

# **Lunch Break**

## **(Pausa Pranzo)**

**SCENA 01-vialetto-esterno giorno**

v.o. CLARA

They're really lovely.

FIAMMA

She's pregnant, you'll see.

AGNESE

Oh come on! How can you see from here?

FIAMMA

Because if she wasn't she wouldn't be marrying the deadly thing.

CLARA

God, how can you be so cynical? It's so hard for you to admit that someone can fall in love?

FIAMMA

And you're naif. You're greener than the country vicar that will marry them...

AGNESE

But you have to admit it's nice. I don't think my Luca would ever think of having that kind of service.

FIAMMA

You should worry more about whether there is a service.

AGNESE

Well he has been thinking about it...

FIAMMA

Oh ?

AGNESE

He's not said anything yet.. It's just what I think, but I'm sure he will soon make up his mind.

FIAMMA

Ah well...

CLARA

You two are really good together, you know?

AGNESE

Really?

FIAMMA

Oh sure he likes you... until you give him a reason not to.

CLARA

Gorgeous earrings, Elena, I didn't notice them before in the office.

ELENA

You like them?

CLARA

Absolutely! Where d'you get them?

ELENA

My husband gave them to me years ago, while we were still engaged. Haven't worn them for years, don't know why.

AGNESE

Is it true, after you're married you get less presents?

ELENA

Well... in a way...

FIAMMA

I think it's up to you.

CLARA

What d'you mean?

FIAMMA

Well... in the sense.. no presents.. no me..

AGNESE

Yes... And no me means he'll look elsewhere!

CLARA

You're with someone who thinks like that?

AGNESE

No... not like that... it's just...

ELENA

..It's just life's one long little battle isn't it my dear, isn't it?

AGNESE

Sure! With all the little whores there are knocking around you have to watch your back. And anyway it doesn't seem to me a good way of doing things.

ELENA

Besides, I don't really think Fiamma practices what she preaches.

FIAMMA

I don't know what you mean.

AGNESE

Oh no?

CLARA

Listen it's already 1:15 and I don't feel like spending all lunchtime standing here talking. Can we sit down?

ELENA

Yes let's move. I can't stand to eat on a rush.

**SCENA 02-fontanone-esterno giorno**

CLARA

What on earth's that?

AGNESE

It's a recipe of a friend who's doing a course in microbiotics...macrobiotics...whatever it is.

CLARA

Nice?

AGNESE

Well... You can eat it...

FIAMMA

That crap never works. You're no fatter than normal. The only solution is not to eat.

AGNESE

According to you we should die of hunger just to keep a man!

CLARA

Well you're not fat!

AGNESE

And so what? If you don't start at twenty you wake up at forty like the back end of a bus.

FIAMMA

And by then it's too late, even if you do lose weight your full of stretch marks and sags.

AGNESE

And then there's only the knife.

CLARA

Yeah I know but I don't agree that you need to...

ELENA

Forget it. Let them eat to get slimmer if they want to!

FIAMMA

The other day I was reading about surgery, yeah? It said they've changed the stuff they put under the skin for boob jobs. It's a liquid base, not only safer but the sensation is much more natural.

CLARA

I could never even think of having a lump of plastic under my skin!

FIAMMA

Yes well. You wouldn't be sad with a good pair of boobs that's for sure.

AGNESE

I don't know, it's the anaesthetic that bothers me. I wouldn't mind having a bit more on top.

ELENA

They move your nipples, you know.

FIAMMA

How?

ELENA

During the operation they cut off your nipples, place them on a table beside you and then stick them back on.

CLARA  
Oh God! Why?

ELENA  
Well it's simple if you think about it, so they don't finish up in the wrong position.

AGNESE  
Right, when the skin gets stretched...

FIAMMA  
...you'll find them next to your mouth! Disgusting!

ELENA  
Ah but the worse come later on, when you have to stay still until they've cut off the bits at risk of getting an infection.

AGNESE  
Hold on, how do you know all this? You know someone who's had it done?

ELENA  
I was about to do it. But things changed...

CLARA  
Excuse me I need to get a drink.

