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My House in Umbria

By William Trevor

Buongiorno.

- Thank God we're still alive.
- I said I'd get you here on time.
- You were driving like a maniac.
- Oh, not me.
- Like a maniac, Quinty.
- There's no point in dawdling.

We should have left home
half an hour earlier.

Couldn't do that. I was busy.
Busy talking to Rosa Chevelli.

I saw you chatting her up.

We were discussing
the household accounts.

She's a tart. I should never have hired her.
She's a good girl. Right, in you go.

I'll see you tomorrow.

On the fifth of May, in the morning...

I left my house in Umbria and traveled to
Milan on one of my monthly shopping trips.

I manage to travel very well on my own...
despite my limited understanding
of the Italian language.

- Excuse me, is this carrozza 219?

- 219, yes.

In the Grand Hotel Duomo, where I
always stay, excellent English is spoken.

I think you're in my seat.

I have a great affection for the Grand Hotel.

It owes more to the style and manners
of the Belle Epoque...

than to the brash technologies
of the 21st century.

In Italy, men who are strangers
still give me a second look...
although not with the same excitement
as they did some years ago.

There are, naturally, laughter lines...
but my hair is still as pale as sand...
and my voice has not yet acquired
the husky depths...

that steal away femininity.

What's the time?

My watch seems to have stopped.

- Ten to.

- Ten to what?

Oh, Daddy. Ten to 12:00.

It's remarkable how much one can deduce
from the slightest gesture...

a half smile, or a shared glance.

Theirs, I decided, is a good marriage...

whereas their love affair

has only just begun.

Hello.

What's your name?

- Aimee.

- That's a very pretty name.

My name's Emily. Emily Delahunty.

- Do you like it?

- I don't know.

I have several other names.

Perhaps you might prefer one of them?

Gloria Grey...

Janine Ann Johns...

Cora Lemonde.

Why do you have so many names?

We have different clothes

for different occasions.

Why not have different names?

- Are you English?

- I was born in England.

Now I live in Italy.

I have a house in Umbria.

Why don't you live in England anymore?

That's enough, Aimee.

You shouldn't ask so many questions.

- Why not?

- It's impolite.

I don't mind.

Just read your book. There's a good girl.

In the garden,

the delphiniums were in flower.

Through scented twilight,

the girl in the white dress...

walked with a step

as light as a morning cobweb.

Annie. Annie?

No, it's Quinty. Come to see you.

You all right? You'll be okay.

What am I doing here?

You are in hospital.

That's where you are now.

You've had a bit of a bang,
but you're all right.

Praise be to God, you're doing okay.

It was a device.

- A timed device.

- Bomb?

Well, "timed device"

is what the police are calling it.

There were other people on the train.

There was a boy who spoke German,
and his girlfriend...

and there was an American family.

Are they here, too?

I'll ask. Now shush. Go to sleep now.

- She's a British citizen?

- Yes.

- She owns a hotel near Chiusi.

- It's not exactly a hotel.

A pensione? A restaurant with rooms?

It's a house where people stay
when the hotels are full.

- Coffee?

- Sì, grazie.

- Sugar?

- No.

- You are...

- I look after this and that.

And the financial matters.

- For the house?

- And her books.

What books?

Grazie.

She writes books. Love stories.

- Are they published?

- They're published all right.

She gets fan mail.

How long have you been with her?

Longer than I care to remember.

"In the garden,

the delphiniums were in flower.

"Through scented twilight,
the girl in the white dress...
"walked with a step
as light as a morning cobweb."
Are you real? Or are you a dream?
Do I not look real?
I've seen you before, I think...
in a dream.
It was here.
I came to see you after the bomb.
You were not conscious.
I'm Inspector Girotti.
It was a dream.
Perhaps. If you say so.
Are they all dead?
The people in the carriage?
- Carrozza 219?
- Not all.
The older Englishman survived.
The German survived,
but he has some burns.
- And the little girl.
- Little American girl.
- Is she injured?
- Not physically.
By some miracle, she escaped unharmed...
but she is traumatized. She cannot speak.
Come in.
- May I talk to her?
- Of course.
Hello, Aimee.
I wonder if you remember who I am.
I'm Mrs. Delahunty.
I have lots of other names as well.
Don't you remember?
Splinters of glass in my legs.
Could have been a lot worse.
They've got me marching up and down
this damn corridor about 50 times a day.
So I struggle back and forth.
- The German boy's got some nasty burns.
- Yes, I was told.
We're lucky to be alive.
The little girl can't talk.

- They're looking for her relatives.
- Oh, dear. How sad. Poor thing!
I'm so sorry about your daughter.
At least it was quick.
Very admirable. Your stoicism.
I expect a military life demands such.
If you'll excuse me,
I'd better do some more walking.
They'll take me off if I don't.
- Where do you want all this stuff?
- In the cabinet, if there's room.
Silk scarves. Sunglasses. Tights.
- Why do women cart around so much crap?
- Cheers the spirit.
- Guess who gave me this.
- No idea.
Ernie Chumps.
It's a birthday present.
Ernie Chumps! You're well rid of him.
I thought he'd come back.
He said he'd come back.
He said a lot of things. I told you he'd skip.
You had no future at the Cafe Rose.
You'd have been stuck with that
fat Egyptian doctor and his greasy friends.
Getting old before your time.
You'd be dead by now.
- I would.
- Dead as a doorknob.
I survived.
- I'll come back later.
- It's okay.
Scusi.
I am sorry, Werner.
- I am so very sorry.
- Thank you.
All we can do is hope.
Hope is one thing that is left to us.
Isn't that right?
We must look to the future and hope.
I'll come back later.
What kind of sickness or malignancy
orders the death of strangers on a train?
What kind of lunatic or devil?

