

ENGLISHMAN. Let's have another bottle of vino. (*Rises crosses to Left of table.*) Mimi! Veni qua!
MIMI. (*Off Left*) Sì, sì—Vengo—

(ENGLISHMAN crosses back to seat.)

ROBERT. (*Crosses down to rocker. Standing near rocker with drink, looks at his watch.*) It's almost midnight.

LISA. I'm sorry you are not in New York.

ROBERT. Stop it.

LISA. But you would have a wonderful time in New York.

ROBERT. I'm having a wonderful time here.

(ANTONIO is still seated. ROBERT crosses back to table for bottle.)

ANTONIO. (*To Lisa*) It is different for you, Signora. You will go to America with your husband when the war ends. But for us? We will be punished!

ROBERT. (*Holding bottle*) Punished!

ANTONIO. (*To down Left*) Yes, punished! Why? Because we made the war, we supported the regime! But how do you punish us? Do you go and pick out the guilty one and say: he's guilty, him we shoot? This is the bad one, he is responsible, him we imprison! No!—The axe on all our necks!

ROBERT. Don't look at me. I'm not responsible

ANTONIO. (*Crosses to Robert*) Who is?

ROBERT. (*Crosses Left*) Christopher Columbus. How the hell should I know?

ANTONIO. Oh, the magnificent promises the radio made us! The political paradise we were promised! Wait, wait! There will be bread, peace, freedom when the Allies come! But where is this paradise?

ADELE. Enough!

ANTONIO. I must speak! It's choking me!

ADELE. (*Rises from couch*) Basta! Va ventro—

ANTONIO. The liberation! (*Laughs; a short, hard, quick*

laugh.) Yes. I'll spoil the party. The Alleati must have their parties.

ADELE. (*Drawing him away*) Basta. Enough now.

(ANTONIO exits Left.)

ENGLISHMAN. Now there's a bloody unhappy bloke. (*Outside, in the dark, the sudden sound of BELLS and of PISTOLS being fired.*)

Midnight. Happy New Year's. (*Standing*) Come on. Let's go out into the garden and see the fireworks. Listen to them. It's a mutiny. It sounds like a bloody mutiny. (*Exits quickly Left.*)

(ADELE puts wine glass on sideboard. Ugo follows slowly.

ALL exit except ROBERT and LISA.)

ROBERT. (*Pouring drink at table*) Would you like some cognac? Ugo thinks I was overcharged for it.

LISA. No.

ROBERT. Why not? It'll warm you. (*Crosses to rocker*) Besides, you ought to celebrate the New Year's.

LISA. You celebrate it.

ROBERT. The bartender said it was pre-liberation cognac.

LISA. I believe you. It is very good cognac. But I don't want any.

ROBERT. Okay. (*Drinks, listening to bells.*)

(LISA takes coat from chair.)

The priest, up there in the church tower, ringing the bells must be cold tonight. (*Kneels Right of rocker.*) Lisa, usually we kiss at midnight on New Year's in America.

LISA. No.

ROBERT. Why not?

LISA. (*Rises, crosses up to arch*) I'm tired.

ROBERT. (*Follows her with cognac and glass*) Who was the friend? The one who talked so much?

LISA. (*In corridor, crossing up*) A friend.

THE GIRL ON THE VIA FLAMINIA ACT II
(They go into bedroom. LIGHTS fade up in bedroom and fade out in dining room.)

ROBERT. When I was a kid, New Year's we'd lean out of the window and blow a tin horn or rattle a cowbell.
(Lisa sits on bed. A pause.)

Does your friend have a mustache? *(At table.)*

LISA. What?

ROBERT. *(Crosses Right)* Maybe your friend sings arias through his mustache.

LISA. *(Falls back on bed)* Why should it matter?

ROBERT. It doesn't matter. No tin horns, no cowbells and a girl who's too tired to kiss me. *(Crosses to table)* No, it doesn't matter. Except you know how the Americans are. *(Drinks.)*

LISA. No. How are the Americans?

ROBERT. Suspicious.

LISA. Really?

ROBERT. And jealous.

LISA. What a surprise. I did not think the Americans were capable of jealousy.

ROBERT. *(Turns)* They're capable. Where were you?

LISA. It does not matter.

ROBERT. If you say that again, I'll—

LISA. Yes?

ROBERT. Break your neck.

LISA. It does not matter.

ROBERT. Goddamnit! *(Puts down glass.)*

LISA. Are you angry?

