



**Matt Thompson**

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

A Roman Holiday

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

**P.O. Box 1400**

**TALLEHAST, FL 34270**

## A Roman Holiday

Winner, Golden Palm Award 2009

**HOLIDAY/ROMANTIC COMEDY.** It's a Christmas of mischief, mayhem, and meatballs in this hilarious romantic comedy. When Stacey arrives in Rome to rendezvous with her boyfriend, Michael, she unexpectedly encounters Nigel, a British professor and kleptomaniac; members of the lively, animated Pagliuzzi family; and an Italian don dressed in a Santa suit and sunglasses. When Michael arrives at Stacey's hotel and proposes marriage, Stacey panics. Suffering from a bad case of pre-marriage jitters, Stacey concocts a plan to make Michael jealous by having Nigel pose as her boyfriend. But Stacey's plan goes awry when Nigel dons a dress and introduces himself as a German chef named Belinda Bratwurst. Twists, turns, and misunderstandings abound in this face-paced comedy that features endless opportunities for actors to showcase their comedic talents.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 90-120 minutes.

## Characters

(6 M, 4 F)

**STACEY:** Arrives in Rome to visit her boyfriend Michael; works in a zoo and is a terrible liar; American.

**MICHAEL:** Stacey's honest, good-hearted boyfriend; a wealthy architect; larger in stature than Nigel; American.

**NIGEL:** Geography professor and kleptomaniac; British.

**OTTAVIO:** Cab driver in Rome; Italian.

**GIANNA :** Ottavio's hot-tempered wife; Italian.

**GIUSEPPI:** Gianna's brother and Don Vitello's bodyguard; a very large fellow; Italian.

**ENRICO:** Giuseppe's lecherous teenage son who carries a boom box wherever he goes; Italian.

**MAMA NONA:** 90s, Ottavio's mother who loves to feed people pasta; Italian.

**DON VITELLO:** Don of the family; has slicked back hair and wears a Santa suit and sunglasses; Italian.

**FLORENZA:** Front desk hotel receptionist; Italian.

## Setting

Hotel room in Rome, Christmas Eve.

## Set

**Hotel room.** The dilapidated hotel room has two small beds, a closet or armoire, and a sad string of colored Christmas lights. There are three doors: a front door, a bathroom door, and a closet door. There is a “window” with its curtains closed.

## Synopsis of Scenes

**ACT I:** Hotel room in Rome, Christmas Eve.

### **Intermission**

**ACT II:** Hotel room, moments later.

## Props

String of colored Christmas lights	Coffeemaker
Curtains	Can of shaving cream
2 Hotel bathrobes	Blanket
Necklace	Dress, for Nigel
Socks	Wig
Sprig of mistletoe	Italian soccer uniforms for Pagliuzzi family members
Pot of pasta	Baskets of food
Boom box	Large Italian flag
Flask	Bra
Rose	Purse
Suitcases	Christmas card
Small bottle of hand sanitizer	Bag
Shower curtain	Large sausage wrapped in Christmas paper
Assortment of hand soaps, shampoo bottles	Engagement ring
Hotel towels	Pitch pipe
Packages of airplane peanuts	Wrapped Christmas presents

## Sound Effects

Toilet flushing	Italian Christmas music
Italian dance music	“That’s Amore” or another suitable song
Phone ringing	
Running water	

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"In Italy,  
we are family!"

-Pagliazzi family

# ACT I

(AT RISE: Christmas Eve, a hotel room in Rome, Italy. A sad string of colored Christmas lights adorn the dilapidated motel room. Curtains to the window are closed. Stacey, wearing a hotel bathrobe and a necklace, is asleep. Her clothes are strewn about. We hear the flush of a toilet. Nigel exits the bathroom dressed in a hotel bathrobe. One of his socks is tied around his head with a sprig of mistletoe sticking out. He lies down on the other bed, which is fully made. There is a knock at the door.)

STACEY: (Has a headache, holds head.) Ummmmm. (More knocking.) Hmmmmm.

(More knocking.)

NIGEL: Where's that knocking coming from?

STACEY: My head. (More knocking. Suddenly Stacey jolts up.)

Oh, my goodness! What time is it?

NIGEL: What, love?

STACEY: What time is it?

NIGEL: Never mind. Go back to sleep.

(Stacey puts her head down to sleep. Knocking continues. Stacey jolts up again.)

STACEY: No, no, no! What time is it? What time is it?

NIGEL: What?

STACEY: What time is it? Is it 10 o'clock?

NIGEL: (Looking at his watch.) It's 10:30.

STACEY: A.m. or p.m.?

NIGEL: Anti-meridian.

STACEY: What?

NIGEL: A.m.

STACEY: 10:30 a.m.? Mike is supposed to meet me at 10 o'clock in the lobby! If he sees you in here, he's gonna flip! That's gotta be him at the door!

NIGEL: Who's Mike?

STACEY: My boyfriend, remember?

NIGEL: Boyfriend?

STACEY: My [6-foot-five 230-pound] boyfriend! Don't you remember me telling you about him? *[Insert Michael's height and weight.]*

NIGEL: In between the ouzo shots, or the gin and tonics?

STACEY: *(Frantic.)* If he finds you in here, he'll kill us both. But it's completely innocent. Nothing happened.

NIGEL: Nothing happened, right?

STACEY: Right.

*(They both notice the piece of mistletoe hanging in front of Nigel's face as he pulls the sprig from his forehead.)*

NIGEL: Ahhh!

STACEY: Oh, my goodness! Oh, my goodness! What happened?

NIGEL: I don't know! I don't know!

