

## LUIGI

Maria was pregnant when her husband Antonio Emilio died in a hit skip accident in the village of Tivoli, 40 miles north of Rome. She went to Rome to stay with her mother in a very poor neighborhood. There she had a beautiful baby girl. She named her Agnella, meaning in Italian, a little lamb. She loved her totally but she hated poverty. Maria knew that she was pretty and fun. She knew that she could attract a marriageable young man but not with a baby and not in Rome.

When Agnella was eight years old Maria stole away in the middle of the night, never to be heard from, never to return. Her grandmother raised Agnella, who survived the early years of sadness. Tears were a way of life. Later, Agnella became everyday more beautiful. Her intelligence and her love of life danced, and danced within her.

At seventeen, heads had begun to turn to watch Agnella's graceful walk, her long legs, and her lovely figure. Her presence caused a stir on the Roman streets. Her breasts, more pointed than round, did not really need a bra. Her love of life, her excitement, and her interest in men caused her breasts to

firm and her nipples to show. She knew that this was a bad idea on the streets of Rome. She tried to dress more conservatively.

Agnella, like most Italian women, attended church on a regular basis. She prayed as Italian women do. At Sunday mass she heard the sound of the bells as the host was raised. Her Italian heritage brought belief.

Then one day the life of Agnella changed. She came out of church on a Sunday dressed in her best clothes. Spring had arrived. This lovely young woman felt life in her step. She thought “I have earned extra lira this week. I am going to sit in the sun and treat myself to a cappuccino. She stretched her neck to gather the sun on her face. The rays warmed her skin. She pulled her shoulders back to let life into her soul. She didn’t even think about her body contours which showed so well. She closed her eyes. She thought about the gospel reading she had just heard. Christ had been on the shores of Galilee. He and his friends Peter and John had cooked freshly caught fish over an open fire.

Then, a cultured voice from nearby inquired “Do you think that was the first barbecue ever recorded?” Agnella opened her

eyes. A young man, very handsome, perhaps twenty-five years old sat at an adjoining table. She had not seen him arrive. She had no idea who he was.

Normally she would have, and as things turned out, should have turned away. But how could she? How could he know about the sermon and the gospel unless he had been in church? How could he know that she was at that moment thinking about the barbecue on the beach? His smile was warm, indeed friendly. He was, in her eyes, attractive, very attractive. She was glad she had dressed well. Agnella said, “I have never been to a barbecue on a beach but I would have liked to have been there.”

The young man said “Would you like to have been there if it was Luigi cooking the fish and not Peter and John? She said “I do not know of a Luigi in the bible” then she continued somewhat boldly “but I do have a secret. Luigi is my favorite name.”

The man stood up, came over to her table, gave a slight bow then said, “meet Luigi, I am not in the bible but that is my name. I am Luigi, Luigi Allesandro”. Agnella couldn't turn away. She smiled. She shook her head, cascading her hair from side to

side. She laughed a contagious, happy laugh. She was joyful from church and from the lingering taste of the cappuccino. She said simply and with sincerity, “I am happy to meet you. “I am Agnella, Agnella Emilio.” He sat, also enjoying the sun.

After they had talked for quite awhile Luigi said “ Ah! Agnella, could we meet in church next Sunday? The priest this morning said the gospel will be about the shepherd who leaves his flock to save one endangered lamb, his Agnella, the meaning of your name.”

This young, really beautiful woman, despite her desire decided to be cautious. She changed the subject. She said, “this cappuccino is wonderful. He said ,” I will buy another one for you and one for me” Agnella knew she had a single lira in her purse. She said that she would like that.

In the sunshine they sat and they talked. She was careful not to reveal her background, nor her living style. He was equally careful, though Agnella surmised his wealthy background from his clothes, his demeanor and his aristocratic Italian language.

