

## **Giulianella**

Giulianella is 19/20 years old and strives to emancipate herself from the traditional expectations of young women in that period.

PEPPINO. So, according to you, this family is some thing out of the Commedia Neapolitana?

**GIULIANELLA.** (Reading magazine.) Papa, are you still thinking about that?

PEPPINO. Of course I'm still thinking about it. Listen, really, you people, you really are a bunch of monsters. Yesterday this house was turned upside down and today you can eat, you can laugh, you can go about your own business as if nothing had happened. Nothing. Don't read while I'm talking. As far as my children are concerned, Rocco does imitations of me and you kill yourself laughing. As a family we come straight out of the Commedia Neapolitana.

**GIULIANELLA.** I'm sorry Papa, but it's true. You and Mamma have been making fools of yourselves, hurting each other like this.

PEPPINO. What do you mean?

**GIULIANELLA.** Why are you not more honest, more open with each other and call bread "bread" and wine "wine?"

PEPPINO. Bread? "Bread?"

**GIULIANELLA.** It's because you don't speak, because you keep things inside yourselves that they grow out of all proportion. If you have a complaint about Mama, you don't tell her to her face, you tell someone else. And then I have to listen to Mama complaining about you. You say this quarrel between you and Mama, has been going on for the last four months; but do you know what started it? I'll tell you, Four months ago, you and Mama went to Roberto's and Maria Carolina's for a meal. Do you remember?

PEPPINO. How can I remember one particular meal I ate four months ago?

**GIULIANELLA.** I can tell you and I wasn't there. But I know because I heard it from Mama. You had macaroni alla siciliana, with sauce made from fresh tomatoes and egg plant.

PEPPINO. (He takes coffee GIULIANELLA has poured.) Of course! It was delicious, I really stuffed myself that night. I had two huge

platefuls and then I went back for more. There was nothing to quarrel about that evening

**GIULIANELLA.** That's what you think. All through the meal you never stopped saying that Maria Carolina was a wonderful cook; and how it was the best macaroni alla siciliana you ever ate; and how Maria Carolina ought to come round here one night and cook it for us all and you still say there was nothing to quarrel about that night?

PEPPINO. I don't know what you are talking about.

**GIULIANELLA.** (Takes her coffee cup to table.) Look, Papa, I spent the evening with Mama when she came back from Roberto's. I had to stay with her. She was in such a state that I didn't dare leave her alone.

PEPPINO. Why? What for?

**GIULIANELLA.** Because of the way you insulted her at Roberto's.

PEPPINO. (He rises.) That is not so.

**GIULIANELLA.** I tell you, I have never seen anyone cry the way she cried that evening.

PEPPINO. Because of me! Because of the macaroni alla siciliana?

**GIULIANELLA.** Yes, you should have heard her:

"Now, after a whole life spent in the kitchen cooking for him, do I have to be taught how to make macaroni alla siciliana by my daughter-in-law? And he had to have two helpings just to humiliate me." Papa, you're always criticising what she cooks for you.

### **Attilio, Amelia's son (Memé)**

Attilio is in his late twenties, but due to a learning disorder and how mother's overbearing behaviour, he act like a 12 year old.

PEPPINO. (He hangs clock on Down Right wall.) As always-twist everything round to suit your own argument! (ANTONIO hangs hat on peg Right of door. Exits Up Left door wearing apron.)

MEME. All right, if it makes you happy-I took your key. I didn't do it on purpose.

PEPPINO. (Takes few steps Left.) I'm not saying you did. All I'm asking is, in future, you examine the key closely before you pick it up.

MEME. Are you saying now that I've got bad eye-sight?

**ATTILIO.** (He goes Right to PEPPINO.) Mamma darns my socks without having to put her glasses on.

(ROSA crosses Right to sink, gets fan, goes back to stove.)

PEPPINO What did the doctor tell you today?