*(More knocking.)*

STACEY: Ohhhh! That's him! That's him! I know that's gotta be him! That's how he knocks! He has a very profound knock!

NIGEL: Calm down!

STACEY: *(Jumping up and down.)* But that's him at the door!

NIGEL: I know, I know. Now just calm down!

STACEY: Be quiet! He can hear you! Okay, let's just pull it together! Cover the bed so it doesn't look suspicious.

NIGEL: But we didn't do anything!

STACEY: You think he's gonna believe that?

NIGEL: You're right!

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STACEY: Okay, I'm gonna get the door. Just act normal.

NIGEL: (*Nervous.*) Normal. Right. (*Attempts to look "normal."*)

STACEY: (*To herself.*) Okay. Breathe. Just act normal, everything is fine! (*To Nigel.*) You look suspicious.

NIGEL: What does that mean?

STACEY: I don't know. You just look suspicious! Will you try and not look so guilty?

NIGEL: Okay, okay! (*Nigel strikes a "not guilty" pose.*) Better?

STACEY: We'll work on it. Okay, here we go! Ready?

NIGEL: Ready as I'll ever be.

(*Stacey is about to open the door but suddenly stops.*)

STACEY: (*Suddenly insecure.*) What if he doesn't know me?

NIGEL: What are you talking about?

STACEY: What if he doesn't even recognize me? I mean, we haven't seen each other for forever!

NIGEL: What?

STACEY: Oh, Nigel, he's the most prominent architect in the States, and three months ago he was invited to Rome to design the Ray Romano Theatre for the Performing Arts. He's very rich, very successful, and he could have any girl he wanted. So why does he want me?

NIGEL: He's very rich, yes, I know.

STACEY: Yes! Very! Don't you remember me telling you that on the ride over here?

NIGEL: Yes, you told me about 20 times in the past 40 hours.

STACEY: That's once every two hours.

NIGEL: (*With disdain.*) Yes, I know.

STACEY: But the money doesn't matter.

NIGEL: Of course not.

STACEY: I mean, do you think he really would wait for me?

NIGEL: What? But you're his girlfriend, right?

STACEY: But I haven't seen him in months. What if he's moved on to somebody else...with a nicer body...a younger girl? There's always young, pretty girls here in Rome. With

their long brown hair...their rich olive complexion, and big blue eyes... (*Stacey turns to Nigel who is daydreaming about this.*) Nigel!

NIGEL: Sorry! Look, Stacey you're very... (*Thinks.*) ...cute.

STACEY: Exactly. Cute. But not beautiful. And why did you hesitate?

NIGEL: What? Oh, jolly hockey sticks! You are absolutely lovely. And did I mention gorgeous? In fact, you are the most luxuriously radiant random woman I ever met in an airport baggage claim area 43 hours ago.

STACEY: Really? Oh, Nigel, that's the nicest thing any stranger has ever said to me.

NIGEL: In fact, if I wasn't married and going to a geography conference and you weren't here in Rome meeting your boyfriend, I'd suggest that we go for coffee sometime.

STACEY: Oh, Nigel that's so sweet. (*Stacey grabs Nigel's hand. Knocking at the door continues.*) Okay, let's focus. What are we going to say?

NIGEL: We'll tell him the truth. We met on the flight from London to Rome.

STACEY: You mean at the baggage claim in Rome.

NIGEL: But I saw you on the plane.

STACEY: I didn't see you.

NIGEL: That's because you were asleep.

STACEY: Oh, right.

NIGEL: So, let's get the story straight then. I was completely gobsmacked that I lost my hotel reservations. And you accidentally booked your hotel two and one-half hours from the airport, where you were supposed to meet Mike, your boyfriend.

STACEY: Correct, but right before I leave my house, Mike phones me and tells me that the day that I land he has to be on the other side of Italy for a last minute presentation on the history of the flying buttockses.

NIGEL: (*Correcting her.*) You mean flying *buttresses*.

STACEY: Whatever.

NIGEL: Right.

STACEY: So, instead of re-booking my flight, I told him that I could just hang out in Rome for a few days by myself. I'm a big girl. There's nothing to be afraid of. And as soon as I found a hotel, I would call him and tell him where I was.

NIGEL: And?

STACEY: And that was the first thing I did, remember? You took the bags up to the room, and I called Michael from the front desk.

NIGEL: Did you talk to him personally?

STACEY: No, I just left a message.

NIGEL: Maybe he didn't get the message.

STACEY: No, he's a stickler for detail. He knows I'm here. He just doesn't know that I'm here with you. Now, let's backtrack. What happened?

NIGEL: Okay, so, at the airport we split a cab to take us to a hotel, but we couldn't find a vacancy because of the holidays and all that. Then we drove around for what seemed like an eternity until our crazy Italian cab driver—

STACEY: Ottavio!

NIGEL: That's right, Ottavio told us we are staying the night at his house. And he wouldn't take no for an answer.

STACEY: (*Confirming.*) Wouldn't take no for an answer.

NIGEL: He said it was an Italian custom.

STACEY: (*Confirming.*) Italian custom.

NIGEL: That we were his guests.

STACEY: (*Confirming.*) His guests!

NIGEL: Right.

STACEY: Right. Then what happened?

NIGEL: Well, we ended up at Ottavio's, and we were so tired from traveling that we both collapsed. We slept until four in the afternoon...

STACEY: And then he fed us a huge Italian feast...

NIGEL: From four to ten p.m. That's right. I remember. And there were lots of Ottavio's family members there.

STACEY: And they all wore suits.

NIGEL: Yes, suits.

STACEY: Then Ottavio said that we would have to leave because he had even more company coming for the next night and that he would be happy to take us to a hotel near the train station, where I was originally supposed to meet Michael.

