

The Last Sforza

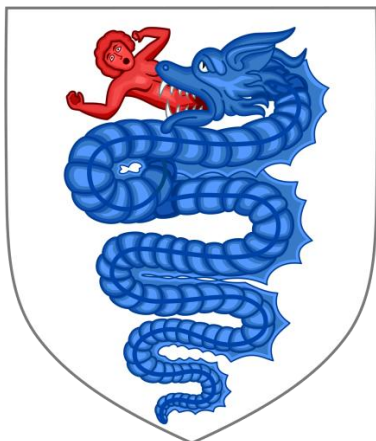
A short story by Paz Itzhaki-Weinberger, author of the best selling book "Rich Before 40" (<https://www.amazon.com/Rich-Before-40-Ultimate-Wealth/dp/1987751183>)

This story is inspired by true events

1. Preamble

The Sforza family is one of the most known and influential families in the history of Europe.

No man can visit the city of Milan in Italy and be without awe while visiting the Sforza Castle (Castello Sforzescro), one of the most impressive touristic sites of the city, where the family crest still greeting the visitors in the place (even today) is one of the most well-known graphic symbols to the public, with the serpent devouring a child, a symbol which is in fact a remnant of an earlier emblem a few hundreds of years before, of the Visconti family who ruled Milan for many years but was united into the Sforza Family by ties of marriage and blood.



Everyone believed the last Sforza was Francesco Sforza the second, who died at the age of 40 in the year 1535 without any heirs (and as his brother died in mysterious circumstances that year and thus allegedly leaving no remain to the family and the city of Milan moved to the control of the Spaniards.

This short story will reveal the truth and expose how the true end of the Sforza family (and it is really the end?) occurred only in the year 2023, 488 years after the original date everyone believed this family was long gone from our world, and in fact just 12 years prior to that well-known family almost regained an unusual position of power and overtook once again Italy, the whole of Europe and god forbid perhaps the entire world, and how a covert organization unknown to the public eye again saved the world in one of countless affairs where the organization fought in the darkness against evil, supernatural entities and sorcery, always behind the scenes, seeking no glory, return, gratitude or benefit, and how this noble and vital act of savior was done incidentally as if a guiding hand from the heavens led to this.

Our fascinating and exciting story takes place in the city of Milan, Italy, at the start of January 2023, right before the end of the New Year festivities.

2. Massimo

Massimo sat on a sidewalk corner at the Duomo Square in Milan. It was a chill day with temperatures around 10 degrees Celsius, but definitely slightly warmer than expected for this season of the beginning of January and it seemed winter this year, 2023, was not like other winters.

Massimo was a short man, dark skinned, well dressed but in a manner not attracting any attention. The look in his eyes was bright, penetrating, scary and evil, so Massimo made sure always never to directly look to other people – simply because his own look was something unforgettable, to differ from his general appearance which left no impression on people. Usually people tended to forget even meeting Massimo just a few moments after he passed in front of them, he was always another meaningless and zero impression person, submerged and swallowed up into the crowd.

Despite sitting idly, Massimo was actually very excited. Today was a very special day for him – not because of the end of the festive season and the square being overcrowded and still with the Christmas and new year stands, but because today exactly 25 years will have passed since he discovered he and no other is the last remaining heir to the known Sforza family, and 20 years since he successfully overtook the external Sforza knights fortress together with his five loyal minions, in a punctual and synchronized action performed exactly according to the prophecy.

If all goes well today Massimo will first obtain the supernatural powers of the family, all directed into his body, and within 12 additional years of fulfilling the prophecy and trial and error with the new powers, along with many human sacrifices, his power will grow and grow until in 2035, the 500th year for the demise of the last supreme Sforza by the secret mystical covenants, his power will become so great he will be virtually unstoppable.

Yes, the prophecy demanded from him no less than 37 years of complete devotion and sacrifice, but today 25 years already will have passed, and he will finally start to enjoy the fruits of his labor and get a taste of power & strength – instead of a person living the shadows, on the fringes of society, he will gradually become more and more powerful, so in a short while all of Milan will be at his feet, afterwards Europe, and who knows – perhaps the entire world!