As I sat by the child's bed,
I tried to imagine this wretched individual...
protected, perhaps, by a mother...
who had always believed that one day
he would commit an unthinkable crime.
But it was beyond my imagination.
You saw nothing unusual
in the railway carriage?
No, nothing.
Nor on the station platform
before the train departed?
I was rather late.
I didn't have time to notice anything.
We're asking the same questions
over and over again. I'm sorry.
Are you a Virgo?
Your astrological sign.
Yes, I am a Virgo. You're right.
I thought so.
It's unusual in a detective.
Thank you for your patience.
- Goodbye.
- Bye.
- I wonder what will happen to them.
- Who?
The General. Werner. The little girl.
- They'll go home, live their lives.
- The police won't let them go home.
Not until the investigation is complete.
They'll have to stay in Italy.
What will become of them?
Where will they go?
I suppose they could stay
at the house for a while.
Stay at the house?
- While they convalesce.
- Well, they'll have to pay.
- Of course they'd pay.
- We're not running a charity.
Charity begins at home.
That's not how it is meant,
and well you know it.
We were all discharged
on the same afternoon.

Werner and the General
were happy to accept my invitation.
And since Aimee was apparently
the sole survivor of her family...
the authorities were glad
to have someone to look after her.
Dr. Innocenti would visit us regularly.
If there were any signs of deterioration...
the child would at once
be returned to the hospital.
Signora Bardini. How lovely to see you.
This is our new little friend.
- You are alive. God love you!
- Yes, thank you.
- Mrs. Delahunty, I'm so happy!
- After we've had a drink, thank you.
Take it easy.
We had all decided that the bomb
and its attendant horrors...
should be buried and forgotten.
It was now time to allow
the beauty of the landscape...
to embrace us with its healing balm,
helped, of course, from time to time...
by a little drink on the terrace.
That night, as the child slept,
we dined beneath the wisteria.
Quinty poured
the Vino Nobile of Montepulciano.
Rosa Chevelli served vegetables...
and Signora Bardini carved
the lamb con rosmarino.
A stranger would have been surprised

to see us:

The walking wounded at table.
I was the only one
who had not lost a loved one...
having none to lose.
- Good morning, Mrs. Delahunty.
- Morning, General.
Thought you might like something to read.
Thank you. Most kind.
Two on a Sunbeam, by Gloria Grey.

- Don't think I know it.
- It's very light. Very undemanding.
- One of mine, actually.
- Yours? You mean, you wrote it?

Gloria Grey is one of several
noms de plume I use.

- I'm most impressed.
- Don't be.

Romantic fiction is not great literature.
Even so, it's quite an achievement
to get a book published.

I persevered.

I have a great talent for perseverance.

There were endless rejections
at first, of course.

Month after month after month.

And then I received a letter.

"We are interested in your novelette.

"We foretell good sales
and a profitable relationship."

- And so indeed it has been.
- That's fascinating, Mrs. Delahunty.

I'd no idea we were staying in the house
of a distinguished authoress.

Scarcely that.

Though I do have my admirers.

Si?

- I know. But you can't do it, Rosa.
- A kiss?
- Someone could see us.
- Who? Mrs. Delahunty?

Why is she jealous?

- Don't be stupid.
- Why?

She doesn't like this sort of behavior
in front of guests.

No, you are ashamed of me.

You don't love me under the sun.

Go inside.

You don't love me.

- Good day, General.
- Afternoon, Quinty.

You speak excellent Italian.

Where'd you learn? Affair of the heart?

It's nothing to be proud of, sir.
I tricked a well-to-do Italian girl
into marrying me back home.
I told her I was the manager of
a meat extract factory, believe it or not.
When she discovered I was lying,
she left me.
Went back to her parents in Modena.
I wasn't going to let her go
without a bit of a fight, so I followed her.
One night, her father and brothers drove me
out to the countryside...
pushed me out onto a grass verge,
and beat the living daylights out of me...
and left me there,
a stranger in a strange land.
That's how I learned Italian, General.
From necessity, as they say.
And so the days passed.
Aimee ate in silence, walked in silence...
painted in silence...
lived in silence.
- What is your work, Werner?
- I'm hoping to become a journalist.
A journalist? What sort of journalist?
Politics.
It's not my favorite subject.
Had you known her long? Madeleine?
Just a few weeks.
She was very beautiful.
She was special. And clever. Very clever.
She spoke a lot of languages, you know.
Even Japanese.
- That is clever.
- It was her job.
She worked for a big company
as an interpreter.
I imagined their first meeting.
She, of course, always wore formal clothes
for business meetings...
her natural beauty enhanced
and made more erotic...
by the dark suit and stockings.
And then the first glance, the first smile,

the first tremor of love.
There has to be love in a person's life.
No one can do without
either receiving or giving it.
Of course, I didn't say that to Werner.
Nor did I say that love expired for me
on The Wall of Death.
I'm down here in the laundry room.
- Where?
- Down here.
Follow my voice.
Here.
- Good morning. I have a letter for the lady.
- Throw it to me.
- Good day. See you.
- Bye.
The American authorities
have located Aimee's uncle.
Excellent!
His name is Thomas Riversmith.
Her mother's brother.
He's a professor.
Riversmith. How interesting.
Inspector Girotti sent me a letter.
Isn't that good news?
Aimee has an uncle.
We had a Riversmith at school.
This man's an American.
Thomas Riversmith.
Perhaps she calls him Uncle Tom.
Wonder if she does.
Riversmith and I used to walk into
the village sometimes. It wasn't very far.
A woman called Mrs. Patch used
to give us tea. She charged us sixpence.
We were caught smoking once.
- You and Riversmith?
- It's not a horrendous crime.
A misdemeanor.
Rules were broken, of course...
but nobody stole.
Owning up was taken for granted.
And if you were caught out in anything,
you did not lie.