NIGEL: So, we got back in his cab at 10 p.m. last night—

STACEY: Check.

NIGEL: Check! And we drove around for what seemed like two hours.

STACEY: Check! And we told him to just drop us off anywhere.

NIGEL: Right! So, he dropped us off in a seedy part of town right in front of an adult entertainment facility—

STACEY: With a giant deer on the roof.

NIGEL: A fine establishment entitled, “Doe’s and Don’t’s.”

STACEY: Let’s leave that part out.

NIGEL: Check. So, after that, Ottavio told us about a very important “business meeting” or something with his family at two ’o clock in the morning.

STACEY: *(Confirming.)* Business meeting.

NIGEL: After more driving around, we finally found our perfect little Italian villa—

STACEY: The Gladiator Motel.

NIGEL: The Gladiator Motel. *(Pause. They both look at their surroundings. Sarcastic.)* Charming.

STACEY: After he dropped us off, it was about one o’clock in the morning.

NIGEL: One o’clock.

STACEY: There was only one room vacant, and we decided to split it so that one of us wouldn’t have to sleep on the street.

NIGEL: On the street. So, after checking in, the next thing we both know, we wake up in bed.

STACEY: Separately. In bed...separately. Let’s make that perfectly clear. He’ll buy all that, right?

NIGEL: Right.

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STACEY: Right. (*Looks at him. Just now realizing.*) Why aren't you wearing any clothes? Where are your clothes!

NIGEL: I don't know.

STACEY: What do you mean you "don't know"?! They're your clothes!

(*More knocking.*)

NIGEL: Look who's talking?! Where are your clothes?!

STACEY: (*Looks down, aghast. Yells.*) Ahhhhhh! You're right! Where are my clothes? Oh...I don't remember! What happened? What happened last night after we got to this hotel?

NIGEL: (*Thinks.*) Uh... (*Thinks.*) ...uh...I don't recall. I can't remember what happened to our clothes!

(*More knocking.*)

STACEY: Ohhhh, where are my clothes?!

NIGEL: Yours are strewn on the floor here.

STACEY: And where are yours?

NIGEL: I think they're hanging up on the clothesline in the loo.

STACEY: Then go put your clothes on.

NIGEL: They're soaking wet.

STACEY: Why are they wet?

NIGEL: I don't know.

STACEY: Well, we can't answer the door... (*Indicating bathrobe.*) ...in this. He'll know that something happened last night when it didn't!

NIGEL: Huh?

STACEY: Ohhhh! What happened last night after we got to the hotel? Do you remember? I still don't remember everything! Oh, I can't think!

*(Nigel turns his back, and Stacey begins to put on all of her clothes while holding up her bathrobe as a cover.)*

NIGEL: Uh, uh...I remember! I remember! We had a drink downstairs in the lobby.

STACEY: That's right! That's right!

NIGEL: And I ordered a vodka martini and you ordered a Sambuca.

STACEY: *(Starting to remember.)* And the Sambuca was very strong.

NIGEL: And you were very tipsy. And then I ordered a sloe gin.

STACEY: And I then I ordered one shot of tequila. *(Thinks.)* Two shots of tequila. *(Thinks.)* Three shots of tequila.

NIGEL: That's when you started to tell the story about the papier-mâché billy goat and the bran muffin.

STACEY: Yes, I vaguely remember now!

NIGEL: And that's when you pulled down the cardboard snowmen in the lounge and started chewing on them like a billy goat. *(Imitates a billy goat.)*

STACEY: I remember! I remember!

NIGEL: And then you started yodeling. *(Yodels like a billy goat.)*

STACEY: That's right! That's right!

NIGEL: And that's when they kicked us out of the bar.

STACEY: That's right. I remember! I remember! Yes! Yes!

NIGEL: *(Turns around to face her, but she is still dressing.)* Yes! Yes!

STACEY: No! No!

NIGEL: No?

STACEY: No! No! Turn around, Nigel!

NIGEL: Oh, sorry!

*(Stacey is fully dressed now.)*

STACEY: Then what happened?

NIGEL: Uh...you...uh...started to stagger.

STACEY: Stagger.

NIGEL: You could barely walk, so I carried you up the stairs.

STACEY: Stairs. Check.

NIGEL: And on the way up to the room, we ran into the stewardess carrying two glasses of red wine. I remember...she had them on a tray.

STACEY: Yes, yes.

NIGEL: It was room service.

STACEY: But not for us!

NIGEL: No, not for us! I turned the corner in the hallway and the next thing you know, bam!

STACEY: Bam!

NIGEL: We smacked right into her.

STACEY: That's right. And wine went everywhere!

NIGEL: Everywhere! That's right! And you got wine all over your white dress!

STACEY: And you got wine all over your nice slacks.

NIGEL: And so we went back into the room here, where I tried to wash it out.

STACEY: But it stained!

NIGEL: Bugger!

STACEY: That's when I felt ill and nearly dropped my purse in the toilet.

NIGEL: But you were fine. You didn't get sick. You were tough.

STACEY: Tough.

NIGEL: So, I gave you one of the hotel bathrobes and—

STACEY: And I told you to stay in the bathroom while I changed in the main room.

NIGEL: And I stayed in the bathroom and changed into a bathrobe as well.

STACEY: And then we went to sleep in separate beds!

NIGEL: Actually, I slept in the bathtub.

STACEY: (*Touched.*) You slept in the bath tub? Really? That was so sweet of you. You're a very considerate guy. Your wife must really appreciate that!

NIGEL: She does. At least, I think she does. I'm on the road so much I hardly get to see her.

