

*my dream is reality*

DREAMING



OLIVIA

by Mariateresa Sella - [www.olivianj.com](http://www.olivianj.com)



**18<sup>th</sup> December 2002, it's been two months since I returned from my trip to Las Vegas**  
**I would like to tell my experience and my feelings**  
**I would like to set my soul free on these white sheets!**

## **1<sup>st</sup> The Beginning**

Once upon a time.....I don't find it useful to start from a so far time...all began in 1978, I was 12 years old and during that spring I watched my first movie in a theatre.

I remember that day, as if it were today. I went to Valdagno with some friends by bus; it was the first time that I went out without my parents and brothers. During that period people spoke a lot about "Grease" a new movie with John Travolta, a very famous actor, idol of every teen-agers.

That theatre seemed enormous ...or maybe I was too small.

I was very excited. When the lights turned off, a cartoon began on that huge screen...the movie started!

A short time after, the sea carried me in a beautiful landscape: the two main



actors, John Travolta, and a certain Olivia Newton-john, were on a beach. They looked so funny : he was wearing a typical fifties hairstyle and she was dressed on the wave of the fifties. Suddenly I thought: "my God, what kind of movie is this?". But this thought didn't last long. I began to be interested in it as

soon as i listened to the song “Summer Night”.

The voice of Sandy (Olivia) was beautiful and so sweet. On the melody of “*Hopelessly devoted to you*” I immediately felt in love with that woman. I have admired her and desired to hear her singing for the whole length of the film. I was loving her and at the same time I hated Travolta, because he made her suffer.

When the film was over I was completely in raptures from her voice, and it began “my great passion for this singer”.

The day after I bought the LP “*Summer night*”. Besides I asked to the owner of that music shop if it was possible to have other LP’s of Olivia. It was not such an easy thing, but lately arrived “*Totally Hot*”, a fantastic album that increased my passion for this singer more.

In the news stand I turned over the pages of all the magazines, hoping to find an article that told something about her. Whenever I found a new one, I was very happy...a little less the newsagent.

From that moment on, Olivia has accompanied me till today.

My soundtrack :“Hopelessly devoted to you”, “Xanadu”, “Magic”, “Physical”, “The promise”, “I need love”, “Tutta la vita”, “Soul kiss”, and many others....including “Why me”.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> The help**

Without being aware, she has stand by me in happy and bad times of my life.

Without being aware, she has filled me with joy and she has made me live on hope with her songs.

Without being aware, she has cheered me up in more than one occasion with her laughs.

How many tears I cried, imprisoned in hospital, when at the age of 20 I found myself unable to walk

Her songs has relieved my desperation, when I had to face the daily uncertainty

all alone, not being free of a liberal choice; without my inward personality; only a body to be washed, to be moved, only a soul to remake, only a Mariateresa to renew.

Day by day, struggling for my life.

Day by day, grateful to heaven for seeing dawn and sunset every day.

I'll never be able to fully write down what I went through, because still today the mere thought of it upsets me.

Day by day she has accompanied me, she was close to me with her songs.

Day by day beyond that window, next to which "my life" has set me.

Beyond that window.. till today.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Dreams never die, people do**

Dreams are always with us. They never die, even if sometimes you try your best to make it happen.

I've attempted to kill my dream ,that one that since I was 24 filled me with desire to hear you singing at a concert. My wish to meet you, stare at you and to give you the opportunity to see in my eyes how much devotion I feel for you.

2001 seemed to be the right year. Together with my friend Antonella, we talked about the possibility to come to the USA to meet you. Some months later, there was the certainty: the two dates of the concerts: Atlantic City, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of September.

We began to plan this trip. Although thousand of problem, everything was ready. Hurra, my dream was on point to become true... but there was Bin Laden and he destroyed it.

He with his madness, has killed 3000 persons.

Still nowadays is difficult to think about what he has done.

Still nowadays it seems a nightmare....but it is reality... the bare reality to which a

madman has brought us!!!  
I didn't go to New York

### **4<sup>th</sup> A new try**

And now? Now a new adventure begins

2003, the new tour's dates. All the dates were in different cities, which were very far from each other.

The days was going on, when I read on "Only Olivia", the fans club, that there were two dates in Las Vegas: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October.

After rejecting the other dates for some problem, Antonella, Robin and I decided to fly to Las Vegas.

Even Robin received the same delusion in 2001 when, because of the attack against the twin towers, he couldn't go to Atlantic City.

So we began to organize our trip: we asked for the cost of the flight tickets and of the Hotel. Robin planned especially these two points, because he wouldn't loose this new opportunity. Besides he proposed to spend some days in Tampa; I remember a phone call with Antonella about this: " hi honey, what about Tampa?", and she answered me: "what the hell you say? Why should we have to go in a city that has the name of a sanitary towel!!!"....eheheheh

I had really never thought to this before that moment....and so we both laughed at it!