Luigi asked if he could meet Agnella the next day for lunch. “No.” “Then dinner, or must I come to meet your parents before they allow you to see me?” “No”. “Then could we meet next Thursday just for a walk along the Tiber, or on Friday? I can get tickets to visit the Vatican Museum, or the opera.

Agnella sensed that this was not a man to meet where she lived. He would never return if he saw her neighborhood. She wanted to say yes to all of his invitations. She said, “Luigi Allesandro, Agnella will meet you at church to listen to the parable of the lost sheep. Goodbye until next Sunday, arrivederci.”

Luigi, if he had any virtues at all it was patience. He did not follow her. He sensed her style of life, her background, and her attraction for him. He smiled as he climbed into his Masserati to go to his apartment. .

During the ensuing week few moments passed without Agnella thinking about Luigi. She hoped he had her in mind. Her thoughts went well beyond a cappuccino or church. She was almost afraid to touch her arm, or her neck, or her face. Her youth brought passion and even desire. She could think only of Sunday.

She arrived at church. She knelt in the same place she had been the week before. The pews began to fill. She closed her eyes. They opened only as she realized a man was kneeling next to her. They were close together but not touching. She looked up to see his face. Luigi also looked, but did not move from their closeness. His hand moved close to hers, not quite touching, then rested lightly on the top of her hand. Warmth flowed through her body. She felt happy and safe in church. Together they heard the parable of the lost sheep. She thought about praying for patience and for purity to calm her desires. But she didn't.

After church Luigi said, "Today I will buy each of us a cappuccino. Their conversations which had begun so well with the barbecue and then the lost sheep, got even better. She talked of her ambitions. He talked of his success. She spoke of how life needed time. He spoke of how life was so immediate. They talked and laughed enjoying the warmth of the midday Italian sun.

Agnella agreed to meet Luigi for lunch the following Wednesday. Later, after additional lunches and walks along the

Tiber, she agreed to join him at the opera. She told him then that her best clothes were those she wore to church. He promised they would be appropriate. After seeing the opera, they sat at a small café, he sipping cognac, she coffee.

They also spent time at the Vatican Museum. They marveled as Odysseus spiked the one eye of Polyphemus, the Cyclops. Together they looked at the statue of Laocoon, who had warned the Trojans not to permit the horse to enter Troy. Agnella wondered if she was ignoring similar forecasts. She didn't care.

Love as a first time event moves as rapidly as desire. Love as a conquest moves more quickly.

Luigi learned soon enough of Agnella's place in life, exactly as he had surmised. Agnella's instincts had also been correct. She began to love riding in his Masserati. She admired his dark blue suit, his starched white shirt and cuffs. She loved being with him, and it became very often. They had wonderful times together. And then it wasn't long before she thought that she loved him. She was so sure of their together love that over a period of time she accepted beautiful clothes, and then shoes and then even jewelry. Finally, and without reluctance, as she

knew what her thoughts were, she willingly accepted the gift of a lovely, long, silk negligee.

She went with him to his apartment. The table was set with candles and wine. They were alone. Firelight flickered the room. Agnella sat, as Luigi held her chair, then sat opposite her. His hand rested in hers. She looked at Luigi then said “Please excuse me.” He poured wine into both glasses. Its red colors reflected the silverware and the candlelight, and the warmth of anticipation. He thought that Agnella would be right back.

She did not come right back. Four then five then more minutes passed. Luigi was totally unnerved. He had planned so beautifully. He thought, perhaps too well. Then he heard the whispering of silk near the flicker of the fire. The silk negligee, never opaque, allowed the glow of the fire to penetrate to her body and to his desire. She reveled in the touch of his hands.

Their love making went quickly as passionate love does. Later they lingered in their love, slowly in the Italian way, yet for her with a lust born of desire. As breakfast time approached he made coffee and set out croissant.

Agnella believed the physical throbs of her passion. She was certain she was in love. She sensed that he too had love in his heart. He had said so often “I love you”, and in so many places.

