

LIFE LESSON AT THE SUBWAY STATION

Like any other morning I am waiting for the subway. The station is very crowded, there is a group of foreign students, old people, and kids on their way to school. I notice four girls, about fifteen, normally dressed but their clothes are dirty. They are immigrants from eastern Europe. I start to observe them, trying to understand what they are going to do.

The train pulls in, the crowd approaches the doors. I see the eyes of the girls moving very fast, they are looking at every purse. They mingle and push themselves into the crowd. I see their hands moving fast into the purses previously analyzed.

Their victim is an elderly woman ...so I decide to intervene!

- 1 "What are you doing?" I say to one of them pulling her arm at the same time.
- 2 "Nothing." Is the answer.

Somebody from the crowd gets in line between the two of us, I'm distracted but after a second it happens again, fast hands looking for something to steal. Once again I intervene.

This time the person who came between me and the girl, turns around and ... SHE IS ONE OF THEM!! It was not a coincidence, she had come to protect her friend.

When she turns around, she threatens me with a fist under my chin.

I don't pay much attention to it, my concern is for the old lady ... now those hands are searching for money, but this time the lady becomes aware that something is wrong. She says something to the girl who then leaves. She is safe!

Now my attention goes to the girl who threatened me, I look into her eyes and now I realize how serious the situation is.

She threatens me! How dare she? She is a thief, she is in the wrong and she threatens me?

We stare at each other and I feel that kind of strength that prevails coming out of me, I could kill her.

I think she can sense it, her eyes are not haughty as before but they are investigating mine, trying to understand what is happening. She steps back lowering her hand.

Now I feel satisfied: she understood who is in charge! If she dares to intimidate me again, I'll destroy her!

The train is just about to leave, I must get it, I have to go to work. Then I realize that the four thieves are not getting in the train. If I don't get it I will risk being lynched. I push myself through the crowd and the doors closes behind me.

My heart is pounding, I'm angry for the affront, I think that I did not do enough . I'm sure that the other two girls have robbed someone else . While I reflect back, fear starts gripping me. I might suffer retaliation, they might follow me or even worst, they might wait for me tomorrow.

I'm still thinking about it, when the train stops, I get off and walk towards my office. My thoughts are confused. What just happened seems so unreal ... but why am I so angry?

I'm feeling the weight of my evil thoughts, of the judgment that I have made...Lord forgive me!

After pronouncing these words, new considerations followed and now I'm reliving some of the scenes, which unfolded earlier: I see the girl that I pulled by the arm, her eyes are filled with fear, she knows what she is doing is wrong!

Afterward I see the girl that threatened me and I think to myself: who taught her that? Was it her mother? Or her father? Does violence run in her family? And when she took a step back, did she recognize the same violence, in me?

My need to be forgiven allowed God to make me see the other side of the coin. I didn't feel insulted anymore instead I saw the opportunity to take revenge on the 'evil one'.

What is the girl's fault? Being born in a community where only the strongest survive? Where if you want to survive you need to steal? Where the women are beaten if they don't bring money home? Is that what it is?

What can we do to stop the stealing? Do we have to fight against these people? Should the Italian government refuse to let them into the country and deport those already in?

This would be racism! Can we wipe out an entire population, to eradicate the problem? The holocaust comes to mind, the hate, the pride, the innocent blood that was shed, the human beings exercising control, the victims terrified by their executioners and killers always in tension for the need to prevail. Father HELP! How can we make a difference?

After this prayer, new thoughts fill my mind... "Love always wins, Love never fails."

Yes Father, that is true.

Driving out people, deporting them, persecuting them, will only cause hate and bitterness to grow high and where is the glory in all of this? There is no glory in

isolating a group of people, only war!

Father help me to love these people as you love them, I ask that you send your angels among them, let the angels fight for them in the heavenly realm, call in more intercessors so that these people might receive your Word and leave their ways behind and follow You..

Naiche Di Salvo