### **5<sup>th</sup> The preparation for leaving**

After some days, we decided to go to Las Vegas. There was still only a big problem to be solved: my problem. With who could I go? Who could accompany me? I began to ask : Mauri answered me he couldn't (he is afraid to fly and to go in a country where he doesn't understand anything), Luisella answered the same (she is too afraid to fly)... have I extinguished all my possibilities? Nooooo... there was just a friend who had given her help accompany me: Graziella. And so, one day, with much courage I decided to call her.

"hi Graziella, here is Mariateresa, how are you?"

she replied: "very fine, and you?"

I: “me too. Do you remember that one day i have told you about the possibility of a trip in USA?”

And she answered: “ yes, I do”

I: “ and do you remember that I have asked you if you could have accompanied me, and you agreed with me?”

she answered me affirmatively and added: “ Why?”

I said: “ this day is coming! There is the possibility to see Olivia: the two dates of her concert in Las Vegas in October. Would you accompany me?”

And she said surprised: “ my God, till over there? Doesn't she come nearer? Anyway, give me a couple of days before giving you an answer.

I replied: “ thank you very much, you would make me a favour, you know how much it is important for me.

All though, during those days, I continued to get information about the trip and the tickets, with the help of Robin.

After some days the phone call of Graziella arrived: “hallo, here is Graziella, i have decided: I'm going to come with you to Las Vegas; you will realize your dream”

I was on the point to faint. Anyway I told her: “really? Are you sure? Do you know that from now on, you couldn't refuse to do it!”

All her answer were affirmative.

Hurra was the only word that i said: this time we would really leave. Then I called Luisella, in order to inform her about it.

At last I informed also my parents.

It was July and we began to think about the booking. Antonella decided to come with us too.

The band was organized: 3 “*olivioman?*” would fly to Las Vegas.

Speaking with Antonella, I began to imagine a imaginary meeting with “madonna” (i use to name Olivia in this way). People could think that I'm a little bit crazy when they hear me naming Olivia with that “holy” nickname, but in the beginning it was only a joke and now I get used to it. Now i explain you the reason: when I said my friends that I would go on a journey, in order to thank a person, who has helped me in those years, they asked me if I would go to “Lourdes” as a pilgrim.

And it was for this reason that began to name her “madonna” because my pilgrimage was that one to go and listen to her, see at her, could tell her thanks for all the help she has already given.

Robin thought about every each possible opportunities to meet her, and so did we. Then we put together our ideas, but saying the truth my ideas were always a bit mad, eheheh....but quite normal if you think about the reckless enthusiasm that has given me the strength to face that travel.

The days went on and the day of the departure date was getting nearer. How much afraid was I; probably because the year before I had to renounce to this journey 5 days before the fixed day.

I remembered when at night I thought: “what could I do if a thief entered in my house and rubbed my passport? How could I make it in time? and if I had an accident with my car? If Graziella broke a leg, would we leave anyway? and what could it happen if Olivia didn’t arrive for the last date of her concert?”

And so, while the departure date was getting nearer, it seemed that the possibility to meet her faded.

The news from her fan club weren’t good: that year they couldn’t give the pass to the subscribed.

It remained just one possibility: to send a fax to Olivia’s manager.

Definitely I didn’t write just one, but about thirties, but without any results.

We were disappointed because this little Italian “trio” couldn’t find the way to meet Olivia.

Antonella was the only between us who had already met the “madonna”, and she has always been repeating not to dream. But my mind continued to do it.

Even if I was sure that it wouldn’t be easy to meet her, I enjoyed to wish it. My wishes were too much: I would have been there, face to face with Olivia and naturally I would have jumped and embraced. I burst in a laugh when every time i thought to buy a pair of manacles, and after having shaken her hand....zac...together....forever. And her reaction could have at that time continually changed: sometimes she would have laughed, sometimes she would have got angry and she would have called her bodyguard, or she would have looked at my

saying: “she is a little bit stupid!”

The 3<sup>rd</sup> of October was “at the door”, everything was ready and planned meticulously.

Antonella would have reached me at home and then, together with Graziella, we would have gone to Milan and then the departure toward Las Vegas.

## 6<sup>th</sup> The departure

3<sup>rd</sup> October, at 3.30 a.m.; the telephone rang; my mother cried me to wake up. During that night she hadn't slept for fear that my alarm clock wouldn't go!

After a fast breakfast, we put on our leather jacket and then go!!!

In Valdagno there was Graziella, so dressed as we were, who were waiting for us.

We drove for three hours and after a break for lunch, we finally reached Malpensa airport in Milan.

Wow!... it was the first time that i saw an airport...it is really big!

We checked immediately in, following Antonella's advice. Thanks to God we were in time: there was already a problem!

It hadn't been enough the recommendations to the travel agency and to the air Delta Company!

The night before, I called personally to the travel agency to mind that I was on a wheelchair. Cristina, the representative of the travel agency, who had booked the flight, had also made about ten or so phone calls to try not to have an unpleasant surprise and in order to have a comfortable flight.