ROBERT. No! *(Takes off jacket, puts it on chair, rolls up sleeves.)*

LISA. I thought you were angry. But I forgot. The Americans are above anger. Only Antonio is stupid enough to get angry.

ROBERT. *(Turns)* Are you trying to get me to blow my cork?

LISA. Che dici?

ROBERT. Blow my cork! Steam me up!

I WANT YOU STOP RESISTING ME
 I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONGS
 I WANT AMBERLOVE

LISA. I? Impossible. *(Sits up, legs Left)* I'm just a girl. An Italian girl you met in a war. An adventure.

ROBERT. Go on.

LISA. If I annoy you, I'll stop. *(Sits back.)*

ROBERT. Don't stop. It'll kill me if you stopped now.

Go on. You were being an adventure.

LISA. *(Rises. They stand Center.)* It will amuse her.

ROBERT. Who?

LISA. Some American girl. Your fiancé. The one you pretend not to have. It will amuse her when you are in bed together. Your story about the Lisa you met in Rome

ROBERT. She'll love it.

LISA. It will be very funny.

ROBERT. She's just dying to hear it.

LISA. She'll be beautiful, won't she?

ROBERT. They're all beautiful.

LISA. And perfect.

ROBERT. Of course. That's the only kind I sleep with.

LISA. *(Rapidly)* It will be so amusing. How once in Rome during the war you lived with a girl because she was—unlucky.

ROBERT. Are you finished?

LISA. I'll make a very funny story, won't I, Roberto?

ROBERT. I can't wait to tell it.

LISA. You see? Then why should it matter what I do or where I go? *(Crosses down around bed and up Right side.)*

ROBERT. Except it happens to.

LISA. Really? Why?

ROBERT. I happen to like you.

LISA. Should I be flattered? Yes, I'm flattered. *(Crosses to window.)*

ROBERT. I think I will break your neck.

LISA. *(Looking out window)* You know, perhaps this winter it will snow, too. Just for the Americans.

ROBERT. Lisa, what do you want?

LISA. *(Crosses down Right of bed)* I? Nothing. I have everything, haven't I? You heard Antonio—how lucky I

LISA. No. Just to go to bed with you.

ROBERT. Yes.

LISA. How simple!

ROBERT. Yes. I thought it was simple.

LISA. You should have found someone who thought so, too. You were kind enough, even generous—you brought the food, and I had real coffee, just as we had arranged. And you asked so little—

ROBERT. I wanted a girl.

LISA. And it was not important how. Or what she felt. So little—that she should be warm, that she should be here when you wanted her—

ROBERT. Is that wrong?

LISA. No. Why should it be wrong if you don't think it's wrong?

ROBERT. You needed the food.

LISA. The food! Yes. Didn't I? I did not need anything but the food!

ROBERT. (*Pauses—slowly*) I don't think I care any more about the other things. I wanted a girl. I don't think I wanted love. I wanted a girl because I didn't want to have to stand under the trees on the Via Veneto or to go under the bridges. I wanted to get away from the army. I wanted to have a house I could come to, and a girl there, mine. I wanted it as simple as that, as simple as it could possibly be. And I thought I would just be exchanging something somebody needed for something I needed. Something somebody wanted for something I wanted.

LISA. (*Quickly*) The black market.

ROBERT. Yes. The black market, if you want to call it that. Everything's on the black market now. But you don't want it simple like that, do you? That's wrong. That's ugly. You have to complicate it with something else. Oh, you'll climb up in the hayloft all right, but you have to be in love before you use the ladder, don't you?

LISA. You are so delicate! You understand a woman so well!

ROBERT. I'm a dumb American. You said it before.

am! I'm going to America. They won't escape, but I will. Che buona fortuna! (*Hits bed, then sits on it.*)

ROBERT. Tell me the truth, Lisa—

LISA. The truth?

ROBERT. (*Sits on bed*) Do you like me at all?

LISA. Così-così—

ROBERT. The truth!

LISA. Does it matter?

ROBERT. Yes—

LISA. (*Slow*) I think I hate you.

ROBERT. But why? I didn't think I was that bad—

LISA. It was not possible.

ROBERT. When did it begin not to be possible?

LISA. From the beginning! From Lake Bracciano!—

ROBERT. Bracciano?