**ATTILIO.** I have to take things easily I'm suffering from- What am I suffering from, Mamma? (He goes back to MEME.)

MEME. Don't worry. Whatever it is, we're going to get rid of it.

(Examining the labels on the boxes and bottles, holding them at arms length in order to read them.) A tablespoon of this after every meal; and these ones are to be swallowed every four hours through the day. (She gives bottles to ATTILIO who puts them back in shopping bag. Everything is back in bag except cotton and vials.)

And these are your injections. Go to your room and get yourself ready. I'll be in as soon as I've boiled the water. (She gives ATTILIO her purse.)

**ATTILIO.** (He picks up packages.) The doctor said the injections might hurt a little.

MEME. Injections always hurt a little.

**ATTILIO.** (Kisses MEME on the cheek.) Mama, try to be careful. (He goes out Up Right with MEME's jacket, gloves, purse and two shopping bags.)

### **Michele: Virginia's brother**

he is an ex convict, il tempered and very scary looking.

VIRGINIA. (To MICHELE.) I told you to stay in the ironing room

ROSA. I said you could bring him here, but not if he's going to follow me everywhere like a stray dog!

**MICHELE.** I could wash the dishes! (VIRGINIA exits Up Right with big tray.)

ROSA. (Goes to MICHELE.) You can't wash the dishes til we've dirtied them. I'll call you. (RoSA bustles out Up Left above MICHELE. MICHELE follows ROSA Up Right.)

PEPPINO. Are you Virginia's brother?

**MICHELE.** I am.

PEPPINO. And is this the way you dress when you go out to-er-meet people?

**MICHELE.** No, this is a beret I found in this house. Your sister said I could keep it. (Pulls a cap from his back pocket.) Here's my hat. (He crosses Center.)

**PEPPINO.** (He crosses Down Center.) May I see your head?

**MICHELE.** (Returns cap to pocket.) If you want.

(He takes off his beret, revealing a completely bald head)

**PEPPINO.** My God!

**MICHELE.** Laugh if you like. It's your home so I won't take offence.

**PEPPINO.** My dear Michele, there is nothing to laugh about. For me who knows your unhappiness, who knows your trouble, there is nothing to laugh about. Tell me. . . how do I say it..after you air your head in front of someone, do you feel better right away?

**MICHELE.** If I take off my cap and the man doesn't laugh, no, I don't feel better. (Puts beret on.) There's no resistance.

**PEPPINO.** But if it does come to a fight, do you lose all control?

**MICHELE.** The last one was taken into the hospital. Cerebral haemorrhage, three cracked ribs and a broken nose. He had a wife and three kids. When I heard about his family I was heart-broken-- (Off Left, we hear the door bell ringing.) but at the time that it happened

**VIRGINIA.** (She enters from Up Right and rushes across the Stage above the table.) The lanniellos are here already. (She goes out Up Left.)

**PEPPINO.** Naturally the lanniellos are the first to arrive! (A thought occurs to him and he smiles in anticipation.) How do you feel at this moment?

**PEPPINO.** Do you feel like-letting off steam?

**MICHELE.** Like a boiler that's about to burst! I promised my sister I wouldn't cause trouble, but inside my head there's hammer beating. Boom... Boom . . . Don't ask me, signers

**PEPPINO.** Whatever is inside you must come out. Don't hold it in because you're in my home. There's a man here, at this moment, and I wouldn't mind in the least if you exposed your head in front of him. To be honest, I'd appreciate it. (He pushes MICHELE of Up Right.) You go back in the ironing room and come in here with your cap down over your ears.

**MICHELE.** (As he exits Up Right.) It would do me good. Boom! Boom!

## **Raffaele Priore, Peppino's Brother**

Raffaele is an actor with the local Am-Dram group, specialised in portraying Pulcinella, the Typical Neapolitan mask from the commedia dell'Arte.