STACEY: (*Touching his arm.*) Oh, you poor thing.

NIGEL: Oh, it's really not that bad. I just really miss her.

STACEY: I can see that. Do you have kids, Nigel?

NIGEL: One. Ian. He's three. Learning football and all that.

You know, he loves to read, in fact, I really feel like—

(*Pounding on the door now shocks the two back into the situation at hand.*) Right, we'll talk about it another time, hmmm?

Now, how do I get out of here?

(*They both look around the room.*)

STACEY: The fire escape!

NIGEL: The fire escape?

STACEY: Yeah! Just jump out the window!

NIGEL: We're pretty high up, aren't we?

STACEY: You're not afraid of heights, are you?

NIGEL: (*Trying to suck it up.*) Me? No, of course not! I mean, come on! Me? Doctor Nigel Hawthorn afraid of heights?

When I was a lad back home, I used to polish the hands of Big Ben! Thirty stories up! Two thousand meters up in the air. So, am I afraid of heights? Please!

STACEY: Great, then just jump out the window.

NIGEL: Jump out the window! Are you nuts?!

STACEY: We're only on the second story.

NIGEL: And that's supposed to make me feel better?

STACEY: Don't worry! You just need to hang out there for a couple of minutes as I greet Michael and then we'll leave.

NIGEL: Okay, but be quick!

STACEY: Got it!

*(Nigel pulls the window curtains open to reveal the wall. There is no window.)*

NIGEL: The Roman Empire just doesn't have the funds that it used to.

*(More knocking.)*

STACEY: There's no window!

NIGEL: I know. What a pain.

STACEY: Ohhhhh! What are we going to do?

NIGEL: I don't know! I don't know!

STACEY: Okay. We're just going to tell him the truth. All of this is perfectly explainable, so we are just going to tell Michael—

NIGEL: *You're* going to tell Michael.

STACEY: I'm going to tell Michael everything. He'll understand. He'll have to understand. I mean, I flew standby from San Diego to Dallas. Dallas to Boston. Boston to London. And from London to Rome. And I couldn't carry all of my luggage.

NIGEL: I helped you with that.

STACEY: That was very nice of you, Nigel, a true gentleman, helping a lady with her luggage.

NIGEL: *(Embarrassed.)* Just being an Englishman.

STACEY: Are all Englishmen so understanding?

NIGEL: Well, not all, but most.

STACEY: You know, I studied in London for a semester in college.

NIGEL: Really, what university?

STACEY: Oxford.

NIGEL: Oxford, really? I never told anybody, but did you know that I wanted to go to Oxford? Instead, I ended up at Cornwall, and so I— *(More knocking, startling them back into the situation at hand once again.)* Concentrate, shall we?

STACEY: Concentrate, right! *(Stacey stands on one leg and begins to emulate yoga exercises as she breathes.)*  
Ohhhhhhuuuuum. Ohhhhhhuuuuum.

NIGEL: What are you doing? We don't have time for this!

STACEY: Yoga breathing exercise. It calms me down.  
Ouhmanamanamanamanamanamaaaaaaaa!

NIGEL: Ohma-mama?

STACEY: No, you're not doing it right. You just breathe from the diaphragm right here. *(She pokes Nigel in the stomach and he laughs.)* Just stand still. I'll show you where to breathe. Right here.

*(She pokes him in the stomach, and he laughs again.)*

NIGEL: Oh, that tickles!

STACEY: Oh, it does, does it?

NIGEL: Yes, yes! Oh, stop that! It tickles! Oh my! *(She keeps tickling him until they are in each other's arms. They look into each other's eyes for a moment. Knocking continues.)* Get the door.

STACEY: Right.

NIGEL: Right.

STACEY: Okay. I'm getting the door. Deep breathe.

NIGEL: Deep breathe.

STACEY: Here we go.

NIGEL: Here we go.

STACEY: On three, okay?

NIGEL: Okay.

STACEY: One, two...three! *(She opens the door. Florenza, the hotel receptionist, is standing there. She speaks very little English.)* Oh, Michael! I've missed you! I've— *(Realizes.)* You're not Michael.

FLORENZA: *(In Italian.)* Ciao, signora giovane. Ci è un uomo che li aspetta downstairs. Insiste che viene vederlo. trasmetterlo in su?

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*(Stacey stares blankly at her.)*

STACEY: *(To Nigel.)* Did you order room service?

NIGEL: I don't remember.

STACEY: *(To Florenza, over-enunciating, loudly.)* I'll have the scrambled eggs, tomato juice, and paella—

FLORENZA: Paella?

NIGEL: *(To Stacey.)* Wrong country, love, that's Spain.

STACEY: Right, Spain.

NIGEL: You know I might be able to—

STACEY: *(Struggling.)* I can handle this. This is my problem.

NIGEL: But I—

STACEY: *(To Florenza.)* Hi. Bon jourmeno. I have-o a problemo with Italiano and a spicy meatballo.

FLORENZA: Ma'am, trasmettere sul vostro ospite?

NIGEL: No!

FLORENZA: No?

STACEY: *(To Nigel.)* I'm handling this! *(To Florenza.)* Wee.

FLORENZA: Wee?

STACEY: Da.

FLORENZA: Da?

NIGEL: Nein!

FLORENZA: Nine?

STACEY: No, si!

FLORENZA: Si?

STACEY: Si, si?

FLORENZA: Silicone, silicone, senora! Lo trasmetterò in su!

STACEY: Arivaderchi!

FLORENZA: Arividerchi!

*(Florenza exits. Stacey closes the door.)*

NIGEL: *(Sarcastic.)* You're a stunning linguist.