But at the check-in desk the air company hadn't received this information. So they had to assign me a normal sit and I run the risk of losing the flight, if someone else on the wheelchair would have taken my same airplane.

For this reason Antonella's advice was essential !!!

Besides she decided to inform the Atlanta airport about this problem in order to take precautions for the flight Atlanta-Las Vegas. In the meanwhile Robin arrived and after two hours, at 11 a.m. we boarded: it was my first time on a airplane. I





don't remember very well, but my first impression was that to be in bus. Now everything was in order: I was in my special sit between Graziella and Antonella; Robin was six or seven rows behind.

"oh my God" exclaimed when the airplane was moving... "oh my Gooooood!!!!" I cried even when it was taking off, adding also: "Thy will be done!"

Honestly speaking, I thought it would have been worse. I wasn't scared, I didn't feel any air pocket. My first take-off was perfect. The impact with the hostesses, instead, was a tragedy. I used to see them on TV or in the movies; nice smiling girls who did all they could to make passengers feel comfortable. On this plane they were all bad looking and pretty old. The youngest one could have been 55. They were ugly, very ugly, I should say. I was very surprised, and told my friends; "Have you seen the hostesses?" They all laughed and Antonella said; "Wait to see the one who's coming!"

After getting over this shock ehehe, just a way of saying "shock", they brought us some food.

Among a chat, a movie, a perturbation, the fateful necessity came: the rest room. Antonella called one of these bad looking woman. I saw her coming with a little wheel chair, one of those you can assemble and take apart in a couple of minutes. I felt a bit bad. Shall I get on "that thingie" to go to the rest room. Graziella helped me to get on it and the "hostess" pushed it to the rest room. Who said disabled don't have problems on airplanes? I'd really like to look at their face! Shouldn't everyone have the same comfort?! Unfortunately I had to put up with some uneasiness, and the only equal thing is the ticket price. The hostesses created a sort of anteroom, so that I could get into that hole without showing off my body. It was pretty hard for Gabriella to drag me in there. In that very moment we went through a perturbation and we were wobbling. All the passengers looked at me while I was going back to my seat. I felt even more "disabled" tied as I was on that pseudo wheel chair. Yet, my thought was always the same; "I would go through this and much more to be able to see Olivia". Even when my legs were hurting a lot, just thinking about this gave me a relief. The idea that I would have seen her the day after, that I would have heard her sing, gave me the strength to put up with everything.

The time for landing came, and even then I didn't feel anything. Perhaps I was too excited. We got to Atlanta, and after passing the customs, I realized I was in

America.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Americaaaaaaa**

Here is America!

My destination was getting closer and closer.

I had a hard impact with the check-in in Atlanta, as a policewoman frisked me. It wasn't easy with the language. She talked to me and told me where to place my hands. I didn't always understand, but I always said "YES". I was alone and felt scared. For the first time a person I didn't know was touching me. When the policewoman asked me if she could take my shoes off, I didn't understand; it was too difficult of a sentence. I looked at her, and after saying my usual "yes", I saw her getting closer and undo my shoes. At this point I understood that she wanted to check if I had something in my shoes. After September 11<sup>th</sup> they've become very strict and check everything. Since I couldn't pass through the metal detector as it would have gone on because of the wheel chair, I got frisked 3 times during this trip. But I had my thought: "I have to put up with everything to see Olivia". We left again. Another boarding, another fit of anger for the assignment of the seats. Antonella had to fight a little to make me assign a seat where my legs could have little room.

Las Vegas was getting closer and closer; Olivia was getting closer and closer. After a five-hour flight we finally began to see the lights of the city, an ocean of lights. We checked if at the airport there were the posters advertising the concert, but they were not there.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Las Vegas**

The first stop was at a stall where we had a coffee, and –strange but true- it was really good. Immediately after this Robin asked for a cab, but then we decided to take a limo. As we shared the fee, it didn't cost us that much, but the emotion to arrive at the hotel on that car was much.

I remember that, when it was time to get on the limo, a man came over after putting the luggage in the trunk, and asked me if I wanted to sell my wheel chair to him. His wife was also on a wheel chair and he wanted to take mine home to

her. More than once he asked me how much money I wanted. I explained to him that I couldn't sell it, as those wheels were my legs. Thinking back again to that episode, I find it strange, in the US, to find someone who wants my wheel chair. America is in the forefront of everything. Maybe I just met a crazy man. I seem to have something that attracts this kind of people. Everywhere I go some weird person approaches me.

After a few minutes I saw through the window of the limo the big poster that advertises Olivia's concerts. Wow! It was beautiful!

Five minutes on this wonderful car, we thought we were dreaming. I showed Graziella the mini bar and the TV; leather and brier-root-coverings. Everything was like in a dream, in a movie.

We get at the hotel, the doors open and we get off the car.