CERFERCOLA. It's magnificent. And I'm the one who tells his patients: "Keep off the rich foods. Stick to plain, simple, nutritious cooking." This sauce of Donna Rosa's makes me a hypocrite. (FEDERICO asks for second decanter, empties it, puts it in front of him. RAFFAELE and ATTILIO with RAFFAELE'S Overcoat now return. RAFFAELE, wearing his Pulcinella costume, leaps in pirouetting in the classic style. He bows to the assembled company. MICHELE enters, holds Up Right.)

### **RAFFAELE.**

Pulcinella. ..

Your devoted and demented servant

Who is both cheered at and jeered at Applauded and defrauded

Takes his leave of his inestimable and inaudible audience!

With a tear on his cheek as large and long as a watermelon.

(Applause.) The theatre calls! Only the scent of a larger audience lures me away-an aroma greater than that of Sunday ragù. (He declaims.)

Let off the fireworks.

Good health and appetite to each and everyone of you.

From Pulcinella.

(RAFFAELE takes off. his cap and mask, bows to the applause, throws kisses to everybody and exits Up Left followed by ATTILIO. PEPPINO does not enter into the fun. RAFFAELE returns to continue, followed by ATTILIO.) If this good company .. (ATTILIO pulls

him off Up Left. VIRGINIA sees MicHELE standing Up Right wildly applauding the show. She screams at him. Both exit Up Right.

LUIGI. What a charming man he is

### **ELENA IANELLO**

Elena is sociable ,sweet natured and as congenial as her husband.

**ELENA.** Tell her, Luigi. This is how you are-aggravating! Why should Donna Rosa have to put up with you?

**LUIGI.** (He turns to PEPPINO.) Would you like to try?

(VIRGINIA dries silverware used for soup, puts them on area Left of sink.)

**PEPPINO.** Why should I have to put up with you? Besides I'm going out.

**LUIGI.** When you hear what I've brought, you'll want to stay at home!

**ELENA.** Tell them, Luigi! It's some of the calamari that Donna Rosa likes so much.

**ROSA.** Not the ones that you do with capers and olives?

**LUIGI.** (He takes packages out of bag as he speaks of them.) The same. The ones that make your mouth water. I've brought the capers(Ad lib: Ah.) and the olives-(Ad lib: Ah.) and the pine nuts. (Ad lib: Ah.) And I'm going to cook them, everybody else- keep away. (Taking off his jacket. Puts it on Up Center chair and puts chair to the Left end of table.)

An apron, Donna Rosa.

**ROSA.** (Handing him an apron from wall Left of sink) Let me stand near you, I want to watch.

**VIRGINIA.** She wants to see that you don't make a mess of it.

**LUIGI.** (Without rancour.) You be quiet. You can be the maid.

**VIRGINIA.** (Brightly.) I am the maid. (She gets oil and plate of garlic.)

**LUIGI.** Pass me the oil then and I need three cloves of garlic and a sprig of parsley. I brought my own pot with me. (He produces the pot from his package.)

**ROSA.** A special calamari pot as well?

**LUIGI.** Do you know how to cook calamari without a proper calamari pot? We went to every shop inNapoli looking for the right one. (Puts pot on table.)

And. . . (VIRGINIA brings sprig of parsley. He sniffs at his ingredients.) Straight from the sea! (Ad lib: Oh! Oh!.) Like putting your nose in a rockpool. (He crosses Right to PEPPINO, thrusting the package under PEPPINO's nose.) Smell! (Rosa picks up pot.)

**PEPPINO.** They're fresh, I suppose.

**LUIGI.** Fresh? They're alive! (He crosses Left above table, he takes the earthenware pot from Rosa and displays it all round.) I rinsed it in sea-water and then wiped it dry-my grandmother taught me everything I know! (He picks up the oil bottle and is about to tip some into the pot when Rosa restrains him)

**Rosa.** (She grabs pot.) That's earthenware. You can't put earthenware straight from the shop onto the fire. (Taking over.) It needs to be rubbed with garlic first, or in three days it will crack straight through. What kind of a grandmother did you have?