She went again to the bathroom where she carefully folded the negligee. Her passion seemed still present. To calm herself she went to the very large, tile lined shower. She lathered her body. She washed her hair, stretching and luxuriating in the warmth of the water. She then felt his body, warm and wet from the same shower, his erection hard against her. She caressed him as he warmly fondled her. In the shower they made love again, with the crashing water matching their own crescendo.

Over the next several months they met often in his apartment and all over Rome. They continued going to the Vatican Museum. Agnella was impressed. Luigi had knowledge of Greek marble from Samos and Paros but especially the blue veined marble from Aphrodesius, the ancient city in Asia Minor, named after the goddess Aphrodite. This marble came only from Aphrodesius and could no longer be found. The blue veins are renowned and recognized as coming only from this ancient city. Luigi had made a special study of this special marble.

Agnella, though somewhat worried, became joyful, yes joyful, when she missed her period. She waited then missed a second period. She told Luigi.

He seemed to be totally happy. The next day he took her out for a special lunch. They drank a single glass of champagne, sharing so as not to harm the baby. Luigi placed a black jewelry box in front of Agnella. She opened it. A black sapphire pendant on a gold chain lay on the dark velvet. He also gave her a blue veined marble statue, a statue of a small lamb. She knew it had the markings of an Aphrodesius carving. They decided to have lunch together in two days for further planning and celebration.

Luigi did not show up. He did not arrive. Agnella went to his apartment. No one answered the bell. Agnella went to the apartment office. She was told he had vacated the apartment and left, taking all of his belongings. He left no forwarding address and no means of contact. Agnella asked how she could find him. She was told that he was known as Luigi Allesandro, but that was not in fact his last name, which he did not use. It was his middle name. He had always paid his rent in cash. His

Masserati was rented under the name of Allesandro. The lease had expired and the car returned.

Disbelief, then sobs and tears punctuated the day and all future days. A baby was born. Agnella, with sadness yet with joy, took this infant to be baptized. She knew that the baby should have its father's name. And so, the baby boy was christened Luigi Allesandro Emilio.

This small child began life in almost total poverty, living with Agnella's grandmother. Agnella found only occasional work. She sold the necklace. She hated poverty. She longed for better food, for better clothes and for a better life. Her son became her burden. She couldn't work because he needed her. She couldn't even think about a husband because of him.

Like her mother Maria, Agnella decided to leave. There were so many rationalizations in her mind. Only one was truly motivating. She hated being poor. She knew that dark black eyes, beautiful hair and a desirable figure would provide for her marriage opportunities but not with a baby. And so when Luigi was seven, she left, knowing that her grandmother would take care of the boy. Agnella did not tell her grandmother nor leave

word for her son. She did, however, leave for him her most prized possession, the blue veined marble statue of the small lamb.

Young Luigi, with dark curly hair, thin but tall, with large brown eyes, had the run of the streets in his poor neighborhood. He grew up knowing that he was poor. He went to school hungry but he never missed school. In the afternoon he wondered and watched, as he learned the life of the street, and how to take care of himself.

He watched the tourists, Rome's visitors. He watched the gypsy families who were experts at pick-pocketing and in stealing wallets. He watched a gypsy mother and a small daughter crowd an unsuspecting tourist, while they took his wallet.

On occasions a gypsy was caught and held until the police arrived. The police never found wallets because the gypsies had already handed the wallet to a small child, who had run away to hide. Luigi saw this happen often. He had a plan. He followed the little gypsy child with the wallet and forcefully took it away. Later the same day, the gypsy child yelled, "There he is, there he is." Luigi ran. Three dark gypsy men easily

caught him. They took back the wallet then slapped him about harshly. One gypsy pinned Luigi's arms behind his back. Two of the gypsy men pulled their knives and came toward him. He knew he was in trouble. Perhaps he was finished. The knives nicked both of his cheeks. Drops of blood began to trickle down each of his cheeks. They promised him a quick, quick death if he ever repeated what he had done. They let him go. Luigi wondered if his life could ever be truly honest.