That's where I learned what honor means.
Do you live alone, General?
Yes, I do. Since my wife died.
All that was going to change.
I was going to go live with my daughter
and her husband in Hampshire...
but I couldn't like him.
I tried.
Just couldn't.
No one can help disliking a person.
My wife was very cross with me about that.
She was a remarkable woman...
and a wonderful wife.
As he spoke, I saw a quayside,
assembled troops...
and a young officer, newly promoted.
Scarcely more than a boy.
The engagement had been announced
on the eve of his departure.
William!
"I love you," she said.
"I'll love you forever"...
her tears staining the leather
of his shoulder strap.
You're welcome to remain here
for as long as you feel like it.
You're not alone in this, you know.
That's a very great kindness,
Mrs. Delahunty. Thank you.
What is it?
Do you want to start it?
Come on, it's funny.
I'm doing it then.
Apart from the people
in your compartment, carrozza 219...
no one on the train was injured.
It was clearly carefully chosen,
your compartment.
One of your fellow passengers
must have been the intended victim.
Perhaps the American?
Aimee's father. He looked important.
A politician, perhaps? A senator.
Or someone close to the President.

He was a child doctor.
The General's son-in-law?
A merchant banker.
It doesn't make sense.
And who would do such a terrible thing?
If I knew, I would not bore you
with my questions.
I come because I do not know.
No one takes the blame.
The newspapers said
it was a terrorist attack.
Perhaps.
What else could it have been?
Who knows?
Some sort of private revenge?
A crazy killer?
- A lunatic.
- A clever lunatic, si, signora.
A bomb, carefully hidden
on the luggage rack...
Terrorists, not lunatics, I think.
- Hello, Werner. You all right?
- Yes, I am.
- It's very beautiful here.
- The garden's a dreadful mess, I'm afraid.
I'm always intending
to do something about it, but I never do.
Why? It's so beautiful.
- You have a garden at home?
- No.
- But my parents had one.
- They're no longer alive?
When I think of gardens, I think of England.
Not that we had a garden
when I was a child. Just a back yard.
I've always longed
for an English cottage garden.
Your herbaceous borders and roses,
lupins and hollyhocks...
and a stone sundial covered in moss,
perhaps a birdbath.
That's what I'd like.
Look at that. Isn't that perfect?
- But you said under the house.

- Yes, well...

There it is. Under the house.

It's south-facing, there's no wind.

It's an ideal setting.

We can have a herbaceous border

all the way along there.

We could have lupins.

We could have sunflowers.

Ms. Delahunty mentioned a flower

called "holly"...Something with "holly"...

Hollyhocks. Yes, absolutely.

We must have those all down this wall here.

It'll be a paradise for her.

Lot of work, mind.

- I just hope I can be of help.

- You know what they say:

"Many hands make light work."

And I think three just about qualifies.

It's good to do this, Werner.

Gardens make me think of the future.

By the way, she mentioned

something about a...

sun clock?

Sundial. Oh, Lord!

Well, we must do our best.

- More cheese, General?

- No, thanks.

If you'll excuse me,

I have some letters to write.

Where is this?

You're at my house, Aimee.

I'm Mrs. Delahunty.

My mother's cross with me.

She says I shouldn't spend

so much time painting pictures.

I should be outside, she says,

playing with the other children.

But I like it indoors. I like painting pictures.

It's like having a world all to yourself.

If I go outside, we'll only start fighting.

That's why I like it when it's raining.

Nobody expects you to go out then.

Dr. Innocenti found it encouraging

that Aimee had spoken.

But he reminded us that
the process of recovery in cases like this...
was often long and uncertain.
We must remember what reality is for her...
and how painful it will be
as her memory returns.

- Is that where we're going?
- Yes.

Gradually, our anxieties began to recede...
and we surrendered ourselves to happiness.

- Does it fit?
- Perfetto.

I couldn't help reflecting that happiness
is often an illusion.
But what's wrong with that?
"Evening had become night.
"Moonlight glistened on the Grand Canal.
"Marco took her by the hand
and opened the bedroom door.
"He led her to the bed..."

Go on.

"When she woke up...
"Tara knew she had found
the love of her life.
"'Kiss me,' she said,
and sank into his embrace."
Aimee had the ability
to bring about the very best...
and sometimes the most unexpected
qualities in those she was close to.
She gave us life and spirit
and new hope for the future.
What a beautiful garden!
It's such a beautiful thought!
Did you make it, Aimee?
A garden doesn't make up for anything,
but it marks our recovery in your house.
It's the most wonderful present
I've ever had. Thank you.
Perhaps for the General, Aimee became
a daughter with whom he might begin again.
Perhaps for Werner,
she was the girl who had died on the train.
For my own part,

I can claim without reservation...
that I became as devoted to the child
during that time...
as any mother could ever be.
Hello, pronto.
I have a person-to-person call
for Signora Delahunty.
Speaking.
I have your party on the line, sir, go ahead.
- He's coming to fetch her.
- Who?
Her uncle.
- Take her back to America?
- Yes.
What's he sound like?
Not an easy person.
When I was a girl,
I longed for a young man of good family...
to draw up in his car beside me.
When I was a woman...
I longed for a different kind of stranger
to appear in the Cafe Rose.
By now, of course...
all such romantic fantasies
were consigned to the past.
...probably brought you
the long way around.
They jack up the fare that way.
Did you pass a bridge about a mile away?
Well, possibly.
- Is Mrs. Delahunty...
- I'm Mrs. Delahunty.
Thomas Riversmith. How do you do?
You're most welcome, Mr. Riversmith.
Hope you had a pleasant journey.
- Is it the back room for the gentleman?
- Yes, please.
- I was just saying to...
- Quinty.
The taxi driver had some difficulty
finding the house.
Otherwise, the journey was fine.
- I'm sure you could do with a drink.
- A drink?

After all the traveling.

It's 6:

as you Americans call it.

If you don't mind,

I would like to wash my hands first...

and then I'd like to see my niece.

Yes, of course. This way.

Your uncle's here.

Mr. Riversmith has arrived.

So, you are Aimee.

Yes.

This is not going to be easy

for either of us, Aimee.