The amazement on entering the hotel was much. It's huge, and has the Tour Eiffel outside. The Paris Hotel reproduces a Part of Paris: the bistrot, the streets, it was incredible, we felt like we were in the French capital city. At the reception we got the keys to our rooms.

On the seventh floor, in front of our rooms, we greet Robin and agree to hear from each other the following day, for breakfast.

The room was really beautiful, in French style. Antonella turned on the TV and there it was, the ad of Olivia's concert. The video clip and the song were "Precious Love". I had never seen it so often on TV. We decided to take a shower, first, and then go out late in the evening. Graziella was worried about me, as my legs were swollen three time as much.

After showering, we lay down for 5 minutes, but I couldn't stay there, I wanted to enjoy every single moment of this trip.

After 20 minutes we were in the hall of the hotel.

We leave the Paris Hotel, and I see right in front of me a big screen with her nice big face. It was the advertising for the concerts. Wow! What emotion! It's not possible, it feels like a movie, but it's true. We decide to go and see the Caesars Hotel, and, on my way I see her again in those big screens. Amazement and joy again. I remember I said; "Mamma mia, I've never seen her in such a big picture". The time seemed not to go by. In those moments I wanted the hands of time to say 8 p.m. of the day after, the time for the concert. We kept walking and got to

the Bellaggio Hotel, with its beautiful fountains which gives wonderful effects through the way the water springs. After this, we went to the Caesars Hotel. Unbelievable, they reproduced the ancient Rome. We started feeling tired, it was 3 o'clock a.m., and we decided to go back to our hotel. We went to bed and fell immediately asleep. It was about 3:30 a.m. Yet, the emotion tended to take away the tiredness. Had it been possible to see Olivia that very moment, I'd have gone. Despite the hardness of the trip, nothing could stop me. But if I slept, the night would go quickly, or what remained of it. I didn't sleep very much, perhaps a couple of hours. At 7 a.m. I was already awoken and very alive, ready to start a wonderful day. I woke up the girls and we started to get ready. Robin called us to know when we could meet for breakfast. At 8 a.m. we left the room and called the man of the group, ehehe. We decided to have a big breakfast. To say "big" is not enough, there was anything we could have. I wanted to rush to be able to visit the city, even though I knew I would wait to see Olivia in front of the hotel. The time seemed never to go by, not even when I was looking for a puppet to give Olivia. Finally, after going from one shop to another, the afternoon came. We agreed with Robin to meet behind the hotel, as, according to him, that was where Olivia would arrive by bus. Antonella didn't think the same, and after waiting for an hour we admitted she was right. We went back to the hotel. Robin and I wanted to order some flowers to bring Olivia during the concert. Before this, Antonella and I stopped at the box office, where the ticket for the concert were sold. Antonella was quite stressed and angry, because she really wanted me to meet Olivia. Antonella's parents, when she left from home, told her; "Do as much as possible so that Mariateresa can meet Olivia". I feel a bit guilty for she really had pretty many fits of anger. At the box office she talked to the director, explaining to him my situation, and telling him I came from Italy to meet her. Yet, this person just kept saying Olivia didn't want to meet anyone, with no exception. To hear those word was for me like a cold shower, and for Antonella a further fit of anger. We went up to the room and found the flowers Robin and I had ordered in the afternoon by phone. I had chosen white roses, Robin the yellow ones. Probably not the roses Olivia particularly loved. Antonella, in fact, told us very kindly; "You're surely two fools. She likes red roses". To which I answered; "It doesn't matter, I like white roses, and these flowers are supposed to tell her my feelings". Shortly after Robin joined us and we began to glue the sheets for the banner I had prepared: the phrase.....

It was 7 p.m., everything was ready, the banner, the flowers... a little touch to the look and there it was, the great moment had arrived.

Graziella was cracking up for laughing when she saw us with the roses. We were all dressed up, and someone could think we were going to a wedding, as in Las Vegas people get married very easily. To some extent, it was like a wedding. In a few moments I'd have seen her, finally surrounded by her voice and her smile.

## 9<sup>th</sup> The concert

We got in the theater, we were in the tenth row. We could see the stage very well and I was comfortable. I could carry the roses. I looked at the people, trying to find someone I knew. In the past months I had been watching the pictures of Olivia's fans on *Only Olivia*. I was trying to find Nancy, my friend from New York, but I couldn't see her. I wasn't sure the person I saw was herself.

I was agitated, thrilled, and –I think- on another level. I didn't know what could happen. I only knew I was there and that in a while my dream would come true. I'd have seen her. I looked at Antonella, I did want to attend my first concert with her; we had been talking about this for years.

8 o'clock p.m. The lights go out. The notes of the song "I HONESTLY LOVE YOU" can be heard. From the right side of the stage I hear her voice and start crying. She comes in and I cried, and cried, and cried. I just couldn't stop. It was stronger than me. I was there, after 24 years I could listen to her, I could see her. In that moment my eyes couldn't see anything. With my soul I could perceive Olivia's magnificence. My heart was beating fast and tears were flowing down my face, without pause. I was trembling and making my wheel chair do the same. Her voice was in me and I couldn't believe it. I couldn't open my eyes, I was afraid to wake up, I was afraid it was a dream. I kept crying and every second felt like eternity. Every tear seemed to make up for the absence of these years. The desire that has surrounded me for all this time. I opened my eyes and she was there. It was not a dream. She was wearing a red dress and was very beautiful, gorgeous, wonderful.