He tried pick-pocketing on his own. He was not good at it, and often was caught. People liked this handsome curly-headed boy. They usually let him go. When the police were called they took Luigi around the corner, gave him a stern warning, then also let him go.

He continued in the local school. He had a bright facile mind, an excellent memory, and an ability to be creative, which later he would use to great advantage. He excelled in all subjects. His favorite was Roman History. He studied how Octavius returned to Rome at the death of Caesar to become Augustus, the Emperor. He could trace on a map the exact location of famous Roman roads.

He knew the Via Apia which led south to the seaside resorts and the Via Claudia which led north to Chianti. He wandered through the Sabine hills where Horace had his villa and had written the well known poetic odes. He found Cicero's villa in the hills near Tusculana. He read about how Cicero had plotted the murder of Caesar on the Senate floor.

Hadrian though, was the great love of Luigi. Hadrian was his idol, his almost imaginary father. He tried to model himself after Hadrian, who had been tall, intelligent, elegant, and aristocratic. He wanted to be like Hadrian, but how? He read books and books and more books about Hadrian. He studied his life and his journeys, where he had been, and what he liked. Hadrian had loved Greece and spoke the language. Luigi began to teach himself Greek and its letters.

At age 14 Luigi decided to leave Rome and his mother's grandmother. She understood. She gave him what little money she could. With the small lamb in his travel bag, he took the bus to Tivoli, a place that he knew about and where Hadrian's Villa was located. He went first to the Hotel Hadrianna. He saw in the rear two red clay tennis courts. No one was about. His quick mind saw an opportunity. He picked up a broom and

began cleaning the lines. The woman who managed the hotel came out. She took an immediate liking to this curly headed, handsome boy. She gave him a small space in the basement to sleep and found more chores for him. She arranged for him to take his meals with the staff in the kitchen. His friendly smile and his cooperative spirit earned for him many friends. She arranged for him to attend school, which he eagerly did.

Luigi had a desire to learn all there was to know about Hadrian's Villa. He knew from study that a villa was not just a house. The word "villa" implied a complex assemblage of buildings, walls and structures. He learned the life of Hadrian who became emperor in the year 117 and ruled for 21 years. He read about the two long journeys Hadrian had taken to Greece. He walked often over the 180 acres that comprised the villa's grounds. It had Roman baths, frigidariums, and caldariums and heated swimming pools. There were libraries for private study. The villa had mosaics everywhere and hundred's of statues of Greek works.

The villa had spectacular views, quiet orchards, vegetable gardens and large fields of grain. It had many, many underground passages. Great armies of slaves had built and

used these honeycomb passages for storage and for work. The passages enabled the slaves to move about without being seen by the people that lived in the villa, and they ran at different levels and in different directions.

Luigi had a copy of the Life of Hadrian, written in about 300 by Helius Spartus. Unconfirmed and perhaps apocryphal, this book mentioned the passageways and a collection of busts and statues collected by Hadrian, which had never been found. Years of research had revealed nothing. Luigi became seriously interested. He decided to explore with thoroughness the underground passages for possible objects left by Hadrian. The passages were minimally blocked off with a simple iron railing and a message “It is forbidden to enter.”

He went further and further into the passages. He carried several flashlights and a large blanket which he pinned to the walls to block out the light, and to keep other people from knowing that he was there. He scraped and tapped with his trowel looking for loose bricks or hollow spaces. He found a hidden rock covered niche. There he discovered a small statue of a Minotaur. His hands trembled with excitement. He

removed the marble image, half bull and half man. and put it in his backpack.

That evening, he examined the marble sculpture. It had a distinct blue vein running through the white marble. Luigi knew that this statue came from Aphrodesius. . He knew Hadrian had visited there on more than one occasion. Many statues and works of art had been created in that city always using the blue veined marble. He became totally convinced that the found Minotaur was authentic.

