

Roberta Fasanotti

MR
WRONGSKY

illustrated by Marilisa Cotroneo

MIMebù 

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The Crackchain family

Oswald was an insecure child, suffering from an illness that is worse than chicken pox. Sooner or later, the chicken pox will pass, but the **all-perfect** complex, when it hits you like a virus, risks becoming your worst enemy... or perhaps your only friend.

A sweet smile often triumphed over the child's plump face, inspiring tenderness, but those who knew him well could read in his eyes a mountain of uncertainties and fears.

From the very first day at school, Oswald had always tried to show his teachers and parents how good he was and how much he enjoyed studying. It was very satisfying to receive praise from

his teachers, who encouraged him to continue. Unfortunately, this was not the case with his father, who was unable to give his son any sign of approval. Because of this, the child's efforts had multiplied dramatically over time, making him obsessed with perfection. He would read and reread the completed task an inordinate number of times, until the moment he threw his arms in the air in triumph.

«That's it!» he used to shout: he had achieved the **all-perfect**.

Oswald's father's name was Baxter Crackchain and he was an ugly-looking man: as long as a traffic light and as thin as a fright, his face had a large, crooked, purple nose.

Mr. Crackchain always wore dark jackets that were too big for him. His trousers were constantly too short and could not cover the black hair on his legs. His shoes had brightly coloured, sometimes glow-in-the-dark socks.

Sour as an aged lemon, Baxter constantly expressed his bad temper. At the end of the day,



after many hours of work, he would cross the threshold of the house at a slow pace, completely captured by a nervous tic that made him first lift one nostril, then the other, and finally, with a very quick tap, move his right shoulder, as if to put it back in place.

«I'm here», he announced sullenly, as his wife and son Oswald stared at him from afar. At that moment the flat was painted with fear, as when one senses the arrival of a ferocious beast.

If by chance the child and his mother came forward just for a sympathetic nod, he would let out an animalistic wail to indicate how annoying everything, really everything, was to him.

Baxter regained his composure by being alone for an hour or more, glued to one of the many classic car weeklies.

He would read and reread the magazine to the point of exhaustion. When the nervous cure was over, he would switch to the TV.

He didn't give anyone a smile and, when he

thought of his son, he was always convinced that he had a rather clumsy one.

Oswald's teacher Beatrix, on the other hand, was in love with the boy and considered him the most attentive and mature pupil in the class. «I don't like her!» Baxter had muttered one day in the school corridor after a conversation with the teacher. He had repeated it once, twice, three times, until he had turned the complaint into a real protest, raising his voice louder and louder. And then he added: «She's an ugly girl too!». In the meantime, all the people he passed stared at him as one would at a madman.

Baxter was certain of one thing: there was no point in trying to learn grammar, no point in memorizing multiplication tables and doing operations in a very short time. No use studying. There was only one subject that was important to him: gymnastics.

On the way to work, Oswald's father walked curiously, energetically lifting first one foot and then the other, straining his calf muscles to the

limit, and with every step he let out a shout of satisfaction. At times he stopped to check the tone of his legs. In the meantime he thought back to his son and let out a grumble of disapproval – Oswald didn't quite realise how much movement developed the brain.

«Gymnasium! It takes a lot of gymnastics to become a good boy», he repeated over and over again.

He knew very well that his son was a disaster in this discipline and saw it as a nightmare.

This irritated him.

Magda, Oswald's mother, suffered from constant nausea, especially when she got up in the morning. Perhaps she couldn't digest her husband, as happens when you eat heavy food for dinner. However, she found great peace in her work: keeping company with Mrs Halfspine, an elderly woman who, according to Baxter, was also deaf enough to be able to put up with his wife's useless streams of words.

In Magda's face was always visible her peculiar

look that alternated between disgust and confusion. Consumed by anxiety, the woman was very thin, especially in her face, framed by a thick mass of hair arranged like so many electrical wires woven into a very compact ball of yarn. There was no brush or comb in her drawers: she moved the cottony mass with her hands.

The most striking feature of this family was the total absence of tenderness. Never, at any time of day, was there a kiss or a hug, and none of the three of them indulged in a healthy snicker. And this had been going on for a long time.

Something small and rough

«Hey! Did you get a sleepersky? Hey, I'm talking to you, do you hear me?»

Something small and rough scratched Oswald's nose.

«Wh-what? Who's talking to me?»

The boy turned on the light, and... with a maddened grasshopper sprint he flew off the bed and into the floor in a second, while his heart danced inside him like an eel that doesn't want to get caught.

«Come on, a little kindnessky for an old man like me! Any more and I'd be in pain! Why this soft one? It's so easy to sleep on the groundsky!»

Oswald couldn't get to his feet, his legs were

shaking, and he did nothing but gape at the animated thing that sat on the blanket.

*«Well, come on, don't look like that! My hair's fallen out, it's true, I'm a dwarf with choked trousers, but the elastic **bandsky** keep it up, don't you think?»*



The tiny dwarf smiled at him in a very cute way. He looked like a bird that had eaten too many worms. In fact, his belly was big, supported by two very thin legs, but they were strong enough to do their job.

Oswald was turning into a quivering pudding, and from the floor he grasped a flap of the sheet, which helped him to swing his hand less. Not a sound came from his throat, as if he had suddenly become mute. Total mute.

He wanted to scream, to call his mother, but he couldn't. Even less likely to look for his father. His head was spinning.

It was early morning, still several minutes to go before Baxter abruptly threw open the door to tell him it was time to get up.

*«So, do you **likesky**? Why are you staring pushing the **noze** down? **Smellsky**? Well... maybe a bit of a stinky smell, I know, but you know, I only eat dust and that stinks a bit. Just don't smell... Do as I say: **noze up!**»*

The little dwarf smiled at the boy, while

showing him how to walk: nose up, like looking at the sky.

Then he went up to him to stroke his hand. A slow, gentle gesture that Oswald had long forgotten. A strange feeling was taking hold of him. Something he could not identify. But the trembling did not subside. His throat remained dry and no words could take shape at that moment.

«*You want me as your little friendsky?*» the newcomer suddenly shot out.

The dwarf lowered his gaze and then abandoned himself to drawing strange figures on the child's hand with a light touch.

Oswald was paralysed by the situation, forgot about his nose in the air and stared at his guest, as if hypnotised.

«*You see, childskey, you don't know me, but I never hurt anyone. Besides, you're really cute!*»

Oswald resembled his mother at that moment, when she stretched out her neck to get a better look at the situation. He noticed that there were