

## Sicilians in the Basement – Act 2 Ted, Heidi

**TED.** Am I too early for lunch?

**HEIDI.** *(breaking her clinch)*  
Not at all Mr. Halpern. Please, have a seat.

**TED.** My usual table?

**HEIDI.** For our best customer, you bet! We haven't seen you for a while. We thought we might have lost you as a lunch patron.

**TED.** Oh not at all. I was on vacation in Europe for a couple of weeks. I go every few years. I hear things have really picked up around here. Word gets around town.

**HEIDI.** They sure have!

**TED.** And to what do we attribute this miraculous turnaround?

**HEIDI.** *(as she hands him a menu)*  
We hired a couple of expert sous chef's from Europe! *(to Armando)* Armando, Mr. Halpern. One of our oldest and most valued customers.

**TED.** And by old she's not referring to my age, but my tenure of patronage. My pleasure.

*(they shake hands)*

**ARMANDO.** Nica to meeta you.

**TED.** Oh, are you from Italy?

**ARMANDO.** Sicilia!

**TED.** Really? How nice. I just spent a week in a little town near Messina. Right on the water.

**HEIDI.** Milazzo?

**TED.** Yes, that's the town.

**HEIDI.** Why that's what where Armando and his grand father are from! What a coincidence!

**ARMANDO.** *(deadpan)* Yeah, soma coincidence.

**TED.** Did your family have a restaurant there? I went to quite a few.

**HEIDI.** They sure did. "La Giaconda" right on the water.

**TED.** Oh, I don't seem to recall that one and I think we hit nearly every one near the water.

**ARMANDO.** Yeah, wella you know theya were a trying to sell it whena we lefta so maybe it changeda names by now.

**HEIDI.** In two weeks?

**ARMANDO.** They do thingsa a very fast in Sicilia sometimes.

**HEIDI.** You'll notice the changes in the menu Mr. Halpern.

**TED.** Why yes I do! Very impressive.

**ARMANDO.** Whatsa u pleasure Mr. Haplperna.

**TED.** Well you know I love your mother's grilled cheese, but this veal saltimbuca looks intriguing. I'll try that.

**ARMANDO.** Coming a righta up.

*(he yells to kitchen as he exits)*

Papa, uno veala Saltimbuca, pronto!

**PAPA.** *(from off)* A tutti pronto!

**TED.** Very animated, isn't he?

**HEIDI.** You know those Italians, very hot blooded. Ohhh, he really gets to me, you know?

**TED.** Does he?

**HEIDI.** Oh I'm sorry Mr. Halpern. I shouldn't be talking that way to the customers.

**TED.** Please call me Ted. And being your 'oldest' customer I hope I rate a little higher on the friend scale. Have a seat. Tell me what's on your mind.

**HEIDI.** Oh I really shouldn't. But it is so hard to talk to my parents sometimes. Can you believe it?

Twenty two years old and they still treat me like a child...and I seem to let them.

**TED.** Maybe that's the problem. Come on, I've got a few years of experience and a wealth of knowledge behind it. Maybe I can help. It's the young man I just met, isn't it?

**HEIDI.** Is it that obvious?

**TED.** Ah yes. From the moment I walked in and you two were, how can I phrase this..

**HEIDI.** Canoodling?

**TED.** Bingo...so what's the problem?

**HEIDI.** My mother doesn't really approve. A little overprotective I guess.

**TED.** Which isn't always a bad thing by the way. ... And your father?

**HEIDI.** Well dad's pretty cool. But then again he's pretty cool about everything.

**TED.** And you're really stuck on Armando?

**HEIDI.** Sure am. From the moment I laid eyes on him. What do I do Ted? I am their only child and I love my parents, but I have dreams of my own. I wanted to travel, experience life...but they needed me and I thought if this restaurant became a success for them they would finally let me go to start my own life. The restaurant is becoming successful but now Armando is here...and I find I want to stay because of him. I don't want to disappoint them, but they need to let me grow up and I need to find a way to tell them that. I need to find a way to tell them I am falling in love with Armando.

**TED.** I see. Well, from an early observance I'll offer three pieces of advice. One, you must follow your heart. Two, things aren't always what they seem and three, everything happens for a reason.

**HEIDI.** Kind of mutually exclusive and ambiguous aren't they?

**TED.** Yes, they are, aren't they? Look, a few weeks ago this restaurant was a failure, right? It didn't seem like anything was going to save it. Certainly not my orders of grilled cheese every day.

**HEIDI.** Yes, you're right.

**TED.** Then something unexpected happened and things were not what they seemed, right?

**HEIDI.** Right!

**TED.** And as for matters of the heart...well, you have to listen to yours and follow what it tells you. Because in the end, it's not your parents' life or dreams that matter, it's yours. Perhaps that young man came into your life for a reason.

**HEIDI.** Well that's what I think but what about hurting other people's hearts?

**TED.** Well, that's the eternal conundrum of life. But you have to be honest with yourself and you have to keep your integrity. Once you lose that, it's very hard to get it back. And your parents wouldn't want you to be unhappy because you were trying to make them happy, right?

**HEIDI.** I suppose you're right. I just don't understand why family relationships have to be so hard. I don't know why any relationship has to be so hard.

**TED.** Great point. It shouldn't be. But you don't get to pick your family, you just have to learn to accept them for who they are and when it comes to love, if two people are right for each other, they should fit like a glove. And while you have to put some effort into it, it shouldn't be an onerous amount of work. Life's complicated enough. But look at your parents, sure they squabble once in a while but underneath you can tell that they care and are dedicated to each other.