For over two decades Massimo terrorized the city inhabitants and visitors, and mainly him together with his five loyal and devoted minions robbed and pick pocketed again, again and again (tens of thousands of times) various people and mainly visitors to the city. Their task was to create a fortune from loot and robbery funds. Yes, Massimo and his minions became in accordance with the prophecy the lowest, most inferior and despised inhabitants of Milan, living in the shadows and existing from robbery and pick pocketing, occupying a house that is officially abandoned (like squatters), an asset which in fact is Sforza family asset but one Massimo acquired by means of terrorizing and illegally and forcefully taking from the rightful owners.

Massimo was very punctual about the fulfilling the prophecy where it was clear only funds deriving from loot and wrongdoing could be used for the purchase of the materials for the gold and diamond suit created and purified by Massimo all those years with the assistance of the best craftsmen, artists and goldsmiths in the city – now all that remained was to inlay the last precious stone already located by Massimo so the loot money of today will be used to complete the purchase and inlay, right on time for the ritual scheduled to that very evening.

As always, Massimo tracked the groups of tourists led by guides throughout the Duomo square, with the wallets led like lambs to the slaughter to the center of the square and near the impressive Duomo. Massimo knew his movement, once he rises from the sidewalk, will be quick, fast, a move of a shadow among people, swiftly rising unidentified and unnoticed, with his hand shortly browsing in the pockets and bags of his victims while their property will become his without any problem or issue.

Who will be the final victim after tens of thousands of previous victims? Massimo's eyes inspected the group of tourist who entered the square near the large Christmas tree and immediately he appeared before his eyes.

It was a tall man, about an entire head higher than most of the people in the square, a handsome man, bearded, well-dressed, a luxury watch on his wrist and gold rings on his fingers, but despite his striking appearance which was not of a typical victim and the power which obviously appeared from the man and the way he moved, he was surrounded by family including young children and the ridiculous group of tourists moving slowly behind an old, ugly and tired looking guide.

Massimo will swiftly steal his wallet and without doubt it will contain enough cash to complete the purchase of the last stone and finish the career of robbery and pick pocketing of Massimo and his minions. The minions, as always, were already in position to assist and got their secret mark and signal to move from Massimo.

A quick action and indeed the wallet was in Massimo's hands, quickly extracting the paper money bills from it and disposing the rest in the near garbage bin and especially all items which could be identified with the victim such as credit cards or ID documents. Indeed the wallet contained enough cash to complete the inlay assignment and Massimo was excited to leave the place and complete the purchase and inlay of the last stone.

But as usual, his instincts and cruel nature overcame him. As the last Sforza member, as he discovered just 25 years ago, he remained to observe his victim from a distance.

Massimo enjoyed spending many long minutes (and sometimes hours!) tracking the robbed person, as his action was so skilled and quick he was never noticed or caught in real time. The moment Massimo enjoyed most and relished was the moment of discovery, where the victim realizes his wallet is no longer in his possession.

The looks of fear, terror, helplessness, sometimes crying or shivering, hectic running and searching, loss of temper - all those stimulated the blood of Massimo and excited him to the verge of ecstasy.

Especially in these last days of the festive season and the load of stands in the Duomo square, dozens of victims fell prey to Massimo on a daily basis, and he saw how the good people of Milan created attractions and decorations and stands and made the place suitable for visitors, and how his own act, a few seconds of pick pocketing, done shortly and unnoticed, completely destroyed the experience for the visitors, sometimes leaving them totally helpless.

"Go away and never return!", thought Massimo. This city is mine, and shortly you will anyway not be able to re-visit it!

Massimo felt as if he was draining the energy from his victims, and now expected the last experience after so many years of robbery and pick pocketing will probably be even better and exceed the previous ones.

Massimo also was very aware of the inability, impotency and carelessness of the local police, even with local policemen on site not able to communicate in English with tourists, being able at most to send them to wait for many hours in the police station in order to file a complaint, one to never be checked or properly investigated.

But something very surprising occurred this time. The tall man very quickly noticed his wallet was gone. He stayed still, did not do the regular ritual of search of most victims. He whispered to his wife and children in a stoic manner, and the small group from some reason departed from the big tourist group.

There was no impression of helplessness or terror, the opposite. They stood in a weird circle and the man took out a Smartphone from a hidden pocket and typed quickly on the screen. The man also held a short phone conversation and then waited like a statue in the square, without any expression or emotion.