But I hope we can become friends.

Thank you, Mrs. Delahunty.

I'll see you downstairs.

Thank you.

So what are you reading?

Lewis Carroll.

Would I fix you a little something, sir?

All that dust on the road,

you must be parched.

Thank you.

Will it be a bourbon?

Isn't that what you drink in America?

I'd prefer an Old Fashioned.

- That'll be on the rocks, I'm sure, Quinty.

- Yes, please.

One Old Fashioned with ice.

Mr. Riversmith, do sit here.

One of Aimee's.

I greatly appreciate...

what Dr. Innocenti has done for Aimee...

and you, of course, Mrs. Delahunty.

It's been a pleasure.

She's an enchanting child.

Be sure to let me have an account.

I want to have all that settled

before we leave.

- There's really no need.

- I have a note on where you are on all that.

Will you be having another one, Mrs. D?

Oh, really. Thank you, Quinty.

I think perhaps I will.

Can't have you drinking on your own,
Mr. Riversmith.

Werner! This is Mr. Riversmith.

Aimee's uncle.

- Mr. Riversmith, this is Werner.

- How do you do?

How do you do?

I had no idea you were
such an accomplished artist, young lady.

These are very interesting pictures.

- What pictures?

- These here.

I didn't draw them.

- I drew them.

- Werner drew them.

- I'm sorry, I don't...

- When are you taking me away?

That all depends on what Dr. Innocenti says
when he comes to see us.

How long will you be
staying with us, Mr. Riversmith?

I have a conference in Baltimore
on the 25th...

so I'm hoping we'll be back by then.

So quick?

Do you know Aimee well?

We met for the first time just an hour ago.

An hour ago?

Well, Phyllis, Aimee's mother and I...

There was a family quarrel.

Where do you live in Pennsylvania?

Virginville. I work in the university.

- Do you have children?

- No.

But Francine has two
from her previous marriage.

They live with their father.

Francine. A new name to me.

It seemed harsh, unpleasant...

like chalk scraping on a blackboard.

I suppose we should be

calling you Professor.

No, I don't use the title.

I don't think academic distinctions
are important.

What is your field?

- I study the carpenter ant.

- Carpenter ant?

The red carpenter ant.

Camponotus ferrugineus.

I don't think I know the carpenter ant.

Our paths haven't crossed, as it were.

The interdependency

of carpenter ant colonies...

reveals behavior that's remarkably similar
to human beings.

Really?

I imagined his home

in Virginville, Pennsylvania.

The local police would have told them
about the bomb...

and Aimee, and the train.

There would have been

much discussion that night.

What to do with the child?

Should she come and live with them?

What alternatives were there?

Having no children themselves...

it was clearly a difficult situation.

Does Francine share your interest

in the red carpenter ant?

No, her field is entirely different.

Her specialty

is the *Camponotus pennsylvanicus*:

The black carpenter ant.

I'd hoped to find a photograph of Francine
that would confirm the picture I'd formed.

But there wasn't one.

This is what occupies him.

This is what fuels his ambition.

He's eminent and distinguished

and looked up to.

But he's not aware of ordinary matters.

Mr. Riversmith is an ambitious man.

That hadn't occurred to me before.

He is ambitious...

and Francine is ambitious for him

and for herself.

There are other professors
with microscopes...

watching ants of different colors
in other trees.

He and Francine have to keep ahead.

They have to get there first.

Where could they possibly find the time
to devote to a child...

who has come so tiresomely
out of the blue?

- Do you think he'll take me to Siena?

- Of course he will.

- You ask him, Werner.

- Me? Why should I ask him?

He's your uncle, not mine, isn't he?

Please, Werner.

Come on, Aimee, you're so brave.

You can do it.

- But I don't really know him.

- You'll get to know him.

Camponotus irritatus.

Damn nuisance.

What about taking her back to the States?

She'll need careful supervision.

Of course, I'll give you

all the medical records for your own doctor.

I mean, will she be okay for the journey?

There's no medical reason

why she should not travel...

but it's a long way.

We cannot know what effect

the journey might have on her.

There's one thing I don't understand.

Aimee insists that she didn't

paint those pictures.

Because she doesn't know she did.

Yes, but why should

the German pretend he painted them?

Sort of kindness.

If the child believes she didn't paint them...

there must be an explanation

for their existence.

Otherwise, it would be

very worrying for her.
Quinty, do you have to do that now?
We're having breakfast.
Yes, I do.
Buongiorno, dottore.
Good morning, Mr. Quinty.
I see you've met our new guest, dottore.
Come and join us for coffee.
Mrs. Delahunty, I'm sorry,
but Aimee is too shy to ask herself.
She wants to go to Siena.
- Why Siena?
- She didn't tell me much.
She said that she promised the doctor
she would go before she left for America...
and she wants her uncle to take her.
I'm sure he'd love to take her.
Isn't that so, Mr. Riversmith?
What's that exactly?
I was just saying to Werner,
I'm sure you'd love to take Aimee to Siena.
I think it's my fault.
I told her about Siena
because it's the city where I was born.
Why don't we all go?
I've never been to Siena.
Absolutely. The more the merrier.
Well, I suppose if Aimee wants to go...
This is the first time
we'll all have done something together.
We haven't had the confidence before.
I had the impression
that Mr. Riversmith stifled a sigh.
I'm surprised that Francine hadn't told him
that this habit of his appears impolite...
if not rude.
A few weeks with the right woman...
and all these little irritations
would soon disappear.
- Morning, Mr. Riversmith.
- Good morning, General.
Can we go in the back?
- Hello.
- Good morning.

- Good morning, General.

- Quinty said I could come.

Now look here, Quinty.

- You said it was okay. The more the merrier.

- I said no such thing.

You certainly did. It'll do the girl good...

You're making it up.

Her name was never mentioned.

You had a drink in you at the time.

You're coming in order to drive. It's

different altogether for a maid to tag along.

