and think. José would think about his mother who was hospitalized in another part of the Hospital, he would think about how his life would be in the future, he would think about many things and that in so little time all the chapters of the day would begin again with the arrival of the phlebotomist.

Finally, before falling asleep, he would talk to God.

Chapter Five Another

Toc... toc... toc... In the middle of a great silence... toc... toc...

Pip... pip... pip... Yes, this one was familiar, but toc... toc... toc...
What would it be? Is it new?

No, stop it José, it was not new, it was the announcement of one more battle.

Nurse Zodiac had chosen to make the arrangements in an adjacent room, so as not to make José nervous. He didn't see her but he heard the toc... toc... toc... and realize...

Pip... pip... pip... (to the left)

Toc... toc... toc... (to the right)

As people say, put on a brave face and weather the storm, José entertained himself by listening to the curious rhythmical combinations of those sounds.

Pip... toc... pip... toc... pip... toc...

The horse serum used in the anti-rejection treatment, came in small vials. It was necessary to open a lot to prepare the solution. That was the toc... toc... toc..., the vials that Zodiac was opening. Once the preparation was made, she entered in José's room as if nothing was happening and said:

— I'm going to change your serum.

— Horse serum again?

Zodiac was surprised to have been discovered.

Yes, it was another rejection and it had to be fought back.

The antibodies' armies were attacking the kidney again, when they were surprised in the rear by the arrival of a worse invader, the horse serum. The fight broke out, the shaking, the teeth shivering and finally... peace.

Another rejection had been overcome.

Chapter Six

One more

The chapters of the day continue, with small changes. The room of the scare (cobalt) was visited a few more times only, but the Gamma Room was still a daily commitment. The days he didn't have to undergo hemodialysis, he was visited by a psychologist. Everything had more or less the same rhythm, phlebotomist, radiography, renal puncture, etc., etc.

The kidney was still not functioning, days went by, it was hard to stay calm, morale was up and down and a few days later, José heard the toc... toc... toc... again.

YES, ONE MORE!!! THE THIRD ONE!!!

This time Zodiac was straightforward. She let José know what was going on and also explained him that now it would be softer because they'd used rabbit serum (?). It seems like a joke, right?

Zodiac was right, it was softer and, luckily, the last too. There would be no more rejections.

Chapter Seven

Midnight Inspiration

It must have been three o'clock in the morning on some Monday. Zodiac comes in with serum in her hand.

— José! I have the feeling something good is going to happen.

— At this time? Another rejection?

— No, no... There's no rejection!

— Don't lie to me Zodiac, you know I prefer the truth.

— I'm not lying, José. Dr. Policla has just called and gave me an indication.

— But, what's this serum? Why at this strange time?

— The thing is that Dr. Policla usually has these inspirational moments. It seems that he couldn't stop thinking about your case. He gave me in the phone call a weird formula, similar to some cooking recipe, ha ha—Zodiac laughs—. In other occasions similar things have happened and up to now, dear José, this unpredictable midnight inspirations of Dr. Policla, have always been successful.

A breeze of new air entered the room. José took a deep breath as if he was in the middle of a beautiful park, but the windows and doors were completely closed. It was the effect created by the renewal of "hope".

It was a pity that due to the time, he couldn't make his wife a part of this, and through her, his mother and all his family, who have been expectant for a long time. He would have accelerated the frequency of the serum drops, which were slowly falling, every two seconds. It was good to have hope, but given that in general the one who expects despairs, he stopped his emotions and fell asleep.

That Monday morning was like every other morning.

Phlebotomist, irrelevant exchange of words, and José didn't pee...

Radiography with its already known vicissitudes, and José was still not peeing.

Kidney puncture, and no pee...

Hemodialysis. Tense atmosphere. José didn't pee. He was suffering in silence. The technician had realized that and was trying to distract him by talking about anything else...

It was as brief as a mosquito bite, the moment he felt he wanted to pee. To say it and to be handled the urinal was equally brief. The emotion and tears took much more time. José peed. Such an expected moment happened without any parade, it just came, and just like that, that day which had started as any other, deeply modified his physiognomy. Doctors came in his room, satisfaction in their eyes (because their faces were still covered), infectious joy.

It was a special Monday for José, because of this event that happened in the middle of hemodialysis and because of what was about to happen in a few hours in the afternoon.

Chapter Eight

I looked through the window (told by José)

You'd like to know what happened to me that afternoon, but first let me point out that almost two months have occurred since the surgery.

Almost two months hospitalized in that isolated room, where the cleaning lady would even sanitize the walls with disinfectant so as to keep an aseptic environment; looking only at people's eyes; with wires and hoses everywhere. However, this last thing had cleared out a lot, they had retrieved the drainage of the wound, the genito-urinary catheter and the monitoring wires.

I was very sensitive with all this. Particularly due to the contrast, the abrupt changes that I constantly experienced.

Sadness-joy, pessimism-hope, fear-tranquility, loneliness-company, quietness-movement, unpleasantness-satisfaction, tears-laughter. That constant move from the negative to the positive...