**ELENA.** (To Luigi.) Who is supposed to be teaching who?

**LUIGI.** We are never too old to learn. (VIRGINIA Crosses to stove.)

**ELENA.** (She rises and moves Upstage.) I think I can safely leave you to it. I shall be upstairs.

**LUIGI.** (He crosses Right and sits Right of table.) I'll be up in ten minutes, no more. I'll just keep an eye on Donna Rosa first. (Rosa Puts package back in bag.)

**ELENA.** (To Rosa.) Are we going to mass together tomorrow?

**Rosa.** (She goes to ELENA.) I'm going to early mass. There's no need for you to get up.

**ELENA.** I want to see how you look in the turquoise cardigan.

**ROSA.** You're coming for dinner tomorrow, aren't you?

**LUIGI.** Of course we're coming for dinner. (He turns to PEPPINO.) We've been looking forward to coming all week !

**ROSA.** Tomorrow, at dinner, I shall wear the cardigan.

**LUIGI.** I chose the cardigan, did she tell you?

**ROSA.** (As if to say; what good taste.) No!

**ELENA.** (She crosses Right to LUIGI.) I can trust him to shop for anything. He's got more patience than me. He not only buys the right things, he shops around until he finds the best price. (VIRGINIA stirs ragu.)

**LUIGI.** When it came to buying you a present, Donna Rosa, and she said, "I'd like to buy a cardigan for Donna Rosa." Ask her who remembered that you'd once said that turquoise was your favorite colour. Ask her.

**PEPPINO.** You.

**LUIGI.** Me.

**PEPPINO.** To talk to you is to make a record.

ROSA. (She goes to sink.) Because he's such a nice person?  
Because he remembers things about his friends?

(ELENA crosses Left, below table to Left of table.)

LUIGI. (He rises and goes Upstage.) Not all my friends. But always to you, Donna Rosa. For you, I would throw myself in the flames because you are the perfect woman. (He crosses Down to PEPPINO.) If there is a person on this earth I envy, it is your husband ...

**ELENA.** What what what...?

LUIGI. Forgive me, my dear Elena. You too have many great qualities but Donna Rosa is the perfect wife. (He goes Up Right.)

PEPPINO. (He goes Right, for his coat.) Excuse me, I have to go out.

LUIGI. Are you going?

PEPPINO. I can't stand the stink of the calamari.

LUIGI. The fresh tang of the sea-you call that a stink?

PEPPINO. It's also very close in this room.

LUIGI. (He crosses Down Right to PEPPINO.) I was hoping to talk you into a few hands of cards-like last week. This week I'll give you four points start.

PEPPINO. My dear Accountant, you mean well, you are a nice, dear man-but there is a time for games and idle banter and this is not one of those moments. But you don't realize that. You don't realize when a man is in a mood for a joke and when he wants to be left alone.

**ELENA.** Forgive me, but you didn't ask to be left alone.

PEPPINO. Forgive me, Signora Elena, but I'm asking now.

ROSA. (Embarrassed.) Peppino!

**ELENA.** (She crosses up to door.) Then we'll go. And as for tomorrow, we'll see if your mood has changed.

ROSA. (She crosses to ELENA.) I'm sorry. (LUIGI takes off apron, puts it on chair above table, puts on his jacket.)

**ELENA,** Not at all. My husband always goes a little too far ...

LUIGI. (He crosses to Rosa.) It's true! It is I who should apologize.

ROSA. No, no, no! He has so many worries-the shop -business worries, you know. (ELENA opens door.)

LUIGI. (He crosses to above table.) We were going anyway. The calamari can be safely left to Donna Rosa. (He crosses to Rosa,



gives her shopping bag. Goes back for calamari pot. RosA puts bag down on floor Upstage of stove. To RosA.) A low flame, you understand? Over a gentle heat until they boil, and then left to simmer. (He gives RosA Calamar pot.)

ROSA. I'll see you out.

**ELENA.** No-no.