Massimo, always very aware of his surroundings, noticed how within minutes drones entered the area above the square – another drone and another drone and another. Also men wearing suits appeared in various entrances of the square with flaring gazes. The look in the man's eyes was replaced to a look of rage, and for a very short moment his look encountered Massimo's look – Massimo felt as if his intestines are being examined, he somehow knew he was located and that the mysterious man known who he is, and he could not know how this happened! A strong sensation of fear and terror flooded Massimo, who quickly disconnected from the look, blended into the crowd and quickly returned to the external Sforza knights' fortress, his home and his minions home during the last two decades.

It appeared to Massimo he saw a nasty smile appearing on the man's face, who immediately hugged his wife and children, acted to calm them down and get them far away to safety – Massimo quickly disappeared in his typical dexterity on one part of the square and the man with his family on the other side of the square, the drones also scattered and the suited men could no longer be noticeable.

Massimo made sure he was not followed, and made sure he only maintained cash money from the wallet and no other item.

Very weird, he thought to himself. I never experienced something like this before, and on this important and crucial day! I must go and read the scrolls of the prophecy and prepare myself for today's ritual. Shortly the feeling of discomfort was replaced with excitement for the power and strength awaiting for Massimo, but still from time to time a thought went through Massimo's mind that perhaps he should have chosen another target – but what has been done cannot be undone. Massimo assumed he will never re-encounter the man, as he never before re-encountered any of his countless victims, and as such Massimo hurried to complete the inlay of the suit and the preparations for the ritual.

3. Isaac Goldwein

The year of 2022 was a very busy year for Isaac Goldwein.

It appeared to everyone his time is divided between his daily job which was intensive and international and required many travels worldwide, struggling for good and noble causes, for justice and for the state, and between time dedicated to his family & friends and his center of life in the State of Israel.

Very little knew Isaac's other capacity, where he advanced to head a tradition or an organization with no real hierarchy, unknown to the public but which acts to prevent threats on the civilization as we know it and the entire world.

It was not incidental: Isaac was an interesting combination of a member of the Jewish religion, a true son of Israel who at one point was the carrier of the modern torch of the Christian Knights Hospitaller from Jerusalem and the remainder of the "Hashishiyun" (Order of Assassins) which is an Isma'ilism stream of the Shia Islam, a unique person receiving honor and respect despite being Jewish also from other members of religions in his country.

The decision he made was to take some time off the day to day actions and fight against evil, and spend the first days of January 2023 at a short vacation with his family to the city of Milam, the capitol of the Lombardy region in Italy. It was an opportunity allowing him to combine business and the examination of an old myth relating to a powerful sword which allegedly belonged to the king of the Visigoths and Ostrogoths Theodoric the Great, a sword which passed to the hands of King Theudis afterwards and finally reached the hands of Leonardo De Vinci in the later years where he worked for the Sforza family in Milan.

From the research conducted by the best scholars it appeared the sword was originally the sword of king David, taken as loot from Goliath and according to the myth was even used by the Prophet Mohammed after Theudis and was received by him in a fascination way – more than how his other swords, the ones stored in the Topkapi palace in Turkey and the one which remained in Cairo.

This sword according to the legend was able to defeat and harm legendary and mythical creatures, and was used by the great Theodoric (in the legends now known as "Dietrich von Bern") to defeat Giants, Dragons, Dwarves and other mythical beings.

The holder of the sword according to the legend would not only received great power as the swords glowed in magical light to defeat the abominated creatures, but also inspiration and insights so the myth gives credit to many of Leonardo's engineering inventions to spending many hours holding the legendary sword.

After many years of intensive research the current information was that the sword is located in Milan, and Isaac knew that if located the sword he will need to dispatch a suitable team to retrieve it and bring in back to the holy land.

Therefore an entire team flew to Milan before him and his family, equipped with special sensor drones able to locate the unique energy emitted from such artifacts, sensors that their development was completed only during the last quarter of 2022 under the strict supervision of Isaac.

The team was a very skilled retrieval team but not very discrete, however this time the unique look of men with elegant suits and ties was such that blended well in the elegant crowds of Milan, the fashion capitol of Europe.