LISA. That Sunday. Sitting in the jeep—with the people on the road looking at me—then shouting—

ROBERT. What did they shout? They were only peasants. They always shout. But the lake was beautiful. Didn't you like the lake—all blue and the mountains?

LISA. And the waiter.

ROBERT. What waiter?

LISA. Who wouldn't serve us.

ROBERT. All I wanted was eggs.

LISA. All they have to eat is eggs.

ROBERT. All right. The waiter didn't like me. The people on the road shouted at you. Lake Bracciano was a disappointment. You think you hate me. Then why did you start? Why did you tell Nina yes? Why did you have me come here?

LISA. Because I thought nothing was important any more. Because I thought everybody had a soldier. The Americans were rich, they had so much, I thought why not? Take one, too. It's so simple!

ROBERT. Wasn't it simple?

LISA. No!

ROBERT. But it is simple. I was lonely, you were hungry. What could be simpler? I didn't ask you to love me—

LISA. From such a great country! With such sympathy for human unhappiness!

ROBERT. We do all right.

LISA. Yes, and you will make Europe so grateful to you!

ROBERT. I'm not interested in Europe.

LISA. What are you interested in?

ROBERT. Me.

LISA. (*Loudly; throws up hands*) Bravo!

ROBERT. (*Looks at her*) Okay. This finishes it. I'll figure out some excuse to tell the Pulcinis tomorrow. (*Rises, crosses Left to table; puts on his jacket.*) Tell them my outfit left town. We moved up north somewhere.

(*A pause. Lisa crosses down to trunk.*)
Would it be all right if I kissed you Happy New Year's anyway?

(*Lisa sits facing front.*)

I ought to kiss somebody a Happy New Year's. (*Robert exits.*)

(*ANTONIO enters Left. Crosses down, sees ROBERT cross and exit Left. Turns back up to bedroom door. He knocks.*)

LISA. (*Seated, on trunk, exhausted*) Yes?

ANTONIO. (*Opening the door*) Signora— (*Hesitates*)

—Are you ill?

LISA. (*Turning*) No.

ANTONIO. (*Crosses down*) I wanted to apologize—

Your husband is an American—

LISA. He was not insulted.

ANTONIO. (*Left of wash stand*) They are not all bad—but it's hard for me to distinguish. I am always angry. Besides, our women—they're worse than the soldiers. The soldiers have some excuse.

LISA. Perhaps our women have, too.

ANTONIO. Some excuse? (*Pausing*) If they were all like you, Signora—

LISA. Like me?

ANTONIO. One should respect one's countrywomen—

Not to feel they are degrading you— Isn't that true, Signora?

LISA. Yes.

ANTONIO. I wanted to tell you this because—

LISA. Why?

ANTONIO. Because I respect you.

LISA. What are you holding?

ANTONIO. (*Glancing down*) A souvenir. (*Crosses to Lisa with a flattened bullet.*) A British one. A Bavarian surgeon took it out of me in Tripoli. On Christmas Eve. It's all I have of my war.

LISA. We all have our souvenirs.

ANTONIO. I was wrong. My mother thinks anyone who escapes is lucky. She's right. Go away, Signora—do what they tell you. Go to America— At least there one can stop one's memories. And ask your husband to excuse me. LISA. There is nothing to excuse.

ANTONIO. (*Crosses up Left*) As for me, who knows? Perhaps I'll turn thief. Stealing is fashionable. And with a gun—well, one is a little more equal. I could steal tires. That's an ex-soldier's profession now—stealing the tires and changing their treads. Perhaps I'll learn to steal tires. Or who knows? Go north—rediscover my courage—and die in the hills, frostbitten, with the look of a patriot. A frostbitten patriot. Well—buonanotte, Signora. (*Crosses to door.*)

LISA. Buonanotte, Antonio.

ANTONIO. (*Crosses back to table*) And remember—go to America. (*Puts bullet on table*) If the end one is happiest far away from the scene of one's mistakes—or one's suffering— (*Exits.*)

(*LIGHTS fade up in dining room. ENGLISHMAN, ADELE, Ugo and MIMI enter from the Left. The bells have stopped ringing. The shooting has died away.*)

ENGLISHMAN. Shows over. (*Turns on radio and sits above dining table.*)

Ugo. Beautiful fireworks— Roberto, you coming in?

Continue on
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"Lisa"
"Free"
"was anything else"

NINA. (Goes to Lisa) Madonna!

