

SIDES Sicilians in the Basement by Joe Simonelli

Act 1 scene 2 – Heidi, Armando, Wendi, Hans, Joey

HEIDI. Hi Armando, I'll be back in to help you in a second. I just want to get ahead of the table settings for tomorrow.

ARMANDO. It's okay facia bella. Everthing's under control. Two tables justa lefta and I recruited your papa to helpa wit the others. Why dona you Taka little abreaka. Hey, you wanta a little vino?

HEIDI. Sure, I'd love a glass. I can't believe how busy we are and so fast too. Your Papa is amazing.

ARMANDO. He isa a good cook my Papa.
Ah, here it is...I gotta special bottle righta back here.
(he goes behind the bar)

You papa letsa me hide it a here on the bottom shelfa. Not for the customers, justa for usa workers.

(He comes back with a bottle of red wine and two glasses, sits next to Heidi and pours them)

Thisa wina, my papa bringa from Italy. Homamada in Sicilia. You try.

(They both take a drink)

HEIDI. Why this is superb Armando. Your papa makes his own wine too?

ARMANDO. But of coarsa, it Italy everybody makesa their owna vino!

HEIDI. What part of Italy do you come from?

ARMANDO. A little fishina village ina Sicilia calleda Milazzo!

HEIDI. So it's right on the water? How romantic.

ARMANDO. Si, right ouside of a Messina. On the water.

HEIDI. It must be beautiful. Don't you miss it?

ARMANDO. Si, que bella. But the economy in a Sicilia not to gooda.

HEIDI. Well the economy here in America is nota to gooda either.

ARMANDO. Ah, you maka funa of my accenta.

HEIDI. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.

ARMANDO. Eh, no problema...I gotta what you Americans calla 'Theeck Skin" Besidesa, your Mama letsa me usa the computer in the offica every morning. I'm talkin an English speaking lessons on there everyday. In a few monthsa, you wonta even tella I wasnta born here!

HEIDI. I bet you're right! Tell me a little more about Milazzo.

ARMANDO. My papa anda me, we have a little restaurant on the water. "la Giaconda" we named it.

HEIDI. Oh, after the 'Mona Lisa."

ARMANDO. Thatsa righta, after the Mona Lisa. My cousin Pepe, he strolla the tables playin hisa mandolin while the people mangere.

HEIDI. Wow, that sounds wonderful! Maybe we could do that here!

ARMANDO. I don'ta knowa. Can you a cantare facia bella? You likea to sing?

HEIDI. I could try.

ARMANDO. Okay, we sing together si...I starta you follow..
"Volare...whoa whoa....(He points to her) Cantare!

HEIDI. "Cantare, whoa whoa"!

ARMANDO. Thatsa very good! Beuno facia bella!

HEIDI. Oh, your restaurant in Messina sounds so wonderful. Why did you ever leave it?

ARMANDO. We do okay. But when we heara that our a cousins are here in America we decided to come. We let Aunt Rosa runa the place.

HEIDI. I think it's wonderful that you're trying to assimilate Armando.

ARMANDO. Assimilata? Che cosa? Whata does that meana?

HEIDI. Assimilate means to adapt. To join.

ARMANDO. To joina! Bella! I lova to assimilate, especially if it's with a facia bella lika you!

HEIDI. You flatterer!....Ah facia bella, that's a compliment, yes?

ARMANDO. Facia bella...that meansa beautiful face.

HEIDI. You *are* a charmer.

ARMANDO. Tell me Heidi, what isa your favorite thinga to do here in America?

HEIDI. I don't know. I guess the usual stuff. Go to movies...go to the beach in the summer time.

ARMANDO. Ah si, the beach isa nice.

HEIDI. What are your favorite things to do in Italy?

ARMANDO. Me, in Italia? I lova to dance!

HEIDI. You do? How exciting!

ARMANDO. You lika to dance facia bella?

HEIDI. I do. But I don't get much opportunity to dance.

ARMANDO. How is thata possible? A bella such as you should be dancing every night!

HEIDI. I'm always here! In the restaurant, helping my parents.

ARMANDO. Your mama and papa, you are uh, how you say a...close to them, I can see that.

HEIDI. Sometimes a little too close. But yes, they are great parents. And their happiness is very important to me.

ARMANDO. Si. I understand. That is how I feel about my Papa also.

But...back to the dancing...

(he stands and takes her hand)

Well come ona. We dance right now. I play some music si?

(He goes back behind the bar and picks up a C.D.)

Perfect,"Romatica songs Italiano!"

(he starts the CD and a ballad similar to the 'theme from the godfather' plays)

HEIDI. Oh we couldn't, right here, right now. The restaurant is still open.

ARMANDO. *(as he takes her hand)*

You papa can a handle the backa room. He will call us if he needs help. Come on now, we danca.

(They start to dance)

You know in Italia, the way we maka love to a woman, is througha the dancing.

HEIDI. Talk about romantic foreplay.

ARMANDO. Che cosa. Whatsa that meana, the foreplay?

HEIDI. Oh don't worry, I'm gonna teach you all about it.

ARMANDO. Really. You gonna do thata for me? Boy you are a really, how do you say. 'a good egg!'

HEIDI. Don't worry, it's going to be my pleasure!

ARMANDO. Am I gonna lika thisa foreplay?

HEIDI. Your gonna just love it!!!

ARMANDO. Oh boy, I cana hardly waita!

HEIDI. That makes two of us.
(she gives him a kiss as Wendi enters)

WENDI. And just what is going on here young lady?!?

HEIDI. Armando was just showing me a few steps.