I was happy and full of feelings. I was there, but, at the same time, I felt as if I was in another dimension, next to her. I felt like I was flying. Antonella kept

telling me to stop crying, but it wasn't that easy. At the end of the song there was a burst of applause, and all the fans were welcoming this wonderful woman. I looked at Antonella to share my feelings with her. She had a very sad face, but, at the same time, she was happy, even though she didn't want to admit it. She had mixed feelings; on one hand she was happy to be there with me, on the other hand she was disappointed because I couldn't meet Olivia. After Olivia welcomed

us, the second song began "Have You Ever Been Mellow".



Antonella, as she was trying to make me stop crying, asked me if I wanted to bring the roses during this song. I felt scared, yet I said "yes". She got up, I took the flowers and we tried to come out of the reserved seat where I was. While doing this, someone of the staff

told us we couldn't do it and invites us to go back to our seats. Antonella didn't

even think about that, telling this person we were just going to bring the roses. So we ran down so that no one could stop us. We got by the stage. In that moment Olivia was on the left side and little by little she comes towards the middle. She saw me and came towards me, with a smile I can't define. My eyes were swollen because of the many tears I cried, I could hardly be recognized, I



I couldn't realize what was going on. She was in front of me and bowed down giving me her hand. I tried to let her know that my right hand couldn't reach her. I gave her the roses so that my left hand was free to hold hers. I gazed at her intensely, and she did the same. These were immense moments, we were looking at each other's eyes. I could tell her with my lips; "I LOVE YOU", she felt touched, held my hand tightly, and said very sweetly "THANK YOU"..... still holding each other's hand for a few moments and then they separated. She smiled at me while we were leaving.

I went back to my place as happy as ever. I had been able to convey my feelings to her. I think she noticed my eyes swollen for joyful tears as her eyes showed she felt moved. Antonella was happy too. In that moment I looked at Robin, yet without saying anything, as Olivia was singing and I wanted to enjoy every single moment of her presence. My heart was beating fast, it went through a big test: the fact that I could hold her hand, look into her eyes, see her smile which in the past enlightened me through the pictures and now I could see it live.



I kept saying she was fantastic, wonderful, and these words of mine were accompanied by the lyrics of her songs.

She's very joyful. She would tell us some jokes during the break between a song and the other, apologizing if she missed some words. She did miss many words while singing a song, and smiled. She, goddess in everything.

Every song brought up thousands of feelings, greatest feelings.

I kept crying, even if not as much as at the beginning. I wanted to stop the hands of time. I wanted to listen to her endlessly.

I wanted to hug her in that moment. During some songs we lifted up the banner. I doubt that she saw it, but it was nice anyway. Time was going by too fast. Knowing the concert schedule, I knew that it was going to be over, that I wouldn't see her till the day after, and this made me sad, even if I was full of happiness. She said goodbye and left while singing "I LOVE YOU, I HONESTLY LOVE



YOU”. The applause lasted for a long time. She was no longer there. At that point, Antonella reminds me that we were not going to leave the theater but were going in front of the backstage entrance, hoping to get a pass to meet her. So we did.

## 10<sup>th</sup> The pass

We waited in front of that entrance. The staff invites us to go out. Antonella tells my story, explaining I came from Italy to meet her, but nothing, those people didn't want to let me pass. On the contrary, she said Olivia didn't want to meet any fan. That wasn't true though, as some people were going in. Antonella didn't give up and we remained there. After 10 minutes those people said again we had to leave, but we didn't move. We had a little argument raising voices, I was in the way where people had to pass to go out. Probably for this reason, a security man came over to us asking what was going on. Antonella explained I was there to meet Olivia, that I came from Italy, that I put up with many difficulties and humiliations. Antonella said these very words; “We don't ask that much, please, ask Olivia if she would like to meet a girl who came from Italy only to meet her. Tell her it's the girl who brought her white roses. If Olivia says she doesn't want to meet her, we will leave”. After a few minutes, that man came back with a smile on his face and said to us; “Olivia wants to meet her”. He asked what's my name. Antonella's voice was faltering, and she was crying. Realizing we were crying, this guy tells us not to cry anymore and that we would go in a while. And it happened. After a while we entered the first anteroom, hardly believing we could meet her. Antonella gave me a hug and asked if I was happy. “Happy” is not enough, I was superhappy. I was touching the sky. We still waited for a little and then we got into the room where I would have met the goddess.