Strangely enough, Isaac's teams located prior to his arrival two such locations of energy – one according to expectations at the heart of the De Vinci science and technology museum in Milan, and the other with similar energy but different and more dull in a suspicious location near the Duomo square.

Therefore Isaac decided to join and disguise himself in a regular group of tourists in a visit to the Duomo, to see from the surface (and not from an aerial look of the drones) the concerned energy source, and that a surprise he had during this irregular tour.

During the tour and while giving instructions to the teams and the array of drones from his Smartphone, discreetly, Isaac suddenly noticed his wallet was missing, he was in fact pick pocketed by a skilled pickpocket who took advantage of the fact he was concentrated on another matter, and with his family inside a slow moving group of tourists. Isaac was furious! The last thing he needed was such a sudden distraction to disrupt his plans.

But the most unusual thing was that the sensors of the energy beeped in his ear strongly as if an object or a mythical creature was only meters away from him.

The wallet itself was of low interest, containing some Euro paper money, ID documents and credit cards which will be easy to cancel and restore, but the energy – oh, the energy!

Isaac quickly informed his family (of the pick pocketing) and operated the situation (while simultaneously operating the teams and array of drones and canceling the credit cards, all from his Smartphone), but from the aerial image it seemed the entire energy was now concentrated on an object but rather a single person, a person that from some reason was positioned in a location that easily observed Isaac and the group of tourists – Isaac looked directly at him and immediately understood from looking a single glimpse into his flaring eyes that despite the disgusting look of this skinny and small man, there is much more in him that meets the eye.

The man immediately disengaged and disappeared in the crowd, but was unable to evade from the aerial array which continued to follow him every move, until documenting his entrance into a building which also emitted the same energy, even stronger than the individual.

Isaac knew time is of the essence – after bringing the family back to the hotel room, he joined the teams and they entered as regular guests to the Science and Technology museum of De Vinci in Milan.

In order not to bother the readers in the museum happening, it should be noted that after hours of an operation which successfully remained covert, and after opening an original ancient item of De Vinci himself, it was discovered that indeed the prayed for sword rested safely for centuries in that location, and was now at the hands of Isaac.

It was already late, almost midnight, but the energy emissions from the building where the pickpocket from the Duomo square entered only became stronger.

It appears the emissions were greater and greater, and Isaac realized the incident at the Duomo square was guided from above by divine intervention, and as with many previous incidents in other countries he must hurry to the place and meet his destiny guided from the heavens. He must act and act quickly.

He arrived alone to the location with the sword inside a musical instrument carrying bag, on his back. The teams with him were good for location, but not for this type of missions, especially if indeed some supernatural evil will be discovered as Isaac suspected. A single drone assisted by sending Aerial images directly to Isaac's mobile.

Upon approaching the building Isaac noticed it was an ancient construction, a sort of mini-fortress situated in one of the small streets near the Duomo square, but that the heavy doors of the entrance were closed shut with massive bolts and chains, radiating with the same energy from the drone aerial look. Surveillance cameras deployed on the location moved and focused on Isaac.

The street was abandoned apart from a homeless person sitting at the corner of the street. Isaac approached him and scattered sedative powder which immediately put the homeless person to a long sleep. Isaac knew and felt the moment to act has arrived – a quick draw of the sword from the musical instrument bag, an accurate blow to the bolts and another one of the chains, and those remained shattered to pieces on the sidewalk.

The sense of power holding the sword was unusual and immense, and the sword began to glow with a bright light, as if signaling its desire to strike evil. It was as if the sword spoke to Isaac directly to his brain and communicated with him like a living, telepathic being. It was clear to Isaac he need to act now, and quickly.

4. The melee

A strong kick to the door and a leap inside, and Isaac found himself inside a wired dark internal courtyard. At the center a flaming burning material formed a satanic circle – a circle on fire with a Pentagram in the middle.

On each corner of the Pentagram stood a brown caped human figure, and at the center a huge snake rose, 6 meters high, all with blue scales and wearing a golden armor with diamonds and precious gems!

The five men mumbled and were occupied in some ritual, and were very surprised to hear the breaking door and to witness the entry of a tall man holding a glowing sword into their unholy ceremony.