FIAMMA  
Wait, I'll come with you.

**SCENA 03-fontanella-esterno giorno**

ALBA

Rats! No water.

FIAMMA

Who cares about water! She knows everything.

CLARA

Of course not.

FIAMMA

I tell you she does.

CLARA

What makes you think so?

FIAMMA

Excuse me, everything! Couldn't you see how she wanted to argue?

CLARA

Yes but just like everyday since I've know you.

FIAMMA

Oh don't take the piss, you see that she is weird today.

CLARA

What do you want me to say, she'll be nervous, is all.

FIAMMA

Exactly, nervous like someone who was refused promotion after all these years. And this tit story?

Why would she have let it go, do you think?

CLARA

I don't know! She'd have changed her mind when she knew what a mess there'd be!

FIAMMA

But you get to know that way before! She was waiting for money that never arrived, I'll bet you.

CLARA

Oh come on, as if she didn't earn enough to get her tits done! And anyway, if she knew, how come she's not saying anything?

FIAMMA

Because she wants to wait for us to give ourselves away.

CLARA

What do you mean?

FIAMMA

You know Clara sometimes I ask myself where your brain is. She wants to know who knicked her job.

CLARA

Like we'd know?

FIAMMA

Well.. someone must have it and it could be one of us, don't you think?

CLARA

You mean you know something?

FIAMMA

Even if I did, you couldn't pull it out of me with tweezers, darling. That little mouse, look how she squeaks! Who knows how much poison she spits out about us.

CLARA

You're paranoid Fiamma, she's not capable of it.

FIAMMA



You put everything down to appearances. She's a little viper believe me. And now what she is coming here for?

AGNESE

Girls she knows everything!

FIAMMA

What did I tell you?

CLARA

Oh stop it! She told you that?

AGNESE

She's not said a thing but I figured it out myself.

CLARA

Well that I got from Sherlock Holmes here.

FIAMMA

Taking the piss is useless. Did she ask if you knew anything?

AGNESE

No she didn't ask me anything...

FIAMMA

Good. The important thing is to make out you know nothing.

AGNESE

How do we make out we know nothing! Don't you appreciate this poor woman drama?

CLARA

Drama? Calm down, you act as if she has been fired!

AGNESE

What's that got to do with it! With all the experience she has she should at least be at second level, whereas she's blocked at fourth. At fourth! Can you believe it?!

FIAMMA

Well obviously she's not popular with certain people.

CLARA

Fine, but I don't understand why we need make a tragedy out of it. If she doesn't take the extra 200 a month, she will not going to die of hunger!

AGNESE

It's not about the money, it's a question of principle possibly you don't understand. I used to think once I'd started work I'd be secure, but it's not true.

CLARA

What has this got to do with anything?

AGNESE

What has this got to do with anything!? What? When I started everyone told me that in time things would just be better. That its not important how good I am, all that counts is experience! But none of that's true! Today they don't promote Elena, and tomorrow? Tomorrow maybe I find myself in the middle of a street!

FIAMMA

Oh please, don't have a nervous breakdown..

CLARA

Stop it! Come on, Agnese, don't be like this, you're very good and...

AGNESE

I am not good. And I'm not intelligent either. It's not my fault ok? The only thing I know I can do is work, and it's not fair that the great and the clever always get the best when people like me or Elena, who break our backs everyday in the office always remain where we are.

FIAMMA

Stop it, you know she spends most of the time on the phone!

AGNESE

It's not true and I know it! You've no idea how hard she works in that office!

FIAMMA

Listen little girl, if you want to believe in her little games, go ahead, but I'll never again let you come to me and say what Ideas I should and shouldn't have. You're the last in line and you know absolutely nothing. Have I made myself clear?

CLARA

You're a real bitch.

FIAMMA

No, it's just I've had enough! You know better than I do that she's never lifted a finger and it pisses me off to hear people get paid for doing fuck all and then have the front to complain!

CLARA

Listen to me Fiamma, you know how many people I like to fire, and not just because they do fuck all like you say, but also boredom with who tries to work, but is not a good reason to be nasty ok?

FIAMMA

All right, all right mother Teresa just don't preach at me...