## 11<sup>th</sup> The encounter

At first we sat next to the door and waited. Antonella said to me; “The goddess in



leopard skin is coming. I'm begging you, do not cry, be calm". It's not easy. I was turned around and the first thing I saw was the skirt made of leopard skin that wrapped her behind. She approached me and smiled at me, shook my hand and held it tight, gave me a hug. She took a chair and sat in front of me. She was in between us and the rest of the people. In that moment it was as if we were alone, only the three of us. I looked at her and said; "I LOVE YOU". I told her she was very beautiful and very skilful. My English is not good enough, but Antonella helped me translating my words. I told her it was very important for me, as I had been following her for 24 years. I told her she helped me a lot. She caressed my hand tenderly, holding it tight in hers. She was looking at me while I was speaking, smiled sweetly at me and got moved when I told her she helped me a lot through my bad times. I thanked her for being close to me with her songs and the smiles she gave me through her pictures. I was very moved and felt she was moved too. Then she caressed my right cheek. I gazed at her intensely, but I can't create a



contact. I wanted to hold her, but it was as if I was petrified. We looked at each other. She answered me as slowly as possible to make me understand as much as possible. She thanked me and said she was happy that she helped me. Then I took out of my purse a little box with a golden heart inside. A month before I had drawn that and sent it to a jeweler's shop to have that heart made. When she saw it, she was surprised, said it was very beautiful and asked if I had really created it. I said "yes". Antonella repeated that with a better English. Olivia looked at it over and over again and said it looked like the logo of her record company. I looked at her and said that was my heart and I was giving it to her. I brought my left hand



to my breast and gave it to her. She grazed the jewel and smiled at me saying it was very beautiful. Then she asked me how long I was staying in Las Vegas. When I answered; "Only 2 days, I'm here only to see you and then I will go back", she looked at Antonella and asked, "Is it true?" SHE TOUGHT SHE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MY WORDS. Antonella said she understood right. Olivia got near me, held my hand, and, with tears in her eyes, looked at me. She couldn't believe I had traveled so much just to be able to see her, and I couldn't believe she was holding my hand and gazing at me so intensely. I told her that I had planned that trip already in 2001, but then the tragedy in New York happened. She said; "A terrible tragedy", and, thinking about that attack, her body kind of trembled. I changed subject, and told her I have a web site dedicated to her. It's my dedication of love. Surprised and happy she asked for the web site address, but I forgot to give it to her. She asked if I had a picture where she could write a dedication or her autograph. Unfortunately I had to say "no". I had nothing with me as I didn't think I'd meet her. She sat next to, between Antonella and me, and began to ask my friend information about my health, while holding my right arm with her left hand. She asked if the illness is in progress or was still. When Antonella told her my illness was still, she looked at me and smiled squeezing my arm and grazed my right hand. She realized I had some problem. Antonella kept telling her my story and told her that I adore the song "WHY ME", that I had the same questions and answers when I heard it. In that song she wrote the very feelings of people who, in one way or the other, have problems. I said to her it's a beautiful song and thanked her for writing it. She looked at me with her moved eyes and said it's her favorite song too, and squeezed my arm and then my hand. I would never have thought she could be interested in me. She asked me again if I had a picture to write her autograph, and I said "no". at that point she called one of the staff asking to have a tour program or a picture, she gave this person the little box with the heart I gave her, and, while doing this, she smiled. Then she said; "And the picture?" So Antonella got up and prepared the camera. In the meantime the picture for the dedication came, and Olivia started writing on it, always holding my arm. I looked at her and saw all her radiance, and her sweetest way of looking. Her freshness made me think back and see her in "Grease". Her will of living sweeps away the years from her face. Even a bit older, she's more beautiful. Her hands let show that the years go by. She, in all that she is, shining like a sun ray that warms without burning. She, with a little make-up; the light

blue on her eyes that make her even more like an angel; with little perfume; with that white-beige shirt. She, who was there, writing some words for me.

She gave me the picture and smiled, turned to Antonella and asked; “Don’t you want it?” Antonella said she was only there for me, but Olivia gave a picture to her too. Then she said to me “Now we’re going to take a picture”. She came even closer to me, we were cheek to cheek, and her arm was around me. After Antonella took the first picture, she said to take another one. She took my arm, I wanted to look at her. When I turned to her she was looking at me, but I wasn’t able to do the same. The intensity of her eyes goes beyond every expectation and imagination. We also took a picture with the three of us. Olivia got up and said; “Unfortunately I have to go to meet the other fans now”. We said we knew it. She tanked me and held my hand tight, but I don’t remember if she gave me a hug. . . . . We departed, the last image I have of her that evening is her back, her blond hair and the leopard skin skirt.

We left the room, still not believing that we spent 20 minutes with her. Even today for us it’s hard to believe this woman’s sensitivity. We’re very happy that we’ve been following her for 24 years; we’re very happy that “OUR OLIVIA” is real and not fake.