Immediately upon entry to the courtyard the five men drew daggers, and ran towards Isaac in order to stab him, not appearing happy from the ritual disruption and appearing completely human. Isaac examined within fragments of a single second all legends of relevant stories he learned, and he identified that the satanic figure, the blue snake, was in fact the one appearing on the Sforza family crest or the Visconti family before it.

But no time to think, as a battle against 5 skilled knives men is not a simple task – the five men moved silently but very quickly, and it appeared all of them were super-fit, quick like demons and in a religious fanatic frenzy.

But all their qualities did not help them against the known Goldwein skills, and after several sword slashes and accurate stabbings, four bleeding corpses were on the floor, two pouring rivers of blood from their extended necks, scattering bloods on the nearby walls, with the last figure still alive crawling with the dagger in hand to the direction of Isaac, which in turn stuffed the edge of his sword into the figure, from the mouth inwards into the body through the neck, as if it was not a human but a roasted pig, until the figure stopped moving.

With every slash of sword, every blow, every stab, every smear of blood, the sword glowed stronger as if hitting the figures fed it with power and energy.

With the five dead, Isaac turned to deal with the giant evil serpent, and was actually surprised the serpent did not participate in the battle and did not help the five figures – looking deeper it seemed the serpent was "Blinking" and trapped inside the burning Pentagram on the ground, as if an invisible energy force field trapped him and limited his movements. Every blink made it appear half-human and half-serpent. The evil from the eyes of it was obvious, and Isaac identified the look of the pick pocket just earlier that day on the Duomo square.

The man-serpent cursed in Italian, some word recognized by Isaac like "Cazzo" and "Vafanculo" but it seems it was in the middle of some metamorphosis between man and serpent, probably soon finishing the dark ritual Isaac disrupted, and the serpent figure began to materialize to a permanent form.

Isaac, realizing time was against him and that soon the snake will be able to leave the circle where the fire began to become lower and lower, slid the throat of the serpent around its head in a perfect circle, then leaped and grabbed the sides of the skin and stripped the serpent skin to the bottom. The bloody snake skin lay on the floor, the snake was no longer blue but red with blood except the head which remained with blue scales and continued to wiggle. Isaac beheaded the serpent with a single skilled sword blow.

The decapitated head flew inside the fountain at the center of the courtyard, a fountain that contained an ancient rusty fire hydrant connected to a rustier brown water pump.

The snake head suddenly returned to a human form and was the decapitated human head of the disgusting pick pocket from the Duomo square, and the head continued to curse Isaac. Yes, a severed head not connected to a body is cursing vigorously!

Isaac grabbed the head, swung it and banged it again and again increasing in power on the rusty fire hydrant, replying to the head in Italian "Cazzo, Cazzo, Cazzo!", the teeth of the head broke and flew, the head was smashed until the fire extinguished and head stopped talking and cursing. The energy also disappeared from the screens and drone now saw the building just a moment ago glowing, as a building like the neighboring ones without any special indication.

The sword also stopped any visible glow and only through the drone sensors the energy could be located, still at maximum strength.

Isaac stood at the center of the small fortress courtyard, near him now 6 completely human corpses. One decapitated with its skin fully stripped off including from the arms and legs, with a completely shattered skull – blood everywhere, including on Isaac and his cloths, and only the sword was strangely clean and spotless, as if it was just made, brand new, still with the unique energy now visible only via the drone sensors.

Isaac knew and felt at that moment that he needs to vacate the premises shortly, and not to wait for the next day or sunrise. Something in the general feeling made him realize eliminating the serpent being was a substantial thing and that this place will be okay from now on. From entering a dark and cursed place the location now felt even blessed or holy.

Isaac instructed the teams not to clean the place, but just to make sure any record of the events which took place is destroyed including the security cameras DVR. His own arrival was not documented in any way, as he previously arranged, and he had a strong internal feeling about the corpses that "The Righteous, their work will be made by others" and that leaving them where they perished will only be beneficial.

While holding the sword he knew everything will be alright, now that the sword of King David will return to its right place, in Jerusalem. He felt the sense of responsibility and power of the holder of the sword, knowing a weak or even regular person must never hold this artifact and that such power and inspiration should be limited to a few.