Luigi continued his private studies. He read Herodotus and Pliny and as many sources as he could find. He also continued his secretive explorations. Months later he was rewarded. His trowel tip had stopped at a soft but firm object. It was a lead box. The lid came off. It revealed a gold necklace. Small oblong gold pieces hung from a gold cord. On every other gold piece a Greek capital letter could be discerned. Sigma, Alpha, Beta, Iota, Nu, Alpha—S-a-b-i-n-a- SABINA . Luigi took a deep breath. He knew this was the name of Hadrian's wife. She had been very close to Hadrian, his counselor, his guardian against mistakes, and his friend. In the same box, Luigi found

several gold coins with Hadrian's image and the date 131 inscribed. He knew Hadrian had been in Greece in that year.

Luigi spent the next year tapping and looking deep in the passageways. Now 20 years old he was about to give up when he tapped an area that sounded hollow like an entranceway. He opened a space next to the floor just large enough to crawl through. The small room was empty. He covered the hole then stopped for the day.

That evening, he studied the maps and drawings of Hadrian's Villa where he had personally mapped the passageways. He thought that the small room was beneath the emperor's private study. The next morning he went back, opened the small entrance, then began tapping the wall of the room. He found what seemed to be another entrance. Again, he opened a small hole next to the floor.

He crawled in and shined his light about the next room. On a shelf he saw, he saw three beautiful carved marble statues. Alongside each of the three was an uncarved marble block the same size as the statue. He found many tools for marble working. His heart pounded. He had come upon an

extraordinary find. The most exquisite statue was a horse about eight inches tall. Its nostrils flared, its muscled flanks rippled. Its neck stretched out, a horse in battle. This horse had aristocratic characteristics. It just had to be a model of Borysthenes, the famous war horse of the Emperor Hadrian.

The horse glistened as a telltale blue vein in the marble ran down the neck then along the length of the body. Next to Borysthenes a block of uncarved blue veined marble rested on the shelf, almost as if it was ready to be carved into another horse.

On a second shelf a life-sized bust of a young man rested. Luigi recognized the curly hair and the full lips of Antinous, the young friend and close companion of Hadrian. It had been carved using the blue veined marble. Alongside was another uncarved piece of marble, the same size, waiting to be carved into a duplicate bust.

The third shelf held a small statute of a man in a toga, wearing a short beard. He held a staff with a snake entwined, the sign of a physician, the caduceus. Luigi knew this must be Homogenes, the personal physician of Hadrian. The blue

veined marble was evident as well, on the uncarved block, ready for carving.

Luigi stood with both lights shining on the marble pieces. He was happy beyond belief. He knew he could never part with those pieces, no matter what their value. His mind began working. He hid the sculptures, the marble blocks and the sculpting tools in another very secret and hidden space of an underground passageway.

He had created a plan. He borrowed enough money to take the gold necklace and the Minotaur to New York to the Metropolitan Museum. The antiquity department believed the necklace was authentic. They were sure that the Minotaur had been carved in the workshop of Hadrian. It had all of the markings and the well-known and documented blue veins in the marble. They were excited. Their research indicated that Hadrian had commissioned other statues but none had ever been found. There remained only the references in the biography of Hadrian by Helius Spartus.

Luigi thanked the Metropolitan. He told them he had bought the items from a person in Rome but would not disclose

the name. He gave his name as Luigi Allesandro. The Metropolitan offered him one million dollars for the two objects, if he had proof of ownership. He thanked them but indicated that he would try to have them sold by Christie's at an auction.

Christies declared the two objects authentic and agreed to place them at auction if the provenance was disclosed, and if proof of ownership would be forthcoming. Luigi refused to disclose the provenance and the proof of ownership. After days of searching he found an undercover agent, in fact a black market dealer, Alberto Donatella. The agent had great interest. He told Luigi that he had a very knowledgeable Roman, a Mr. Fellini, an expert in Hadrian objects and blue veined marble who perhaps would buy the objects. The agent valued the two pieces at a total of \$1,000,000. Three weeks later the agent delivered a check to Luigi in that amount. The funds were deposited in a Swiss bank account which Luigi had set up. He told Alberto about the other sculptures who said that he had heard of other Hadrian sculptures and knew of certain writings about them. He had also seen a Borysthenes sculpture, which he knew was not authentic, because the tool markings were not old and it did not have the blue veins. The agent thought that the

Roman might be interested in authentic pieces. Anything that Alberto could find and verify this client would probably buy.

