

Margaret puts the dishes in the sink. Leaning heavily against the counter, she holds her head in her hands. She slowly realizes Piero is standing in the corner, eating toast, watching her. He smiles.

PIERO SIDES

MARGARET

You want some butter with that?
(pause)
Jam? Caviar with a silver spoon?

Piero shakes head no at each.

MARGARET

How about a cozy chair, we don't want you to wear yourself out.

PIERO

You make this bread?

MARGARET

Nothing wrong with that bread.
(looks out the window, unnerved)
Since when do you speak English? I saw Mr. J in the yard ... you stay right there. I gotta tell somebody
(Picks up wooden spoon)
Mister Jamison! Don't you move, I know how to use this.

He puts ID papers on table and backs up

PIERO

Is okay! Look, see, here. See? English. I speak English. Everybody know, the Army, *Dottore* Jamison ... is good.

MARGARET

He knows?

PIERO

Certo. In my mama's hotel, in *Roma*, we get many people from *Inghilterra*, England, I learn from them. And the cowboy movie picture. "We gotta get them varmints!" I love the cowboys. What is varmint?

MARGARET

You is varmint. Never thought to tell *me*, standing around like a fool in my kitchen? Figures ... the government gives you to us, and all the while you're spying. And if the bread's so horrible don't eat it, Spy.

PIERO

I don't say 'orrible, I say do you make the bread. Can you please put down this spoon?

MARGARET

Yes, I "make the bread". Oh, choke on it, I don't care. Go back to your camp and eat spaghetti if you don't like what we have here. Nobody asked you to come to America.

PIERO

Scusi, a very big man points a very big gun in my face, he *ask* me to come to America. And nobody *give* me to you, *Signorina. Dottore* Jamison does not own me, *Signorina*, American Army does not own me, *Sig. nor. ina*. I give myself. They say you need Piero in this kitchen, Piero is in this kitchen. Myself.

MARGARET

But you are a prisoner.

PIERO

Si, they put me in the prison. But I am not the *criminale*.

MARGARET

Not a criminal. But still a prisoner. It's hard for me to tell the difference.

PIERO

Then you are lucky to have never been either one. *Tutto qua*.

(pause, awkwardly changing subject)

How do you know spaghetti? All your friends, they say *noo-dles*, I don't know this *noo-dles*.

MARGARET

I lived in New York City. I've probably seen more people eating spaghetti than you have. And you don't know my friends.

PIERO

Not ... okay, not *your* friends. *Giulio Cesare*, you know? *Amici, Romani, Compaesani*. I am the *Romani*, of course.

MARGARET

Lord save us, an actor, too. Well, Spy, you couldn't know my friends, because ... I don't have any.

PIERO

This is a terrible thing to say.

MARGARET

Besides, all you have to do is go over to Jimmy's Grill on Thursday. Thursday is spaghetti night.

PIERO

I don't think they like me too much in this Jimmy's grill. But one day, when the war is over, maybe we go together there, no?

MARGARET

No.

(pause)

No! Besides, I don't think this war is ever going to be over.

PIERO

Oh dio, don't say this even like a joke, God will hear you. Why do you laugh?

MARGARET

You? With me? In Jimmy's. I don't think so.

PIERO

Mah, you are right. I will ask someone else.

(looks out at the moon)

Eh, *buon giorno, Signorina Luna* ... you and me, we go to jimmysgrill for spaghetti? *Un po' di vino*, some dancing—do you think jimmysgrill is big enough so *la Luna* and me, we could dance? My arms are not very long, we have to dance like this

(arms spread wide)

but I very much love the round woman, *capisci?*

MARGARET

Why are you looking at me like that?

PIERO

I wonder ... how round is your mama?

MARGARET

You talk about my mother again, Spy, and that camp will seem like a holiday.

PIERO

I make the joke! I have respect for your mama, your papa, your whole family, very nice very beautiful people. You are a very feisty girl, I like that.

MARGARET

You're calling me feisty? What's next ... uppity?

PIERO

I don't know this “uppiddy”. Feisty, I learn from the cowboy ... I never know what it means until now.

MARGARET

Great, the spy likes me. Listen, now that we're ... speaking the same language, I expect you to work, or things are going to get very unpleasant around here. Understand?

PIERO

Si, si, capisco. I do not want things to be ... unpleasant, here too.

MARGARET

I bet you probably had a pretty good life back there in Italy.

PIERO

(wistfully)
In my country –

MARGARET

I don't like you lurking around, listening in on conversations. Lord knows what you've heard already. That's probably why they locked you up.

PIERO

(points at papers)
This word they put on my paper, look ... look, “unwilling combatant”. *Si. Il Duce* he tells me, here is a gun, you go to Africa, I go to Africa. Put up your hands, *si, si*, Gee. Eye. Joe, I put up my hands. Get on this boat, go in that place, put on this clothes. Now, I am, like you say ...
(he turns and points to the stencil on his shirt – there is no “W” in Italian)
Pee. Doh-pia-voo ... boo ...

MARGARET

Double-you ...

PIERO

I have the big letters on my back, is easy to see what I am. You should be happy in this big house with this nice family, this nice bread, but you are not happy. You are only in a nicer prison. You have letters on your back too, I just can't read them yet.

MARGARET

You keep your eyes to yourself. I don't need some raggedy Fascist judging my life. I am fine.

PIERO

Like *Signore Ty* say ... I forget. Who I talk to. The po. Tay. Toe, they are in the corner, there is other work to do somewhere else. Okay? Okay.

As he leaves, Margaret goes back to work, begrudgingly.