It was clear to Isaac the sword arranged for it to be re-discovered in such a crucial time in history where it is needed, but Isaac felt that it might have been better if the sword remained for many hundreds of additional years in a safe place untouched by any human. Isaac felt as if the sword had it's own awareness or will, and the desire to force her will on Isaac when he held it. Indeed during the melee he let the sword control him believing it was good and vital, but now when the battle was over he felt continued touch with the sword was a serious risk and might even cause the holder to become addicted to the powers the sword is offering.

Once this internal feeling grew stronger with certainty the corpses should remain as they are, Isaac gave the sword to the teams for dispatching to the holy land, not before wrapping it firmly and forbidding anyone with a strict prohibition to touch it, so only he would be able to touch it upon his return.

The teams were also ordered to take to Jerusalem the gold armor with the embedded diamonds and gems (Including sapphires, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones) – the armor did appear brand new but one which was prepared for many years in a very talented way by skilled craftsmen, one that upon the years will become priceless. The armor also contained symbols and runes which should be investigated further, and Isaac ordered all scrolls and writings in the location to also be returned together with it to Jerusalem.

After two and a half hours of the Teams working at the location, they all left it as they came – Isaac continued to cleanse himself and return to his vacation, a vacation not like he has anticipated.

5. The End – Luigi

Like every morning, old Luigi passed in front of the small old abandoned fortress in one of the streets in the Duomo square in Milan, used to seeking in sad eyes how the historic home of his family, a house still registered on his name as the last and only heir, is still in place in great glory but as an abandoned derelict asset, closed but with new and modern bolts and chains, with state of the art cameras and security sensors.

The gang of maggots living at the premises for two decades stole the asset from him, took possession of it with brute force, and it was clear to him his family forever lost the place especially since the extreme interaction he had with the leader of the maggot gang, and how this leader abused and threatened him and his family over 20 years ago – when Luigi was in full strength, not old & fragile as he is now.

But Luigi never lost hope, every day he passed early through the location hoping for something to happen, and he had a new disappointment every day again and again for 20 years.

But this morning things were different – the luxurious front gate with the heavy doors was wide open, the modern bolts lay shattered on the sidewalk, and the general darkness of the place was replaced by bright light and a ray of sun making the entire place happy and bright.

Luigi stepped hesitantly through the doors – no voice, no alarm, the cameras did not move to his direction – no maggot or any presence or guards appeared in place. Luigi carefully closed the doors and got used to the small light in place at the internal courtyard.

Luigi's heart was pounding strongly, as he witnessed a horrible scene he thought he will never see. The mutilated bodies of the entire maggot gang were all over the place, blood all over the floors and the walls, and near the ancient fire hydrant at the center of the fountain, the same hydrant small Luigi used to play with when he came back from school to home, a severed crushed toothless head lay but one

which could be identified, alas hardly, of no other than the top creep, the head maggot, Massimo, the sworn enemy of Luigi who haunted his dreams all these many awful years. Near the crushed head a dead decapitated body lay rest, one which was brutally skinned off....

After a few minutes of shock Luigi knew what he had to do. He will not call or report to the local police. He will call no one – there is no one that will miss the deceased, no one to notice their disappearance, and if any their disappearance will only be felt as a positive vibe to the streets of Milan. Luigi immediately locked the internal bolts and he knew he needs to hurry and transfer during the next few hours the corpses to their final resting place, the small cemetery in the internal fortress courtyard, the same cemetery where Luigi's parents and previous generations of the family rest.

After some digging and burial, Luigi will clean any remains or evidence of what apparently happened in the previous night. Afterwards Luigi will renovate the place with constructors and builders and again make the small fortress regain its glory as his family home.

The bright sunlight on the place after so many years (as mysteriously, shadows and darkness were on the place ever since the invaders took over – even in summer – so different from the good old days were Luigi's family controlled the place and memories of Luigi's fun childhood there) symbolized for Luigi that no less than divine intervention took place here.

Luigi thought he will never live to this day but now he did. Luigi knelt on his knees praying to the good lord and his messengers, the angels on earth who got this outcome, a triumph of good against evil, tears of happiness in his eyes, and then he turned to the disposal of the abominable remains which still defiled his ancestral home, doing all that with a small cheerful song playing in his grateful heart.

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