— No, José! I'm sorry to interrupt you, but in this case it is a mistake to say negative-positive.

— In here again, "CS"?

— I think it's important to talk a bit about this subject, given that it was already introduced, though it doesn't have much to do with the story.

— Explain yourself please.

— It's a very common thing to identify opposites as negative or positive (or vice versa), but it's a mistake. Black and white, tall and short, fat and thin, day and night, they are all opposites but none is positive or negative. To know how to accurately pinpoint which ones are positive and which ones are negative is something extremely important for human behavior. Nowadays people talk plenty about "good vibes" and being always "positive", but it's not

used correctly, because they identify the good vibes and the positivity as being always jolly, happy, cheerful, with no conflicts.

For example: A thief robs a lady's retirement pension at a bank's exit. Minutes later, the thief cheerfully counts the stolen money, he feels happy, with no internal conflict.

On the other side, you have the old lady bitterly crying, scared, upset and full of conflicts because she does not know how she's going to pay taxes. If the previous interpretation were correct, we would have to assert that the thief is "positive and with good vibes" whereas the old lady is "negative and with bad vibes", which is completely nonsense.

— Very original. But then, what is being positive and have good vibes like?

— Positive is everything that comes from God. As God is Love, everything related to Love on its different forms and stages will forever be positive, like the love of parents, sons, siblings, spouses and the love for animals, nature, art, work, inner responsibilities, and also the aspects of comprehension, respect, tolerance, etc., etc. Anything that agrees with Love will be positive, and anything that disagrees with Love will be negative.

— You were right "CS", it's a really rich subject to analyze. For starters, I have come up with two questions, first, provided that Love comes from God and therefore it is positive, the opposite which is negative, where does it come from? Second, with this analysis of yours, there can be tears which are positive (if motivated by True Love) and positive concerns; I wonder if there can be positive deaths, because I've heard of people who have killed for love, and people who have suicide for it...

— In the name of Love and in the name of God people have committed limitless atrocities throughout history. Men should meditate and reflect on this subject a lot so as to learn everyday more and better how to identify True Love, and so, not to mistake paths. As regards your first question, I'll tell you that if it's so hard to correctly identify the positive, it's not worthy to complicate ourselves by analyzing the negative. Let's only look for the positive and the negative will be exposed on its own.

— Great "CS"! One day we'll revisit and deepen this subject.

Getting back to what I was saying, I was telling you, my reader friend, that I was feeling really sensitive, probably due to all the abrupt changes of situations I was constantly experiencing. So

much so that it didn't seem like two months had passed, but much more.

That Monday I had such happiness that it didn't fit inside me. I was wishing that night would come to share with my wife, the joy of having started to urinate. She already knew that, like my mum, because they always phoned during the day so that Zodiac would update them with my news.

But during the afternoon another important event took place: They took my serum out!

After almost two months of having it placed, first in my neck and then in my right arm. You can't even imagine the relief! Such a freedom sensation! Being able to get up, walk, go to the bathroom, without taking the serum with me. It was the last tie I had left.

I enjoyed that freedom, I walked, straightened up, stretched out, touched the walls, and suddenly: Oh, surprise, the window was right there!!! I reached out and overwhelmed up to tears, I looked... I was surprised to see the leafy trees, full of such green leaves, when I was hospitalized, the firsts buds were just appearing. And the avenue, so many cars! So much movement! So many people! Such rush!

I was glued to the window, like a kid with a new toy. I realized that my wife would come down that avenue. If I paid attention and didn't move from that spot, I would see the car coming. She had told me that every night when she was arriving, she saw through that window, the serum recipients hanging by my bed. Well, those serums were no longer there and I was standing where they used to be. She had to see me! It couldn't go wrong! She would see me by the window and I would see her arriving. This was a joy I wasn't going to miss. And thank God I didn't. We saw each other, said hi, and the relatives who drove her here saw me too, and it was SO BEAUTIFUL!

Three unforgettable things happened that Monday: I started urinating, my serum was taken out and I looked through the window.

Chapter Nine

The nightmare ends

The next day, Tuesday morning, my emotions would keep exercising. A new camisole entered my room. That image didn't belong to any of the people who usually came in; however, I noticed something familiar about him. Who was he? I waited until he came close to see his eyes, and that's how I realized those were my mother's eyes.

She was in the middle of her recovery. She was very well in the physical aspect. A little disturbed emotionally, due to the changing news about my condition. Once she finally checked that now things seem to be on track to success, her gaze lightened up.

Little by little, they allowed the entry of others visits. I started to see my aunts' eyes and the eyes of my true friends, those who weren't expecting anything of me (because in these circumstances I wasn't able to give them anything), they came with the sole and healthy intention of giving me company and affection.

Still there would be a few problems to come, like a rebel urinary infection that gave a big amount of work to doctors. This was not an impediment to the fact that soon after it was no longer necessary to enter the room with a chinstrap.

The traditional holydays of the end of the year were coming, and alongside them I was dreaming with the choripan I was hoping to eat when I was completely recovered.