I know. We're servant class, I know that...

but it'll be a terrible disappointment for her.

She was up ironing her clothes

till the small hours.

I'm servant class myself,

as Quinty well knows.

- Let's go!

- Wait a minute, we're not all in.

But with everyone waiting,

I didn't want to explain to him.

But naturally there was a difference.

Siena the next stop!

You won't go anymore, amorous butterfly

Fluttering around inside night and day

Disturbing the sleep of beauties

A little Narcissus and Adonis of love

I had the most extraordinary dream

last night.

It was about you.

You were repairing the kitchen drawer...

that had just fallen to pieces

in your sister's hands.

You scraped away a kind of fungus

from the joints.

And then you placed the drawer in a clamp.

"It was so clever to do that"...

said Phyllis.

And the wooden slat of the kitchen blind...

tapped against the window frame.

Do you remember...

a Venetian blind that tapped against

the window frame?

No.

The reply came too quickly.
To remember, it is necessary
to think for a moment.
Even for several minutes.
It was disappointing
that Mr. Riversmith wasn't going to bother.
But I felt sure the glories of Siena
would soon make him more amenable.
Tell me about your sister.
Tell you what?
What sort of a person she was.
She was very like Aimee.
Every time I see Aimee,
I'm reminded of Phyllis.
- Yes, I know.
- It's the exit only, I'm afraid.
- We've go to go around the front.
- What a bore.
More steps.
- Aimee, wait.
- Come on.
But what happened? Why did you quarrel?
Phyllis had been very close
to my first wife. When we separated...
Phyllis did all she could
to bring us back together.
That must have been difficult for Francine.
It was. She was very angry about it.
Very upset.
There was a violent quarrel.
And you took Francine's side?
Well, of course. Phyllis never forgave me.
We never spoke to each other again.
A dozen times I'd come to the point of
writing to make amends...
but never did.
Come on, you two. Hurry up.
We're not all quite as fit as you are,
young lady.
Hoping to end bloodshed and rivalry...
St. Bernardino, 1380-1444...
wanted the feuding Sieneese to unite
under his symbol of the Risen Christ.
That would be above the door there, see.

Did it work?
Unfortunately, the plague wiped out most of the population, so he never found out.
Shall we go in?
Where's Aimee?
For heaven's sake. Where did she go?
There she is. She's over there.
- What are they?
- What are what?
Those colorful things on the wall.
They're crash helmets.
Crash helmets? How extraordinary.
- I wonder what they're doing there.
- I wonder.
Probably in memory of people who've been killed in traffic accidents.
- No, no. Saved.
- Scusi?
Saved. They were saved.
They give thanks.
They put their casco on the wall.
How very touching.
I haven't got anything to put up there.
What do you mean?
I was saved. I should give thanks.
What a sweet idea.
We must think of something.
Come on, lots to see.
There are some wonderful paintings inside.
Can you think of anything?
If you'll excuse me,
I'll go in search of a bookshop.
- I might find something on roses.
- Yes, please do.
We'll go up to the tower again,
if that's all right.
Yes, of course, if you've got the energy.
- We'll try.
- Come on, I'll race you.
Mr. Riversmith, where are you going?
I thought I'd have a look
at the picture gallery.
No, you don't want to do that.
Full of tourists.

You come with me.
This way.
Is this a place you've been before?
Yes. I always come here.
Scusi.
This is a very quiet place.
It's this place here. This is the place for us.
Are you sure this is a kind of...
Are the others coming here?
Let's sit down, shall we?
I wonder if they're brothers, the barmen.
They look like brothers, don't they?
I wonder if they are.
It's so peaceful here.
I'm sure you're dying
for a bit of peace and quiet.
And a drink!
I insist on standing you a cocktail.
No, I don't drink in the middle of the day.
Recognizing this as a polite reluctance
to accept more hospitality...
I ignored it.
I ordered him an Old Fashioned...
since, in my house,
that had been established as his drink.
It's awfully pleasant here.
You mustn't worry about the others.
There's no reason why you and I
shouldn't spend a little time together.
And if tongues start to wag, who cares?
Such nonsense.
Look at them over there,
the man and the girl.
Are they lovers, do you suppose?
Just a friend, perhaps.
Her father? What do you think?
No, I think they're lovers. Look.
I'm sure they're lovers.
Grazie.
Salute.
What a strange
and mysterious thing it is, love.
To be without it is like being...
deprived of oxygen.

I had no love when I was a child.
The people who brought me up
were not my parents.
I was still very young
when they told me the truth.
- Olive?
- No, thank you.
My real parents were traveling entertainers.
They had no use for a child.
"Not the sort of people you'd care for"...
said the mother who wasn't my mother.
The people I lived with
couldn't have children.
They bought me.
Isn't that astonishing? Bought me.
Like a cut-price sofa.
- Crostini?
- No, thank you.
The father who wasn't my father
used to take me to the Gaiety Cinema.
On Sunday afternoons,
there'd be a comedy short:
Laurel and Hardy or Charlie Chase.
And then the Gaumont News
and then the main feature.
I loved Westerns.
I loved the canyons and the ranches...
and the feathered Indians
that fell one by one.
The saddles that became pillows
beneath the stars.
For a while I think they were fond of me.
But as I grew older, things began to change.
I was 10 when she told me the truth...
the mother who wasn't my mother.
"20, that's what he give," she said.
"Rough type of people," she said,
"to profit from the baby."
"50 they ask, 20 he give."
As soon as I was old enough, I ran away.
I ran and I ran and I ran.
All over the world.
London, America, Egypt...
Morocco.

I felt he was in some way distressed
or preoccupied.

I wanted to reach across the table
and touch the back of his hand...
but naturally, I didn't.

I think we should go.

I think we should join the others.

He'd hardly touched his drink.

That saddened me.

Alcohol in moderation can be a great
loosener for a man like Mr. Riversmith.
Aimee, I've been thinking
about what you could give the cathedral.