STACEY: You think you could have done any better?

NIGEL: Yes.

STACEY: And why would you say that?

NIGEL: I speak Italian.

STACEY: Why didn't you tell me that before?!

NIGEL: I tried, but you wouldn't listen!

STACEY: And you let me just go on and on? Great! Well, did I get the breakfast order correct?

NIGEL: You told her to bring up the visitor who is waiting in the lobby.

STACEY: Visitor in the lobby? Oh, my gosh! It's Michael!

NIGEL: That's what I was trying to tell you! Look, I have to get out of here. I'm just packing my things, and I'll just walk out the door.

STACEY: And then he'll see you down the hallway coming out of my room.

NIGEL: Fine. We'll just say that I was from the airline and I was returning your luggage.

STACEY: No. He knows I traveled standby. My luggage is light.

NIGEL: Look, this entire thing is ridiculous. We are all grown-ups here. And your boyfriend is—

STACEY: Very large.

NIGEL: I'm just here for a conference. Why did I have to get involved in all of this?

STACEY: I'm so sorry.

NIGEL: Don't be sorry, love. Look, I am a full-grown adult with a wife and child. I have two Ph.D.s in geographical and biological sciences, and I'm not going to let anyone push me around. I'm going to hold up my head, puff out my chest, and walk out that door without fear. *(He starts toward the front door. There is a loud pounding. Cowering in fear.)* Mummy!

*(More pounding on the door.)*

STACEY: That's Michael! You answer it!

NIGEL: Me? What are you...loony?!

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STACEY: If you answer it, then he'll think that he has the wrong room number.

NIGEL: What if he doesn't believe me and decides to fix my vision problem?

STACEY: You don't wear glasses.

NIGEL: I will when he gets through with me.

STACEY: Just answer the door!

NIGEL: I don't think that's entirely proper because as an Englishman it would be rude to just burst in on other people's affairs!

*(Just then the front door bursts open and an Italian family bustles into the room. Leading the pack is Gianna, a loud and boisterous woman. She is surrounded by Giuseppe; Mama Nona, who is holding a pot of pasta; and Enrico, who is holding a boom box. Ottavio, her husband, is hidden behind the family members.)*

GIANNA: *(Pointing at Stacey. With furious gusto.)* Che cosa è il mondo voi li pensa sta facendo con il mio marito? Pensate che possiate venire al nostro paese e fare appena prego come voi? Siete molto inconsiderate, non gentili e dolore nella mia estremità! Perchè gli avete rimasto la notte con l'altra notte? Non avete avuti motivo a! Siamo una famiglia molto povera ed ora desiderate rovinare la mia sede piccola! Sto andando romperlo in su nella ms piccola Skinny Pants delle parti piccole! Così, se desiderate combattere, allora combattiamo!

STACEY: Gesundheit.

GIANNA: You disrespecta my familia and a-sleepa with my husband!

STACEY: What?

NIGEL: *(To Gianna.)* I'm sorry, but who are you?

*(Ottavio steps out from behind his family.)*

STACEY: Ottavio!

(Stacey goes to hug Ottavio, but Gianna won't allow it.)

GIANNA: You stay away from my husband!

STACEY: Husband?

NIGEL: Husband?

GIANNA: Husband! And you a-sleep in my bed with Ottavio!

STACEY: I'm so sorry about that! *(To Ottavio.)* You know, I never did get your last name, Ottavio. It all happened so fast.

GIANNA: *(Appalled.)* It happened so fast?!

MAMA NONA: Ah moron!

OTTAVIO: Hello, Ms. Stacey from America.

STACEY: You remember my name.

OTTAVIO: You are not easy to forget.

NIGEL: That much is certain.

OTTAVIO: And you are Mr. Nostradomus.

NIGEL: Close. Nigel.

OTTAVIO: Yes, of course! Good to see you again!

GIANNA: *(To Stacey.)* You stay away from my husband you...vagabonda!

NIGEL: I think that there's a little misunderstanding here.

OTTAVIO: This is what I try to tell my wife, but she doesn't believe me.

GIANNA: Silencio!

NIGEL: Look, I'm afraid that there must be an awful mix-up.

STACEY: Did we forget to pay the fare?

OTTAVIO: Oh, no, no, no, no! You were very polite. You paid cab fare with extra nice tip. You see, my very sweet wife—

GIANNA: *(Exasperated.)* Voi buon marcio per niente marito! Voi disrepect la mia famiglia!

OTTAVIO: *(To Stacey and Nigel.)* My very sweet wife. You see, when she gets something in her head, it's very difficult to change her mind.

GIANNA: I don't need to change my mind. I know what I saw!

OTTAVIO: You saw nothing!

GIANNA: Non inizi con me Ottavio! Devo ricordarvi di come avete distrutto il mio cacciatore del pollo ultimo martedì! Lo faccio per la famiglia di Mazzarino e la avete mangiata tutta!

OTTAVIO: Perché facciali sempre per iniziare in su con questo stuff! Non ho fatto nulla! Dovete crederli! E non inizi con il Cacciatore! Che cosa circa il lasagna avete fatto l'altra notte? Ha avuto un sapore come un materasso!

*(This escalates until all of the Italians are arguing. Italians adlib, "Non ho visto mai che che happened," "Why voi non ha eliminato il trash," "Why vi siete alimentati indossate Vittelo i sauce?" "Forget rossi circa it!" "What sono voi che fate con tre lo scooter del motore delle ragazze Enrico?" "My possono misura tre ragazze così perchè not?" "Ah moron!" etc.)*

GUISEPPI: Silence! Silencio! I getta to the bottom of this-a. *(To Stacey.)* I am Giuseppe, Gianna's brother. Now, my sister tells me that-a you slept at our house-a two nights ago-a? Did you?