ANTONIO. (Picks himself up from the floor. Crossing up Right) Wasn't it true, Signorina? The people should be able to tell— (Exits arch.)

(MIMI crosses Right and pushes chair in to table.)

NINA. Poveretta! Did that animal hurt you?

UGO. (Bewildered) We were talking in the kitchen— ROBERT. It's all right now.

NINA. He needs a keeper, that animal!

UGO. (Suffering for his sin) He's ashamed—

NINA. Ashamed! Some day he'll kill somebody with that shame of his. Go bring a glass of wine, Mimi!

(MIMI goes to the sideboard and pours a glass of wine.)

UGO. When will there be peace? (Sits upper end of couch.)

NINA. When all the animals are in the zoo.

(MIMI retiring with the wine.)

There, cara— drink.

LISA. (Rises, crosses Left Center, followed by ROBERT) They would not believe me at the Questura—

NINA. (Rises, to Left of dining table.) Shh—don't talk now—

LISA. But why should they have believed me? It was true. I was what they said I was.

ROBERT. You don't have to talk about it.

LISA. Then afterwards they put all of us into a big track. There were so many girls.

NINA. (Crosses Left) It doesn't matter, cara.

LISA. When we drove through the streets everybody looked at us in the truck. Then some of the girls shouted and some spit at the people in the street and some cried. There were so many girls.

UGO. Eh—

LISA. (Crosses to Ugo, on couch.) Were they all bad, Ugo? All of them?

UGO. (Turns his head away) No—

LISA. (Crosses up Left by sideboard) Then in the hospital they put us into a big room and they said undress, and we undressed, and they examined us. Have you ever seen, Nina, many girls together naked in a big, cold room?

NINA. (Sits in chair above dining table) I don't want to see it.

LISA. I was so afraid of touching anything. I was so afraid of the disease.

(ROBERT moves toward her.)

(She crosses to ROBERT, Center.) It will be so much easier now.

ROBERT. (Crosses up a step.) What do you mean?

LISA. It will be so much easier now that I am what the others are.

UGO. But—

ROBERT. Ugo!

UGO. Si.

(MIMI is up Right of Center.)

ROBERT. Take Mimi and Nina and go out, please—

UGO. (Crossing to Left of table) Mimi, Nina, get them alone.

(NINA rises, crosses to LISA, stops, exits Left. MIMI and UGO exit Left. LISA crosses to Left of dining table.)

ROBERT. Lisa—if there was anything I could have done, (To Right of table.) I'd have done it.

LISA. Would you?

ROBERT. But Ugo and Adele said I shouldn't go to the police. It would be worse if I went to the police too.

LISA. (Two steps to ROBERT.) There were so many girls. But where were the soldiers? There must have been soldiers.

ROBERT. They don't arrest the soldiers.

(BOTH below table.)

MTR

Comp - he doesn't go

Resolution

LISA. Why? Shouldn't they arrest the soldiers too?

ROBERT. They don't.

LISA. Only the girls.

ROBERT. Lisa—anything you want, ask me. I'll do it!

LISA. Why should you do anything?

ROBERT. Because.

LISA. Because of pity?

ROBERT. Call it what you want.

LISA. (*Takes the yellow card the police have given her from her purse.*) And this? Can you do anything about this?

ROBERT. Put it away.

LISA. Why? They gave it to me to show— (*Starts up Left of table.*)

ROBERT. Lisa! (*Follows Lisa up around table.*)

LISA. To my customers. In case there's any doubt.

ROBERT. Give it to me.

LISA. No.

ROBERT. Give it to me!

(*Both above table.*)

LISA. (*Puts it back in purse*) As a souvenir? To take home with your German pistol? (*Crosses up Left.*)

ROBERT. Tell me what you want—

LISA. (*Backing him against table*) Go home.

(*Pause. ROBERT crosses down Left by couch, followed by Lisa, who stops above table.*)

LISA. Go home! Take your tanks, take your money, take the coffee and the sugar and all your generous gifts, and go home!

ROBERT. It's four thousand miles away.

LISA. The dancing in the streets is over. The celebration is finished. Go home. (*Crosses up Center.*)

ROBERT. (*Holding at chair Left of table. Stops Lisa with line.*) Lisa, do you remember what you said about

Americans the first time I met you? When I came to the house?

LISA. What did I say?

ROBERT. You said they were stupid—

LISA. Yes.

ROBERT. They were too rich—

LISA. Yes.

ROBERT. They were liars—

LISA. Yes.

