

(Chapter 3, A Typical Day)

"... As soon as Tony left the house, Caterina's first cousin, Anna, rang the bell.

"Hello, Anna, so nice to see you.'

"So nice to see you, too. Here, I brought you some fresh tomatoes from my garden.'

"*Grazie*, I'm glad you stopped by. Have dinner with us. It will be ready in about an hour. Also, Rosa Maria and my husband will be home from work soon, and my father should be walking through the door at any minute. They'll both be joining us. Sit down. Have a meatball. I just made them.'

"Thank you, Caterina.'

"Buona Giornata,' said Luigi upon returning home from his new position as a sanitation worker. As he took a seat on the living room couch, the doorbell rang.

"JJ, go answer the door,' said Caterina.

"Who is it... 'The Fixture'?' asked Luigi. (Angie's friend, Francesca Panarelli, visited their home so many times he nicknamed her.)

"No, it's your cousin Tessie,' announced JJ.

"Caterina, wiping her hands on a dishcloth, walked out of the kitchen and greeted her.

"Come in, Tessie. Stay for dinner. You can tell us all about your trip to Italy.'

"Oh, what a trip! We all had such a great time. Italy was fabulous!

"As the family ate, Tessie regaled everyone about her recent travels with her fellow parishioners and Father Cuccarelli, the Catholic parish priest whose Masses they all attended. She capped her presentation with a gem: 'You'll never guess what happened on the trip! Father Cuccarelli introduced all of us to *his mistress and illegitimate son* when we visited Napoli! Can you believe they live in a villa there?!'

"Cousin Anna blessed herself with the sign of the cross. Giuseppe retorted, 'I'm not surprised. Priests' souls are blacker than the robes they wear!'

“The level of excitement over the details rose with the volume of their voices as they discussed the pros and cons of the unusual pairing they had just heard about from Tessie. Rosa Maria suggested that maybe Father Cuccarelli was a late-comer to his calling and that he might have had a relationship with the boy’s mother before he became a priest, explaining why he did not hide the connection!

“Giuseppe snapped, ‘Nonsense! This kind of living is normal in Italy.’

“Everyone at the table knew that probably he was right, and his remark gave them something else to consider. Finally, the conversation simmered down, followed by a few choice words, a little disagreement, and some nervous laughter...”