STACEY: Yes, of course.

*(The Pagliuzzi family starts arguing again. Pagliuzzi family members adlib, "Ho saputo prova di it!" "Don't e colloquio dolce me!" "I ha saputo che questo happen," "How desidererebbe io cucina i cinesi della pasta for?" "The non ha inventato gli spaghetti, io lo scommetterà vita su esso!" etc.)*

GUISEPPI: *(Shouts.)* Silencio! Silencio!

GIANNA: *(To Stacey.)* And whose idea was it for you to stay in my house while I am gone with the entire family to Portofino?

STACEY: Well, your husband said it was all right.

*(The Pagliazzi family being arguing and adlib, "Unbelievable!" "I ha saputo che tutto il along!" "That Angelina Jolie è bello!" "Deve essere Italian!" "I'm che va comporre un certo capo della salsa tonight!" "What's del mollusco e di linguini là!" etc.)*

GIANNA: Silencio! Silencio! Ottavio, you told me that you had a business meeting!

ENRICO: *(To Ottavio.)* Si, si! You said you had a business meeting with Uncle Tony!

OTTAVIO: That's right! Uncle Tony had dinner with us along with some of the other members of the family with Ms. Stacey.

STACEY: Did we disrespect the dons the other night?

GIANNA: You met the dons...of our family?!

*(General clamor from the Pagliazzi family.)*

STACEY: Well, only one. I'm sorry. I forget his name. What was it again? *(Thinks.)* Don Johnson? Don Drysdale? Don Knotts?

GIANNA: Don Vitello!

STACEY: That's it! Don Vitello!

NIGEL: Don Vitello?

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: Don Vitello!

STACEY: *(To Gianna.)* Ma'am, I only stayed the one night, then I packed up my things and I left the next day.

GIANNA: Then why did I find your clothes scattered about our room?

OTTAVIO: Because she slept in our bed.

GIANNA: She should never have slept in our room!

ENRICO: You're right, Aunt Gianna, she should have slept in my room!

*(Enrico tries to put the moves on Stacey, but Mama Nona drags him away by the ear.)*

GIANNA: (*Yells.*) Enrico!

ENRICO: (*Yells.*) Ahhhhhhhh!

NIGEL: Could somebody please explain what is going on here?

GIANNA: (*To Stacy, indicating Nigel.*) Who is this?

STACEY: This is Nigel, and he—

OTTAVIO: (*Yells.*) Stop! Stop! Let me explain. Ms. Stacey, she slept in the bed with this young man... (*Indicating Nigel.*) ...Narnia.

NIGEL: (*Corrects him.*) Nigel.

GIANNA: You slept with the Ms. Stacey in our bed? You are her husband?

OTTAVIO: Husband!

GUISEPPI: Husband!

STACEY: Husband?

NIGEL: Well, I'm really not her—

GIANNA: Silencio! Tell me your name again.

NIGEL: Nigel.

GIANNA: Nike?

NIGEL: (*Corrects her.*) Nigel.

GIANNA: Nickel?

NIGEL: (*Corrects her.*) Nigel.

STACEY: Nigel. And I'm sorry, but we really don't have time for this, you see—

NIGEL: I'll handle this. (*To Pagliuzzi family.*) Now, as I was about to say—

GIANNA: (*Yells.*) Silencio!

NIGEL: Yes, Ms. Mussolini.

STACEY: (*To Gianna.*) You can't talk to Nigel that way. In fact, I—

GIANNA: (*Yells louder.*) Silencio!

STACEY: Yes, ma'am.

GIANNA: Speak, Ottavio!

OTTAVIO: You see, my darling wife, Mr. Nits and Ms. Stacey, they sleep in our bed because they are together.

GIANNA: Married? These two are married?

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NIGEL: Well—

OTTAVIO: That's right. That's why they sleep together in our bed. They are married!

GIANNA: (*Attitude changes.*) Married? Then that is all right!

OTTAVIO: Yes, so everything is fine!

GIANNA: Everything is fine!

OTTAVIO: You see, I told you it was all a big misunderstanding. I never slept in our bed with this young lady. Mr. Nantucket stayed with Ms. Stacey in our room, in our bed, together.

NIGEL: Actually, I slept on the floor.

GIANNA: Why did you stay on the floor?

NIGEL: Because I'm really not her husband.

GIANNA: What?

NIGEL: Now I think that I should really be the voice of reason in all of this and I—

GIANNA: (*Upset, shouts.*) You are not her husband?! You come into my house, unmarried, and disrespect my familia, and my country, and my sports team like this?

STACEY: I'm sorry, ma'am, I didn't mean any disrespect, Mrs...Mrs...

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: Pagliuzzi!

STACEY: Mrs. Pagliuzzi! I'm so sorry—

GIANNA: If I find out-a that you two are not-a married, I'll tell Don Vitello.

NIGEL: (*Stutters.*) Don-Don-Don Vitello?

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: Don Vitello.

GIANNA: And if Don Vitello finds out-a that you have disrespected this family, he will not like-a that-a one bit.

(*Giuseppe takes a step toward Nigel.*)

GUISEPPI: (*Menacing.*) Notta one bit.

OTTAVIO: (*To Nigel.*) Giuseppe is Don Vitello's bodyguard.

NIGEL: Bodyguard?

GUISEPPI: That's right.

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*(Awkward pause.)*

NIGEL: *(Grabs Stacey by the arm.)* Darling, do we have to fight like that all the time?! *(To family, putting on an act.)* Sometimes me and the little woman just get so mad at each other that I pretend that we're not married at all. *(To Stacey.)* Isn't that right, darling?