ROBERT. What did I say?

LISA. I don't know.

ROBERT. I said they were a little bit of everything. Do you remember?

LISA. Yes, I remember.

ROBERT. You hate us now. And maybe you're right—you, Antonio, the kids who threw rocks at our jeeps—maybe we ought to be hated. I don't know. I'm not much of an American, anyway.

LISA. It doesn't matter any more.

ROBERT. Except that it might have been different. Who knows? Perhaps if I'd met you when there was no war—

LISA. (*Turns. Crosses down a step.*) We wouldn't have met.

ROBERT. We might have. (*Turns. Crosses up a step.*)

Lisa, what did you do before the war?

LISA. (*Sits in chair above table.*) Please—

ROBERT. Did you go to the opera?

LISA. Yes—

ROBERT. We'd have gone to the opera. Which opera do you like best? (*Crosses in a step.*)

LISA. Oh, Roberto—

ROBERT. Which opera do you like best?

LISA. (*Looks up.*) Traviata.

ROBERT. We'd have gone to Traviata. Then we'd travel. (*Crosses up a step.*)

LISA. Roberto, please—

ROBERT. We'd have seen all of Italy. Both of us. What town do you like best?

LISA. Roberto, stop!

De Game

068

ROBERT. Come on, what town do you like best? I'm a stranger here.

LISA. Portofino.

ROBERT. Portofino? Where is it?

LISA. In the North. By the sea.

ROBERT. All right—we'd go to Portofino, in the North by the sea.

LISA. I was very happy there once.

ROBERT. Once?

LISA. When I was seventeen.

ROBERT. (*Sits chair left of table*) Would I be happy in Portofino?

LISA. Roberto! Please stop—

ROBERT. Would I be happy in Portofino?

LISA. I don't know.

ROBERT. I'd be in love. You're supposed to be happy when you're in love. Would I be happy?

LISA. (*Desperately*) Yes!

ROBERT. Then, after Portofino, and after being in love, we'd go to the States, wouldn't we? (*To America*) Just to show them how pretty an Italian girl ~~can be~~ ^{is}. Besides, I'd have to show my mother who ate her fruit cake. Would you have made a good wife?

LISA. Yes.

ROBERT. How good?

LISA. Very good.

ROBERT. All the Italians make good ones, they tell me. But you'd have been one of the best, wouldn't you?

LISA. Yes—

ROBERT. Guaranteed?

LISA. Yes, yes!

ROBERT. We turned out to be great liberatori, didn't we? (*Takes the police card out of her hand.*)

LISA. No, Roberto—give it to me.

ROBERT. (*Rises; crosses down left.*) Give you what?

LISA. The card! (*Crosses down to ROBERT.*)

ROBERT. (*Tearing it up*) What card? I don't know of any card.

LISA. Roberto, you mustn't!—you mustn't do this to me!

ROBERT. Do what? (*Drops the pieces.*)

LISA. (*Kneels to pick up pieces.*) This—!

ROBERT. (*Kneels to hold her, holding her wrists*) Why not? Blondie loves Dagwood, doesn't she? Everything happens to them, but she loves him. Doesn't Blondie love him? Doesn't Blondie love him?

LISA. Roberto!

ROBERT. Doesn't she?

LISA. Yes, yes!

ROBERT. Say it.

LISA. She loves him.

ROBERT. Then kiss him. He just came home from a tough day in the office. Kiss him.

(*And she does at last, crying a little. They rise; cross to couch; sit. ADELE comes in from arch carrying a net shopping bag.*)

ADELE. Lisa, when did you get here? How did it go at the Questura? (*Crosses left, above couch.*)

ROBERT. All right.

ADELE. No trouble? She's free?

ROBERT. Yes, she's free.

ADELE. (*Puts bag on table. Taking off coat, hangs it on hall tree.*) What did I say? I said it would go all right, didn't I? You always imagine things are worse than they are. A little courage, that's all one needs. Where is Ugo? (*Crosses back to table.*)

ROBERT. (*Holding LISA*) Inside. Nina's here—

ADELE. Nina? Dio, so quickly. But, good—we'll make a fine festa. I promised her a festa yesterday—wine, and macaroni! The Americans like macaroni, no, Roberto?

ROBERT. They love it.

ADELE. We'll make a fine festa. But remember—no more

tears.

ROBERT. No—no more tears.

*Promised
-four*

Dancing