- Perhaps one of your paintings.

- What?

Perhaps you could do a special painting.

Wouldn't that be a good idea?

- Special painting?

- To put alongside the crash helmets.

To give thanks. You thought
it would be a good idea.

You remember the crash helmets, Aimee?

We didn't know what they were.

And the Italian lady told us.

Don't you remember?

It appears she can't remember a thing.

That's unusual, but not unheard of
in these cases.

Maybe not, but it's very worrying.

We were planning to go back to the States
at the end of the week.

Should we delay?

That's up to you.

Dr. Innocenti, let me be frank.

My wife and I have no experience
in this sort of thing.

Will we be able to handle it...

or do you think the child will need
institutional care?

It's unlikely, but not impossible.

We'll have to make a decision.

- Four, five, six, seven...

- No, that's eight.

...nine, ten.

- Take bigger steps.
I can't take bigger steps.
One, two, three, four, five...
six, seven, eight, nine, ten.
That would be safer.
One, two, three, four...
five, six, seven...
General.
Oh, Tom.
Have you seen the General?
Yes. He and Werner were talking to a man...
about making a sundial
for the cottage garden, I believe.
In that case, I won't disturb them.
How good they are to me.
A pipe would not have seemed amiss...
clenched between his strong-seeming teeth.
Do you mind if I smoke?
You go right ahead.
If he'd had a pipe,
he would have relit it now.
He would have pressed the tobacco
into the cherry wood bowl...
and drawn on it to make it glow again.
Would you have another bourbon?
I'll fetch one for you. I need a top-up myself.
Nothing to drink for me, thank you.
You know, I went to America once.
To Idaho.
Really?
I dreamed of going there.
I adored Wild West movies
when I was a child.
Idaho is hardly the Wild West.
No, I was misled.
A man called Ernie Chumps took me.
He's a very unreliable person.
But I was young.
Full of romantic ideas.
He went to Idaho...
in search of orders for sanitaryware.
And he took me with him.
He didn't travel
with the sanitaryware, of course.

Just brochures full of photographs...
and a miniature two-dimensional toilet...
just to show the quality of the porcelain.
He took me to Morocco as well.
To Marrakech.
Women were his weakness.
He was Aries on the cusp with Taurus.
A very mixed-up region
for a man of his sensual disposition.
I think I'll turn in early. The jet lag.
You should be waking up now, Tom.
You're six hours behind.
You're right. Then perhaps I'm just tired.
Of course, you know...
before my time...
he took someone else
around with him on expenses.
She wanted to marry him.
Anyway, he couldn't afford to
because of Mrs. Chumps and the alimony.
I was 18 years old when I first met Ernie.
Green as a pea.
He left me in Marrakech.
Just abandoned me in the Cafe Rose.
They gave me a job...
entertaining the guests.
It was exhausting work.
One of Ernie's favorite products
was the joke flush.
When you pulled the chain,
a recorded voice said, "Ha-ha!"
The trouble was you couldn't stop it
from saying, "Ha-ha!"
Poor Ernie.
Defective goods got him in the end.
- Are you really going to bed now?
- Yes, I am.
I'll walk upstairs with you.
My books.
- Your...
- Books.
My own books.
You're an author, Mrs. Delahunty?
You might like to call me Emily.

The books they had at the Cafe Rose...
were the complete works of Shakespeare...
and the collected poems
of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.
That was my education
when it came to writing English.
I know The Lady of Shalott by heart.
And the part of Lady Macbeth and
"Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day?"
You're a Capricorn.
The moment I heard your voice
on the phone, I guessed Capricorn.
Most interesting.
Your ants are interesting, too, Tom.
I used to find it so easy to write.
You know, like escaping
into my own private world.
It became more difficult as I grew older.
Sometimes impossible.
Since...
carrozza 219...
I feel it coming back.
An energy.
And do you know why...
I see you are putting those in full sun.
- Yeah, I think they need it.
- Yes, they do.
A little water wouldn't hurt.
What have you found, Tom?
Visitors from Argentina.
Linepithema humile.
They came here by boat in the 1920s.
They appear to be thriving.
Italy certainly has that effect on people.
Ants, too, it seems.
Glorious day, huh?
It is indeed.
He greeted me so pleasantly
that I was tempted...
to forgive his rudeness
of the previous evening.
The truth is I'd already had a drink or two...
and I may have misinterpreted his response.
He is a scientist, after all.

Perhaps fiction isn't his forte.
You're leaving tomorrow.
Yes, we are.
How sad. You had breakfast?
No, not yet.
I thought I'd go for a walk
before it gets too hot.
That's a good idea.
Do you mind if I come with you?
As you wish.
Such a shame you couldn't stay
a little longer.
I'm afraid...
I was a nuisance to you
when we talked yesterday evening.
Not at all.
You were tired, and I delayed you.
I think I offended you...
by calling you by your Christian name,
I'm truly sorry.
It is perfectly all right.
- You weren't offended?
- Not at all.
It's just, it's friendlier to call you Tom.
"Professor" makes you sound so ancient.
Look at those clouds.
They're like the clouds in the painting.
Is that Werner?
Say what?
I thought I saw Werner.
That's a memorial to an American soldier.
The people were starving,
and he gave them his food.
All of it, even though they were the enemy.
And he died in some pointless skirmish.
But they didn't forget him.
They thought it was a miracle
that a soldier should do such a thing.
I don't believe in miracles.
Let me tell you something, Tom.
There's been a terrible evil, but here...
in this little corner of Italy,
there's been again a miracle.
Three survivors,

out of all the world's survivors...
have found a place in my house.
One to another, we're a source of strength.
The miracle of that...
I do not believe in miracles, Mrs. Delahunty.
I told you that already.
Nor do I believe in fate, destiny, astrology...
Whether you believe it or not,
a miracle has happened.
It's happened here.
Suddenly he was cross...
and I thought he was going to shout,
as other men have in my presence.
But he didn't.
Perhaps you should get back to the house.
I'm sure you could do with a drink.
I do not drink at 9:00 in the morning.
- Quinty, I wanted to ask your advice.
- About what, sir?
Mrs. Delahunty. The situation, as it were.
My staying here.
The point is, should I stay or should I go?
I thought you was planning
to finish the garden.
I know, but with the child going,
and the whole group is breaking up...
I was wondering whether it's not time for me
to pack my bags.
- Do you want to go?
- No.
Definitely not. I mean, who would?
Beautiful surroundings, the comfort,
the sheer joy in being here.
Let me tell you something.
I met her in Marrakech.
I was ill. I was dying, in fact.
She nursed me back to health.
In her own way,
she's been looking after me ever since.
I felt a bit guilty about it at first,
but then I realized...
that's her function in life,
looking after people.
Despite all the sadness and pain...