STACEY: Well, I—

*(Nigel grabs Stacey and hugs her tight.)*

NIGEL: *(To Stacey.)* Did you bring your bathing suit?

STACEY: No, why?

NIGEL: *(Strained.)* Because if we aren't *married*, we're gonna be swimming with the fishes.

*(Pause. Stacey understands. She laughs. Nigel laughs.)*

STACEY: Oh, darling, you're such a kiddier!

NIGEL: That's me! The big, married, kidding type of husband!

STACEY: That's right, honey bunny! It's too bad that we *fight* all the time, isn't it?

NIGEL: It is, but I forgive you!

STACEY: *(Looking at Nigel, astounded.)* You forgive me?

NIGEL: That's right, snooky-snappy-peanut-pie!

*(Stacy and Nigel give each other an Eskimo kiss.)*

STACEY: *(To family.)* Yes, you see, we are always fighting, my Nigel and I.

NIGEL: *(Smiling.)* That's right! We're always fighting.

OTTAVIO: Then you must be Italian.

*(The Pagliuzzi family laughs, but Nigel and Stacey do not.)*

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NIGEL: Oh...uh...right. We had a fight, and that is why I slept on the floor. But we're married all right.

STACEY: Absolutely. (*Spells.*) M-A-R-R-Y-E-D. Married!

GIANNA: I see. So, where are your rings?

NIGEL: Where are our rings? (*Thinks.*) Well...our rings are...uh...

STACEY: At home.

NIGEL: At home. That's right!

GIANNA: Why?

NIGEL: Why?

STACEY: Why?

NIGEL: Why? Well, because...her ring is so large that she gets carpal tunnel just trying to lift her hand. (*To Stacey.*) Isn't that right?

STACEY: Yes, my ring is so big, it's like I'm wearing a small island on my finger.

NIGEL: And you love your ginormous ring, don't you, sneaky-slappy happy-hoaggie!

STACEY: That's right, my darling dappy-chunky-monkey.

OTTAVIO: (*To Gianna.*) You see, my wife, this happy married couple is strangers in our country. This is what I try to tell you. You know our customs. We must always help those who are in need. This two young people needed a place to stay their first night in Rome. And since the entire family was gone at your mama's, I thought that we had enough room for all. So I slept on the couch and I give up our room to Ms. Stacey from America and Mr. Nincompoop—

NIGEL: (*Corrects him.*) Nigel.

OTTAVIO: That's what I said. (*To Gianna.*) So, as you can see, that this is a huge misunderstanding.

NIGEL: Exactly.

(*Pause.*)

GIANNA: Ms. Stacey from America!

STACEY: Yes?

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GIANNA: Come here. (*Stacey slowly walks up to Gianna. Gianna looks Stacey up and down and then grabs Stacey's head and kisses her on both cheeks.*) Welcome to the family!

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: Welcome to the family!

(*Enrico turns on his boom box. Italian dancing music plays and everybody starts to party. Enrico, Mama Nona, and Gianna all begin to dance. Giuseppe pulls out a flask, takes a swig, and passes it around. Mama Nona starts feeding the entire family pasta from her pot.*)

OTTAVIO: Welcome to the familia, Ms. Stacey from America!

STACEY: That's very kind of you, but I—

(*Ottavio grabs Stacey and Nigel around the shoulders.*)

OTTAVIO: Let me introduce you to my family!

NIGEL: You know, this might be the right time for me to change my laundry. It's just down the hall. I'll just get my stuff together and—

OTTAVIO: Nonsense! It is the holidays! Let me introduce you to my beautiful family! Of course you know Gianna!

GIANNA: Bon journo, Mr. Nettles!

NIGEL: (*Corrects her.*) Nigel.

OTTAVIO: This is my brother-in-law Giuseppe, who you've met.

GUISEPPI: Welcome to Italy!

OTTAVIO: And this is my nephew Enrico!

(*Enrico saddles up very close to Stacey and takes her hand.*)

ENRICO: (*In Italian.*) Ciao abbastanza signora. È molto piacevole venire a contatto di una creatura incredibilmente squisita. (*He kisses her hand.*) Avete mani belle. Abbinano la vostra faccia.

STACEY: What did he say?

OTTAVIO: He say that you have beautiful hands. And that they match your face.

ENRICO: *(To Stacey.)* You are the most beautiful woman in the world!

*(Enrico hands Stacey a rose. She reluctantly takes it from him.)*

STACEY: Oh.

ENRICO: You are...a work of art.

STACEY: You are...15 years old.

MAMA NONA: Manga, Enrico!

*(Ottavio laughs as Mama Nona shoves food into Enrico's mouth.)*

OTTAVIO: *(To Stacey and Nigel.)* And this is my Momma Nona!

MAMA NONA: Bon journo! You try my very special fettuccine. It is to die for! At least that's what my husband did.

NIGEL: Did what?

MAMA NONA: He ate my fettuccine and then he died.

NIGEL: He died?

MAMA NONA: I think I put in too much pepper. Would you like a bite?

NIGEL: I think I'll pass.

MAMA NONA: That's what my husband did. He passed on, right after I cooked for him.

OTTAVIO: Oh, Mama, he died of natural causes. He was 93.

MAMA NONA: He had the constitution of a bull!

*(Ottavio laughs and takes Gianna's hand.)*

OTTAVIO: And this is my beautiful wife Gianna, who you already know.

GIANNA: I am so glad that we cleared things up, Ms. Stacey from America!

STACEY: Me, too.