## **12<sup>th</sup> The awareness: she is special**

We left the theater, both with our heart full of tears, and found Robin and Graziella waiting for us, both happy when they saw the picture in my hands, as they understood I had been able to meet her. On our way back we met another fan who looked unhappy and angry, but we couldn’t care less, Antonella and I thought! The world could fall apart. In that moment I could save the entire human kind as I had so many positive feelings inside me.

We went to our room to leave the pictures, I couldn’t risk to damage them. I looked at that nice big face again with the dedication and put them away in the luggage.

We decided to have supper –it was 11 p.m.– even if the food was not on the top of the list. We went to a restaurant and ate. We told Robin about our encounter with the goddess, that’s how we finished the day.

We went back to our room and got ready for the night. I wasn't sleepy, but, at the same time, I wanted to be alone with my thoughts. I was trying to remember the magic encounter. Everything felt like in a movie, I could hardly believe it, and I feel the same even now while I'm writing. I feel like I can't tell all my feelings, and I'm sure I will never be able to do it completely. Everything is in my heart, in my soul.

After trying to remember as much as possible, I finally fell asleep. In the middle of the night—it was around 3 a.m.—I felt like someone was watching me sleep. It was Antonella who was watching me, she hoped I was awake. She wanted to talk to me. This encounter had been important for her too, like a release. We were afraid that Olivia was not the one we had idealized in all these years. Antonella's tears were mine too, we were both happy, aware of the greatness of this woman.

### **13<sup>th</sup> The second day in Las Vegas**

A brand new morning and I want the time go by fast again. I wanted to see her again, to get back those feelings.

We visited the city for a while: the EMG Hotel and other hotels, Excalibur, Montecarlo, Luxor. I can't describe these hotels, they all represent a certain time or city. At the Excalibur Hotel two entertainers asked me what I was doing in Las Vegas. I was wearing the shirt with Olivia's face on it and answered; "I came here to attend Olivia Newton-John's concerts, I come from Italy". I noticed they were a bit surprised.

I was already thinking about the night. I wanted it to be 8 p.m. Thank God time went by fast while we were laughing, taking pictures and walking to see as much as possible in the shortest time possible. I bought a puppet to give Olivia during the concert. Graziella and I went back to the Caesars Hotel. There were so many things that it was hard to choose. Any kind of puppets and price. I didn't want to buy the same little bear, so we decided to get a big white dog. Then we went back to the hotel, Graziella was tired, but I wasn't. I was very excited and this swept my tiredness away. In fact, once back in the room, I went immediately out with Antonella. I think I rested only for 10 minutes. My legs were very swollen. Antonella and I went to the swimming-pool, not hoping to meet Olivia as many fans did, but just to see the environment and realize how many people were there. I saw

the guitarist, Andy, who greeted me with a big smile. I, as shy as I am, could only say “Ciao”. It felt good to be at the pool, it was warm, but after a while we decided for the slot-machines. Las Vegas is the city of games and we couldn’t help playing.

It was another way to kill the time, to make it go by fast. The night was drawing near, but, at the same time, also the time to leave. The following night I wouldn’t have seen her.

After losing 40 bucks we went back to the hotel room to get ready.

The excitement was much, it hadn’t diminished. The waiting was thrilling.

## **14<sup>th</sup> The second concert**

We had to go earlier that night, otherwise we could have run the risk of not being able to buy the different gadgets. When we got to the store, we found a long queue. While waiting I saw a man with a face that looked familiar. He looked at me and said; “Mariateresa”. I went towards him and realized he was Nancy’s husband. I saw her too, finally, after looking for her for one day. I introduced myself with my bad English. Antonella came to help me, we talked for a while till it was our turn at the store. I bought myself a T-shirt, a key-ring, a magnetic picture and the tour program. I couldn’t take my eyes away from the program, it had wonderful pictures. As I’m always afraid to damage anything that reminds me of Olivia, I asked Robin to take my things to my room. I went back to Tom and Nancy with Antonella. Nancy, very nicely, showed me the pictures she had taken the night before, and she was very sorry that she wasn’t able to take a picture while I was giving the flowers to Olivia. She took wonderful pictures. As the doors of the theater opened, we went in. My heart was beating fast, I was about to see her again, to listen to her. The lights went out and I was enchanted by the magic of her voice.

Wrapped up in my feelings, song after song, my soul was full of joy. Like the night before, my eyes were, of course, full of tears. I couldn’t film her with my camera, I wanted to enjoy the concert as much as possible. I filmed only for a few minutes, and the song I liked the least. The security noticed me, and they came to tell me I couldn’t use my camera. I felt relieved. I looked at Antonella and saw