WENDI. It looks like he was showing you more than that.
(she yells to backroom door)
Hans get in here! Armando and Heidi are, are...

ARMANDO. It's okaya senora, you daughta isa gonna show me foreplay!

WENDI. She's what?

ARMANDO. And Ima gonna love it!

WENDI. HANS!!!!

HANS. *(Hans enters from back room)*
What's the problem, I'm in the middle of serving a flaming tart!

WENDI. Well, we've already got one right there...an American flaming tart and an Italian gigolo!

HEIDI. Mother really, I'm twenty two years old, I can make my own decisions.

WENDI. Not as long as you're still living under our roof you don't.

HEIDI. Well how can I not live under your roof when you don't pay me enough to get a place of my own!

WENDI. I am not going to stand here and discuss family matters in front of this, this, Italian Lothario.

HEIDI. That's redundant mother, the character of Lothario *was* Italian.

WENDI. Don't you quote Shakespeare to me young lady. I took two semesters in Community College. Now let's go, we've got two more tables in the back then work and flirting is done for the night. Are you coming Hans?

HANS. We gotta clean up and who's gonna lock up?

WENDI. .Let Garibaldi over here do it.

HANS. I didn't know Garibaldi was from Shakespeare?

WENDI. He wasn't. What are you talking about? Never mind. Let's go...

(Heidi and Wendi exit)

ARMANDO. Is OK bossa. Me and a Papa can take care of everything.

HANS. *(to Armando)*

Tell me Armando, are women this much trouble in Italy?

ARMANDO. Manega realo senor Hansa, thisa is a no trouble compared to the senora in a Italy. Why you think I coma here! Go ahead, finish up and you go homa. I'll clean upa and locka the reataurante. I'll see you tomorrow bossa!

HANS. Thanks Armando. But I've got a feeling it would be more pleasant if I spent the night with you and your papa in the basement then having to go home and referee those two.

ARMANDO. Ima sorry to a causa so mucha trouble, but me and your daughter, well There's an expression in Italia, whena you meeta the righta senora, your hearta jumps througha youra chesta!

HANS. Yeah, she's a sweetheart. And you seem like a good kid. But it's not me you've got to convince. It's her mother. Heidi's her only child. She's very protective.

ARMANDO. Yeah, so I a notice.

HANS. I just hope this doesn't turn out like Shakespeare Armando. We've got more problems than just Wendi.

ARMANDO. Che cosa?

HANS. You and your Papa don't happen to have green cards do you?

ARMANDO. Whatsa a greena carda?

HANS. You know green? Verde.

ARMANDO. Verde? Oh, you meana the work permita. Nah, since you not paying usa we didnta think we needed it.

HANS. Well you do need it whether we're paying you or not. Right now we are sheltering illegal aliens which is, well, illegal!

ARMANDO. You kiddin, you ever eata at a Mexicano restaurant! You yella Imigration in there anda the whole kitchen staffa run outa the back doora.

HANS. Yeah, and the gardner goes with them. But be that as it may it's still illegal and we could lose our liquor and restaurant license.

ARMANDO. Gee, ima sorry to a be a so much trouble senior Hansa.

HANS. Ah, it's not entirely your fault Armando. And there's nothing we can do about it tonight so let's just sleep on it and we'll try to figure something out tomorrow. Goodnight Armando.

ARMANDO. Arrivaderci senior Hansa.

(Hans exits as Armando turns off the music and starts to straighten up the picture of the Italian crooner on the wall, a few beats and Joey Tarrazzi enters.)

JOEY. Well look who's here. I just saw all the Segrums leave. They leave you here alone?

ARMANDO. *(with no trace of Italian accent)*
What are you doing here? If they catch on...

JOEY. Relax, I saw them pull away.

ARMANDO. And what if they forgot something and come back. You could blow the whole scheme!

JOEY. I told you I saw them drive away. Did he bring up the green cards?

ARMANDO. Sure did. And he's real nervous about it. Thinks he'll lose the whole restaurant if you pursue the matter.

JOEY. That's just what I want him to think. He'll be so nervous about me turning him in that he'll run out of here screaming for me to break the lease. I'll make him another offer in the morning. Although not as generous as the last one, but I'll get this space back, you just watch.

ARMANDO. Then my grandfather and I take the place over. That was the deal, wasn't it?

(Joey walks over to Armando and puts her arms around him. He looks uncomfortable but doesn't resist)

JOEY. That's the plan. Of course we'll have to negotiate a new lease. As we discussed, with a little something to sweeten the deal...right? *(She runs her hand over his chest).*

ARMANDO. Sure, sure. I just want my Grandfather to have the restaurant he always wanted in New York. With the movie theatre opening this place will be a goldmine. Business is already booming since we got here.

JOEY. And that *wasn't* supposed to be part of the plan. I didn't want *their* business to pick up so much. They weren't supposed to have any success at all. Why does your grandfather have to be such a good cook?

ARMANDO. He's really Sicilian.

JOEY. Well tell him to put some more garlic in the Ragu, will ya? I need them to *want* to leave...get it? And if you want your own restaurant you've gotta make sure that happens. So don't start going soft on me. And, just so we're straight on everything, you keep your hands off that daughter of theirs.

ARMANDO. Hey, you don't own me and if I can have a little fun while I'm getting the job done, what's it to you?

JOEY. Ok, handsome. You have your fun on the side. Just be careful and remember what you were hired to do *(goes to kiss him on mouth but he turns his head so kiss lands on his cheek, he pulls away, obviously not interested)*

ARMANDO. Yeah. I remember. You worry too much.
(She exits as he starts singing – "Volare")

Curtain (act one)

INTERMISSION