GIANNA: Ms. Stacey, I apologize for my husband. He's very rude. (*She hits Ottavio.*) He forced you out on the street. You are welcome at our house any time, my dear. I tell you the family would not have minded.

OTTAVIO: You never know with the dons. Sometimes business is business.

GIANNA: If a woman were running the family business, we'd run a tight ship. Right, Ms. Stacey?

STACEY: Sure.

GIANNA: In Italy we have a saying...“Men bring home the pig, but women are the ones that wrestle them.”

STACEY: Ah.

GIANNA: We also have another saying—

OTTAVIO: “In Italy, we are family!”

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: In Italy, we are family!

NIGEL: What was that?

MAMA NONA: (*Pinching Nigel's checks.*) In Italy, we are family!

OTTAVIO: Let's celebrate!

STACEY: That's really not necessary because we—

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: Familia!

*(Ottavio turns up the music. Gianna and Ottavio dance. Enrico grabs Stacey and shoves the rose stem in her mouth. He starts to suavely gyrate his hips and dance while Stacey tries to pull away. Nigel is trapped with Mama Nona as she attempts to feed him.)*

STACEY: (*Shouts over the music.*) You know, I don't know if we really have time for this!

ENRICO: There is always time for love!

GUISEPPI: My son is a lover, Ms. Stacey. He learned from Papa!

ENRICO: Si, si!

STACEY: That's very nice, but...no, I mean...Ottavio, Gianna, you really shouldn't go to all this trouble!

OTTAVIO: It's no trouble at all!

GIANNA: You are part of the family now!

*(Gianna kisses Stacey on both cheeks. Mama Nona plants a kiss on Nigel. More partying as Stacey tries to break away from Enrico's suave dancing. Knock at the door.)*

STACEY: What's that pounding?

ENRICO: The sound of my heart, Ms. Stacey.

*(More knocking on the door, but Enrico won't let go of Stacey. Nigel manages to break away from Mama Nona and attempts to hide. They play a little game of hide-and-seek. Knocking continues.)*

STACEY: No, there is somebody at the door!

*(More pounding on the door. Giuseppe answers the door. Florenza enters.)*

FLORENZA: Scusilo! Che cosa nel mondo voi pensano state facendo?! Non ci non è tempo per questo affatto perché. You cannot make this much noise! *(Enrico swings Stacey out, releases her, and grabs Florenza for his new dance partner. At first she resists.)* Wait! Wait! No, wait!

ENRICO: What is your name, my sweet?

FLORENZA: My name is Florenza.

ENRICO: Florenza! Mama mia! *(In Italian.)* Il mio amore! You are so beautiful. Dance with me!

*(Enrico and Florenza start dancing. Florenza loosens up until she is actually enjoying herself and getting quite wild.)*

STACEY: Stop! Hey, could you guys just cut it out! We really don't have time for this! *(Nobody listens to Stacey. She approaches Nigel.)*

NIGEL: Well, it looks like you've got everything under control here! So, I'll just be leaving!

STACEY: You can't leave yet! How will I explain this to Michael?!

NIGEL: A lot easier than you'll be able to explain me!

STACEY: Will you just help me get rid of them?! *Please?!*

NIGEL: What do you propose I do...call in the Italian army?

STACEY: How should I know? Just get them out of here.

NIGEL: Fine! (*Nigel steps out and attempts to get everyone's attention.*) Attention. Attention! Could we turn down that infernal music box just a tad. I have an announcement to make! (*Music cuts as everybody stops.*) Thank you all for your warmth and kindness! (*Pagliazzi family adlibs, "Prego!" "No problema!" "We are family now!" "Let's dance!" etc.*) My wife, Ms. Stacey, and myself are very gracious and humbled by your hospitality as we are both strangers here in this country... (*In Latin.*) ...Terra incog neta. (*Everyone stares blankly at this.*) That means, "Strangers in a strange land." It's Latin. What I'm trying to say is...well, I... (*Changing gears.*) ...grazie!

(*Pagliazzi family adlibs "Siete benvenuti!" "You're welcome!" etc. Music comes back on and they start to party again.*)

STACEY: Nigel!

NIGEL: Wait! Stop! Stop the music! (*Music is lowered again.*) Now, my bride and I have had a very long trip and a crazy couple of days, and we are very tired now and would greatly appreciate it if you would allow us some time to rest and possibly get some sleep.

GUISEPPI: You can sleep when you're dead!

PAGLIAZZI FAMILY: (*Shout.*) Si!

(*The music starts up again and everybody continues dancing as before.*)

NIGEL: *(To Stacey.)* That didn't go down exactly as I had hoped.

*(Stacey goes over to the boom box and turns off the music.)*

STACEY: *(Shouts.)* Hey, everybody! Italy just won the World Cup!

ENRICO: The World Cup? Viva Italia!

*(Pagliuzzi family adlib "The World Cup!" "Party in the street!" "Viva Italia!" "Let's Go!" "Buena Sera!" "I feed the players my pasta!" "Manga!" "We are Roman!" etc. They all exit in a huge huff. Stacey slams the door. Nigel is slack-jawed.)*

NIGEL: Nice work.

STACEY: Thanks.

NIGEL: Now everything is back to normal.

*(Phone rings.)*

STACEY: *(Startled.)* Ahhh!

NIGEL: What's that?

STACEY: Oh my gosh, I almost forgot! That's Michael! On the phone! He's downstairs in the lobby! Oh, I know it! I know it! Now, what do we do?

NIGEL: I don't know about you. Between your boyfriend and Don Vitello, I'm going to get fitted for a tuxedo.

STACEY: A tuxedo? What for?

NIGEL: My funeral!

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**