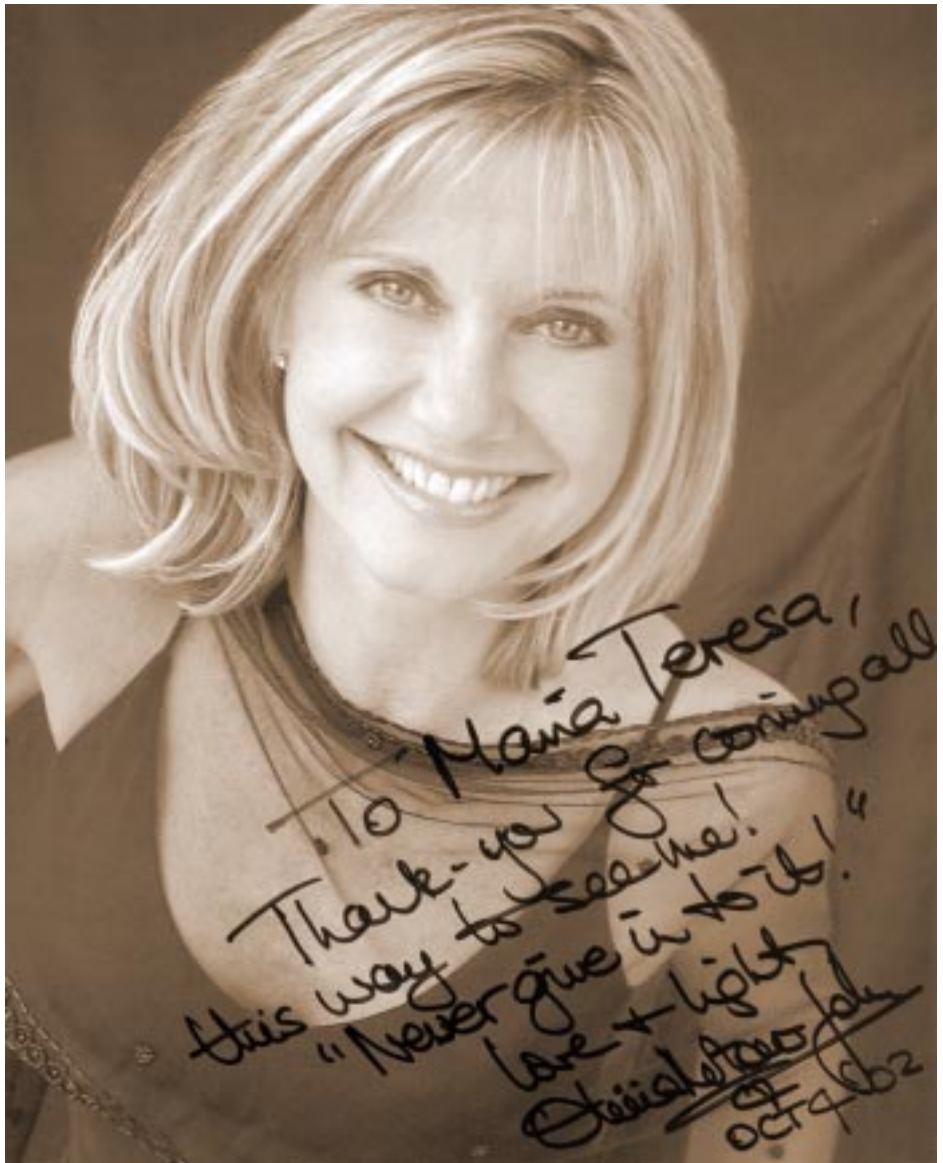
that she was finally happy; she could enjoy the concert. The night before, instead, she was very disappointed because she couldn't find the way to make me meet her. While Olivia was singing the song "Not Gonna Give In To It", we decided to bring the big puppet dog. We chose that song because of the dedication Olivia wrote the night before. So we did, I gave her the puppet and she shook my hand. I stayed there for a short time, I didn't want to be too intrusive, as she already spared me a lot of time the night before. If I think about those nights again, I just can't help crying. Tears of joy and sadness at the same time, as I'd like to see her again and I don't know when it happens again. As every magic moment, this ended too. She said goodbye while singing "I Love You, I Honestly Love You". We left the theater and we were supposed to meet Nancy and Tom again. We had a short chat, as we had to pay the bill at the hotel, and the following day we had to be at the airport very early in the morning. Satisfied, we went back to our room, and I didn't feel only joy inside. The night went by fast, and when the alarm clock rang I realized I had to leave Las Vegas.

## **15<sup>th</sup> Our return home**

As we did on our arrival, we decided to take a limo to get to the airport. This time it was black, more luxurious than the one we took two days before. The return trip began. Our first stop was in Atlanta and then Milan. The night we spent on the plane was not very easy, or maybe I didn't have the same strength as I did on my way to Las Vegas. My purpose to see her was gone. I wasn't repeating the phrase "For her this and much more", because I was going far from her.

We got in Milan. My only thought was "I'll go back next year", and this is till my thought, after three months that I met her. The will of seeing her again, of listening to her is giving me much strength, and I'll do all I can to make my wish come true again.

**Thanks to Graziella, Antonella, and Robin: you've been wonderful fellow travelers.**



To Maria Teresa,  
Thank-you for coming all  
this way to see me!  
"Never give up to it!"  
Love + light  
Debbie Starob  
OCT 4 1982