CLARA

And you Agnese, stop crying it doesn't help.

FIAMMA

And dry your eyes, if she sees you've been crying she'll get suspicious.

CLARA

What's the time?

AGNESE

About 1:30. Why?

CLARA

I'm going to tell her.

AGNESE

What do you mean? Tell her what?

FIAMMA

If you feel... Maybe it's better to force her to show her hand so we can stop playing games.

CLARA

Look, I'm not going over to do you a favour, but because I feel sorry for her to think that she should spend time with snakes like you who bitch behind backs.

FIAMMA

Fine go, but remember all saints end up martyrs.

CLARA

Right, and witches always die alone.

**SCENA 04-fontanone-esterno giorno**

ELENA

Oh there you are... where are the others?

CLARA

They're chatting at the fountain.

ELENA

I'm sure I can imagine about what.

CLARA

I don't understand.

ELENA

Oh come on, don't pretend you don't know.

CLARA

Elena I....

ELENA

Oh let's stop it please, or rather go and tell the others there no more need to play games. I'm tired.  
Everyday, everyone pretending together and never saying anything up front. I've had enough,  
really.

CLARA

When did you know?

ELENA

Right away. When people change the subject as you walk in the room it means you're through.

CLARA

Sometimes I wonder how we can behave that way.

ELENA

It's normal. People are shitty.

CLARA

No please, I don't want to think that. I believe that when you're in a place where people have bad  
habbits you're forced to copy them ... rather than face the consequences by not...

ELENA

So why are you here talking to me?

CLARA

Maybe because I'm tired too..

ELENA

You're different and you don't deserve to be caught in the middle. Y'know, before all this happened, I was fine... But now... I don't know, maybe its that I feel so awful that I'd be out of place anywhere..

CLARA

I understand this is a bad moment for you Elena, but you'll see it's just a matter of time, if you wait...

ELENA

No, no you're wrong. You must never wait, I've always been stuck, thinking that no one would take away from me what I'd earned... and now I've lost everything to the first little girl that passed by!

CLARA

But... how can you know that someone younger than you?

ELENA

Don't you know? Ah well the office still doesn't know the best bit! He had the nerve to bring her home, that rat, saying she was a colleague from the office, and I was there like an idiot thinking "Look how pretty the post office employees have become!" I even cooked for them! God the shame..

CLARA

Elena...

#### **SCENA 05-fontanella-esterno giorno**

AGNESE

I think she's crying..

FIAMMA

I don't think it's news that makes someone happy, you know.

AGNESE

I don't know how you manage to be so calm!

FIAMMA

And why should I worry? Because if today they screw her tomorrow its us?

AGNESE

Exactly for that!

FIAMMA

Listen to me Agnese, job security, a salary that grows on its own, all these beautiful fairy tales you can forget, ok? They don't give a toss if you want to get married, have kids, spend time with them. Your private life doesn't exist. For people like us there's only one way for us to have a career and it's to think only about work!

AGNESE

Fine I understand but...

FIAMMA

No Buts! The world is divided between those who please themselves and those who work. Society, the government, they're all bastards. The only truth is that if you're a bigger bastard and more sly than they are, you can make a big fat pile of cash. Course, you're fortunate... you have someone who'll maybe marry you and make everything perfect. Hope for you with all my heart but it would be better to get a move on because I assure you men's ideas change a hell of a lot quicker than you can ever imagine.

FIAMMA

Did you tell her?

CLARA

No.

AGNESE

Then why's she crying?

CLARA

Her husband's left her. He's gone off with a girl.

FIAMMA

No, really!!?

CLARA

I couldn't tell her.

AGNESE

Now what do we do?

FIAMMA

Now? We go back to work.

#### **SCENA 06-vialetto-esterno giorno**

CLARA

Hello? I'll catch you up! Hi darling how are you? So so, like always, I can't bear them anymore... but luckily I get off a bit earlier today. No, look, don't buy anything for dinner , let's eat out so we can celebrate. Yeah well it's not a lot, but an extra 200 every month will make life easier, and will mean I can take care of you for a change!... I love you to... bye.