she's been happier these past few weeks
than I can ever remember.
That's it. She likes...
She needs to look after people.
So if you want to stay on, sir,
you'd be doing her a real favor.
That's my opinion, anyway.
Werner, why didn't you ask your friends
to come to the house for a drink?
My friends?
It's your home, after all.
What friends?
The two men you were talking to
this morning.
Mrs. Delahunty,
I talked to no one this morning.
Didn't I see you?
You were down in the valley.
Two men in a big car.
I'm sorry, but you're mistaken.
I saw no one this morning.
Don't be afraid, Werner.
- Afraid?
- So often I see fear in your eyes.
Mr. Riversmith, the telephone. It's your wife.
Thank you, Quinty.
Forgive me, Werner.
I was only trying to reassure you.
...till I see you?
- Yes, if it's not delayed.
So I should wait outside?
Wait in the car and I'll find you,
otherwise we're gonna miss each other.
Miss each other for two hours, like last time.
So I'll look for you outside,
by Baggage Claim, okay?
And if they give me a hard time,
I'll just drive around till I see you.
Her voice was unpleasant, harsh,
devoid of expression.
Exactly as I had imagined it.
I pictured her without difficulty:
A skinny, weather-beaten face...
myopic eyes beneath a lank fringe...

eyebrows left unplucked.

Guess what she does.

She writes romance novels.

- You're kidding.

- Bodice-rippers.

She's got a bookcase full of the stuff,
all the trash she's published over the years.

God, how funny.

She told me about some guy
who'd taken her to Africa...

selling bathroom fixtures.

Do you believe that?

She sat there, talking on and on...

getting sloshed on this disgusting drink
called grappa.

I tell you, Francine...

the whole evening was truly grotesque.

What will I not do to continue

To find myself during dusk like this

If it starts like nothing was

But it bothers me constantly

I'm looking for the young German.

Have you seen him?

No, I didn't see him. Can you please ask
Quinty? You'll find him on the terrace.

Thank you, Rosa.

But it bothers me constantly

- Buongiorno, Signor Quinty.

- Buongiorno.

I'm looking for the young German.

He went into town to buy some more plants.

What time do you think he'll be back?

I have no idea.

Ask him to telephone, please.

I need to check something.

So, the little girl leaves soon for America?

Tomorrow morning.

She has become part of your family?

She has that.

I wonder if I'll ever come back.

I certainly hope you do, Aimee.

I'd be awfully sad if you didn't.

Just because you're going to America...

doesn't mean you're going to spend

the rest of your life there.
I might.
You might.
But it's unlikely.
Look at me. I've led an English life...
an American life, a Moroccan life,
now I'm leading an Italian life.
There may be many more.
Who knows?
It's like reading a wonderful book.
You never know what's going to happen
in the next chapter.
I hope it will be a happy ending...
like in one of your stories.
Life isn't always like my stories.
Sometimes you have to make
your own happy endings.
Look.
See?
I thought you'd nodded off.
- What time is it?
- It's dinnertime.
Put your face on, now. Come down.
We're all going to miss her, Emily.
It's been a long while
since you've called me that.
I just forgot.
At dinner we were all very quiet...
Lost in our own private thoughts.
As I looked around the table, I was aware
of the other, unseen phantom guests:
Phyllis, Francine...
the General's wife, his daughter,
his son-in-law...
Werner's girlfriend Madeleine...
and behind me,
the father who wasn't my father...
Ernie Chumps...
and the couple who perished when
their motorcycle soared towards heaven...
over The Wall of Death.
Sometimes...
I feel as though we were all...
in a story that's being made up

as each day passes.

- More wine, General?

- Just a drop, yes.

Girrotti was looking for you today.

What do you mean? He came here?

He did. You'd better give him a ring.

If you'll excuse me, I think I'll go for a walk.

Yes, it's a lovely evening.

Good night, Aimee. Sleep well.

Night.

Remember, we've got a long day
ahead of us tomorrow.

Thought you'd turned in.

I was just about to, General.

All right if I have a bite of cheese
to go with this?

Not much of an appetite earlier.

Of course.

- Did I hear the front door?

- Yes.

Riversmith.

He's gone to bed.

It'll seem strange without her.

- It will.

- Will indeed.

I'll say good night, General.

There's something I have to do.

Good night, Mrs. Delahunty.

Good night.

Mr. Riversmith?

What is it?

No, it's all right.

Nothing's wrong.

What time is it?

Not yet midnight.

- Is something the matter?

- No.

Nothing's wrong.

I thought we might share a farewell glass.

I was sound asleep.

We have to talk.

What talk?

This time tomorrow you'll be gone.

Just a sip.