Luigi continued to be sure he would never part with the three originals. He continued his creative plan. He had made plaster casts of the three original blue veined statues. He took the casts to Imbroglia Masterini the best master sculptor in all of Italy. He commissioned and received a marble duplicate of Borysthenes from the plaster cast. He then gave to Masterini the original tools and the block with the blue veins and asked for a second duplicate. The result was perfect.

Over the next year Luigi had Masterini make two copies of Antinous and Homogenes, one copy with good but modern tools and marble and the other using the blue veined marble and the original ancient tools. He took the plain marble sculptures to the agent. Alberto said “these are not authentic. They lack the blue veins and they were not sculpted with ancient tools.

Luigi told Alberto he thought that he had made a different important discovery. Six months later he showed him the sculptures done with the special tools and the blue veined marble. Alberto went ballistic. He thought He could get

\$5,000,000 from the same private collector who had bought the necklace and the Minotaur. Luigi was contacted in ten days. The sale had gone through to Mr. Fellini, the private collector. The funds were placed in the numbered Swiss account. Luigi began dealing in Roman artifacts. He kept his own three original Hadrian marble sculptures in a small, beautifully lit private room where the small lamb also resided.

One day the following year on the streets of Rome, Luigi's contact Alberto Donatella ran into Luigi. He said to him "I have again been in contact with Mr. Fellini the collector that bought the wonderful Hadrian pieces. Would you like to meet him?" He is a very wealthy man. He lives in Florence. Luigi paused while reflections of guilt passed through his mind and recollections of his childhood experience with the gypsies and their daggers. Then he said, "Yes, I would like to see the sculptures again and meet Mr. Fellini. However, you may not, indeed must not tell this collector that these artifacts came through me. Alberto said, "No problem, that won't happen." Alberto then said "I'll tell you about this collector. Through the ownership of these Hadrian pieces his reputation as an honest, admirable, knowledgeable man has totally escalated. He was respected because of his long Italian lineage, but now he enjoys

Florentine respect for his knowledge of art. He has even had designed and uses a Coat of Arms saying “Art & Justice & Truth.

Two days later Luigi took the train to Florence to keep the arranged appointment. He put into his jacket the authentic blue veined marble lamb which had come from his mother. He thought that perhaps he would show it to the collector.

Luigi was ushered into an exquisite penthouse. The butler said” Mr. Fellini will be available in just several more minutes. In the meantime please enjoy yourself, look at the collection.” Over the doorway was the shield Art & Justice & Truth. In the center of the room, on separate stands, stood the exquisite war horse, the physician and Antinous. The necklace and the Minotaur occupied less grand positions.

Finally, the owner entered the room. There was a stunned shock, then silence. The two men looked at each other seeing immediately the very close almost exact resemblance to one another, a very close relationship— neither said a word. Then the older man extended his hand, “I am Luigi Allesandro Fellini.” The younger man did not extend his hand, but said

“Luigi Allesandro Emilio.” They continued to look closely at one another. The pause was long and awkward.

The younger man, Luigi Allesandro Emilio abruptly stood straight and tall, turned his head to one side then said “If you only knew the truth. This Hadrian collection has earned for you a reputation. And your Coat of Arms, it speaks of Art & Truth & Justice. “Goodbye - and to Art, but here, there is no Truth and no Justice and -- Revenge is Mine.”

While walking out he reached into his pocket. He held up high the small, authentic blue veined lamb, saying again “REVENGE IS MINE.”

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