Everything was progressively clearing out. Blood drawing, radiography and kidney puncture stopped being done every day, like the Gamma Room as well. Hemodialysis was already a part of my past.

For the so usual radiography, one day they took me directly walking to the radiology section. It was a curious experience. After such confinement, people coming and going made me dizzy me and

my legs didn't completely respond. I came back exhausted to my room.

In a few days it would have been three months since I'd been hospitalized.

My beloved doctors Policla and Catri, and later on Dr. Maschi, came and gave me a few recommendations and also THEY DISCHARGED ME.

When I was leaving, Dr. Maschi told me a few words which astonished me.

— José you should write a book telling everything that happened to you... it may be useful for other people...

Chapter Ten

To you

Since the first chapter to “the discharge from hospital”, it’s been 12 years.

You’ve seen through these pages that during those 12 years I was losing autonomy and sinking into a painful dependency, up to the point of feeling at some extreme cases, sensations of helplessness and powerlessness. Little by little, my entire life was left spinning, with no other perspective, around my suffering.

Now that a transcendent change had taken place, I had little Marian (the kidney my mother had donated me) turned into my friend and functioning as it should.

I had to untie the tied to come back to the world of the healthy people. This couldn’t be done in one day, mainly because from time to time there would still appear a few problems. First, a genital infection for which they had to urgently hospitalize and perform surgery on me. A while later, a viral infection that had me feeling very badly, and later on I had some trouble with the arteriovenous fistula because it had dilated too much; as I didn’t need it and it appeared I wouldn’t need it anymore, doctors decided to annul it... surgery again. All these obstacles linked me to the previous part of my life and didn’t make it easy for me to re-entry the world of the healthy people. In the middle of all this, there were also lab-checks, which went from being weekly to quarterly. These lab-checks were essential to test the evolution of the post-transplant and adjust the doses of immunosuppressant medication, which I had to take forever.

Doctors allowed me to eat and drink everything, but I had already suffered enough, so I took great care not to fall in an unbridled state. With the help of my family and my “Conscious” (that great friend that you already know as “CS”), I’ve been harmonizing

freedom and order. I learnt how to be happy by living in moderation and eating healthy, avoiding any sort of excess as much as possible.

Miss or mister reader, if you got to this point of the reading, you don't need to be told that mine was a very complex case. In the first stage, I had trouble getting an accurate diagnosis and being well cared for. In the second stage, it was hard for me to overcome hemodialysis for "turbulent" reasons. Finally, the transplant tripped with three rejections.

I'm sure there must be more complex cases, but happily, the great majority of them are much much simpler. Already in my times there were some transplanted patients who were discharged seven days after the surgery, whereas I spent three months in hospital. If you are renal-chronic, or have a relative or friend in that situation, don't be upset, you have solutions now. The worst that could happen would be something similar to what I've been through, to turn to a hemodialysis center where transplants are neither performed nor advised, and provided that you get transplanted, to have nothing more and nothing less than three rejections.

Up to the moment I'm writing these lines, nine years have passed since the transplant. Everybody is absolutely fine, but I don't want to say goodbye without telling you some of the things that have happened to me in these years after the transplant.

Three years after the surgery, my wife got pregnant. The result was a beautiful and healthy boy who brought joy to our lives.

At that time doctor Esteban passed away. Do you remember him? The Great Professor died too, and slowly continued to leave this world all my hemodialysis partners. My most heartfelt memory to all of them, even to the Great Professor, to whom, honestly, I bear no grudge, although I can't stop asking myself how much pain we all would have prevented if the Great Professor's behavior had been different. The same question I ask myself regarding the health insurance employee (see chapter one from the second part) who rushed us to decide what hemodialysis center to go. That employee must not have the slightest idea of how her two-minutes-lack of will transformed into years of multiple distresses and sufferings to a whole family group. If only she had had the kindness to type us

the list (a three minute work), may be the whole future would have been less tortuous for us.

Five years after the transplant, while I was queuing to get a lab-check, at Hospital Important, I felt somebody touching my back. I turned around and saw a very handsome young men smiling at me. He seemed familiar.

— Josecito!

— Yes! Do you remember we used to be on hemodialysis in front of each other?

— How could I forget?! You have no idea how much I remember you! (Do you remember him? He was the stab in my soul from chapter one, part three)

— How are you doing Josecito?

— Good! I've been transplanted with a cadaver kidney. I'm fine now. Do you remember Zulli? That fifteen years old girl..., well she has been transplanted too, she is doing great... And you José, how are you? I had heard that you were one of the first's transplants recipients in this Hospital, now they are going for their 400 or more, did you know that?

— The 400th already! I have no doubt that we could extensively talk about all these subjects that are so common and sensitive for us, but I have one question: How do you remember me?

— Because your case was widely mentioned, for its difficulty. I recorded everything, as I recorded your suffering face when I got pricked because of hemodialysis. Even though it's all over now I can't forget it.

THE END

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*Alejandro César Trotta
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