Mrs. Delahunty,
we have nothing to talk about.
It's unkind...
to call me Mrs. Delahunty, Tom.
It's not even my real name.
The fact that my sister's child
spent some time in your house...
after the tragedy
doesn't entitle you to harass me.
I've been thinking about him so much.
Why did he do it?
What...
terrible anger must have possessed him?
What are you talking about?
But he loved her.
I really believe that.
He may have agreed to help them.
But I saw how he stroked her arm...
in the railway carriage.
He was in love with her.
Truly in love.
You talking about the German boy?
He must have been led into it.
He seems so mild, so gentle.
He made a confession to you?
Is that what you're saying?
I'd love it if you'd take just a sip of...
No, I don't want any goddamn grappa!
Why do you keep pushing drinks on me?
All hours of the day and night,
you seem to think I need a drink.
You make appalling accusations and...
I only said it might be so.
None of us can be certain about anything.
Only the perpetrators, we both know that.
Do you have any grounds for saying
what you said about the German?
I had a dream.
A dream?
And I see it...
in his face...
in his soul.
It's a dream!
That's all the evidence you have?

What other evidence do you need?
Given the right circumstances...
all of us are capable
of the most appalling things.
And even if Werner is guilty...
there's the chance of redemption
in a child's forgiveness.
And for Aimee, a way back to herself
in offering it.
That is preposterous.
How can you possibly suggest that Aimee...
could have friendship with a boy
you claim might have murdered her family?
It's monstrous.
Listen to me.
Do you know the Italian word, colpa?
It means guilt.
All of us...
feel colpa about something.
It's a burden we all have to bear.
Do not, I beg you...
let colpa stand in the way of your actions.
I don't understand
what the hell you're talking about.
I think you do.
You feel colpa...
because you never made peace
with your sister.
And because of that, you feel obliged
to take the child back with you.
For God's sake!
Be honest with yourself, admit it.
Please! Just stop it, will you?
Aimee is happy here.
She's as happy as she can be,
at the moment.
Don't destroy her one chance
of happiness...
because of your own sense of guilt.
You haven't touched your grappa.
A drink would do you good.
No, I don't want any...
Oops, sorry.
You're extremely drunk.

It's easy to say that.
Easy way for a man to turn his back.
Keep away from me. Don't come any closer.
Just...
stay away.
Leave me alone, Mrs. Delahunty.
I want to go to sleep.
You're a man who always sleeps.
You'll sleep your way to the grave.
Hell is where men like you wake up...
with flames curling around their naked legs.

It's 9:

Aimee, come on.
We don't want to miss the flight.
Go in the back and get yourself strapped.
That's it. Get yourself in, now.
Got your seat?
Bye, Rosa.
I am relying on your discretion,
Mrs. Delahunty.
Of course.
- I wish to talk to you...
- About Werner.
Are you also a mind reader?
I feel he's the one you're looking for.
Feel?
I had a dream.
Tell me.
In the dream there was a demonstration.
Young people carrying banners,
and Werner was amongst them.
The police used water canon.
It was very violent.
And then, I remember...
there was a big building.
It was an office, I think.
Werner was there, and the girl,
and they met...
by accident, it seemed.
But I think it was planned, because they...
They needed to use her.
They needed her to carry the bomb.
Is he in his room?

He's left.

Left?

Ask Quinty. Two men came in a car.

"There seemed to be a difference of opinion," Quinty said. I think it was something more significant. This dream of yours, was it inspired... or provoked by anything the young German had told you? He told me the girl was an interpreter. That she worked for a big company, one of those multinational companies. Nothing else? He said he was interested in politics. The girl was on her way to the airport. She was traveling with senior company executives in a private jet. Amongst the debris of carrozza 219... we found fragments of a barometric switch. Clearly the bomb was meant to explode while the plane was airborne. It must have gone off by mistake. We have also made a connection between Werner and a group of political activists. The fact that he seems to have disappeared... makes me believe that our suspicions were correct. It was a remarkable dream. Dreams are remarkable, Inspector. Much undervalued. Maybe so. The girls in my romances are never left abandoned by their lovers. Mothers do not turn their backs on little children. Harsh fingers never probe innocent bodies in the darkness of a cinema. The somber side of things does not appeal to me. I imagined their plane flying across the Atlantic. Time would be gained. Hours added to Aimee's young life.

They'll drive home in the Buick.
Conversation will be difficult.
Tom is tired.
Perhaps Francine will suggest
the two of them cook supper together.
Scrambled eggs.
Aimee and Francine...
the first meal in her new home.
When darkness comes to Pennsylvania,
the Riversmiths will lie beneath the sheets.
His pajamas bundled away...
and Francine's lean body naked also.
The child may be nutty as a fruitcake,
but they'll manage somehow.
They'll think of something...
being in the thinking business,
both of them.
And then sometime later...
months maybe, or years...
they'll decide that expert care
is no more than the child's due.
Better for her own sake to be looked after
by people who are skilled...
in a place that contains others of her kind.
We were at the airport.
He was there,
talking to her at the check-in desk.
And they came back with the bags.
He kissed her once, shook my hand,
and he was gone.
Didn't he say anything?
He said he'd call you and the doctor
in a few weeks to review the situation.
- Nothing else?
- Not a thing.
Where's Werner?
I've been looking all over for him.
- He's gone to stay with friends.
- What friends?
Just some friends. Friends from Germany.
Just a little holiday.
But he sends you a great big hug, all right?
I think I'd better check the silver.
Let's hope he hasn't robbed us blind.

If he has, we'll forgive him.
Forgive him?
We all need forgiveness, Quinty.
Mr. Riversmith may never come back for her.
He may decide
he doesn't want a child in his life.
Especially not his sister's child.
He's no fool.
He knows Francine will be jealous.
I doubt very much
whether he'll ever come back.
On the other hand, he may
very well come back next month.
I may be dead next month.
The moon may have crashed into the earth.
Who knows what dreadful things
may come to pass?
But at the moment...
I'm happy. What else matters?
Carpe diem.
I'm never really sure what that means.
Seize the day. Embrace the present.
Enjoy life while you've got the chance.
Carpe diem.
I'll remember that.
In the garden,
the delphiniums were in flower.
Through scented twilight,
the girl in the white dress...
walked with a step
as light as a morning cobweb.
That evening she hadn't a care in the world.