

MOTHER'S HEART

FOLK SONG:

WHEN MY DAUGHTER MADE SAGNE (fresh homemade eggless pasta)
THE SNAPS COULD BE HEARD FROM THE MOUNTAINS.
MOTHER'S HEART...MOTHER'S HEART
TONIGHT WHEN THE BAND IS COMING
THEY'LL TAKE HER AWAY
WHEN MY DAUGHTER MADE SAUCE
IT COULD BE SMELLED FROM SAN LUCA
MOTHER'S HEART...MOTHER'S HEART
TONIGHT WHEN THE BAND IS COMING
THEY'LL TAKE HER AWAY
WHEN MY DAUGHTER WENT TO MASS
THE YOUNG PEOPLE ALL FOLLOWED HER
MOTHER'S HEART...MOTHER'S HEART
TONIGHT WHEN THE BAND IS COMING
THEY'RE TAKING HER AWAY

NEIGHBOR: My dear, can I come in?

MOTHER: Come in, come in. Let me turn off the radio.

NEIGHBOR: I brought you some basil.

MOTHER: Oh, thanks! I've finished mine. It's good with tomatoes. Do you bottle it?
(tomato sauce)

NEIGHBOR: Of course I do. How can you cook without tomato?

MOTHER: Did you see how beautiful Uncle Carlo's San Marzano tomatoes are?

NEIGHBOR: Of course, I've seen them. But they're expensive. There aren't many this year;
it hasn't rained enough.

MOTHER: He told me I have to get at least 200 kilos for that price. Otherwise, they cost
more.

NEIGHBOR: Really? Ask Uncle Teodoro how much he'll set you back.

MOTHER: Nooo... The two brothers are fighting, I can't go to both of them... What would
people say...

NEIGHBOR: Carlo and Teodoro aren't fighting. They didn't make a will, so there's no
reason. After they die, the notary will take care of it, and the relatives have to keep quiet.

MOTHER: And how do you know?

NEIGHBOR: That they have to keep quiet?

MOTHER: No, that they didn't make a will.

NEIGHBOR: Peppinella told me.

MOTHER: And you listen to Peppinella? Oh, poor you! Help me hang out the laundry, the
sun's coming out, let's hurry up.

NEIGHBOR: All right. Afterwards, you help me. I told my daughter, and look at that. She
left everything as it was. Everything I say goes in one ear and out the other. What should
you do with these children? The boys, especially, don't want to do anything. And the girls,
too. They don't want to crochet, they don't want to learn to embroider... Housework... yes,
sometimes, but they leave everything dirty.

MOTHER: (*with pride*) My daughter embroidered her own trousseau sheets and put lace all
over them. And when she does the housework... spotless, she doesn't stop until the house
smells good.

NEIGHBOR: (*sarcastic*) Oh, yes... "When my daughter made tomato sauce it could be smelled all the way to San Luca." (*Old saying*)

MOTHER: Of course! I taught her, and she does it better than the others, even now that she's got love on her mind.

NEIGHBOR: I know... I know... Everyone knows she's in love. They hug and kiss in the middle of the street. It's a scandal! And there's no talking of marriage!

MOTHER: This is what you think... we are talking of marriage. But today it's not like it used to be, in the old days it was enough to bring a little trousseau... a few lace doilies. Now it takes money, hundreds of thousands of lire, and that's not even enough.

NEIGHBOR: Of course it's not enough, if they buy flowers! They have to get married and spend on flowers?

MOTHER: And how do you know that my daughter's fiancé gives her flowers? Did Peppinella tell you that too?

NEIGHBOR: No. I saw them when he brought them.

MOTHER: Don't you have anything better to do than watch what others do?

NEIGHBOR: We live next door...

MOTHER: So when my daughter displays her trousseau, come and see it. It'll be astonishing. They'll come all the way from Civitaretenda to see it, it's so beautiful.

NEIGHBOR: Of course, they're all your relatives.

MOTHER: Oh, I arranged my daughter's marriage! I sent her on the pilgrimage on purpose.

NEIGHBOR: To the Holy Ghost?

MOTHER: No! To Saint Gabriel. What, don't you know? Everyone went. From Villa Jubbatti, Villa Grande, Villa Caldari, Rogatti. You could hear singing from early in the morning.

SONG:

DUE TO PAIN, I CAN'T WORK ANYMORE

SAINT GABRIEL RESTORES YOUR HEALTH

A MISCONDUCT AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE

SAINT GABRIEL GIVES YOU A GRACE

SAINT GABRIEL, SAINT GABRIEL, CONSOLE OF MY SOUL

SAINT GABRIEL, SAINT GABRIEL, YOU REMEDY EVERYTHING, AND SO BE IT

NEIGHBOR: But did you send your daughter alone? You didn't go?

MOTHER: No, otherwise how could she find a husband? I made it clear to the priest. Don Rosario was there. I told him, "Don Rosario, my daughter must find a husband. But it must be a good match."

"I'll take care of it," he replied.

NEIGHBOR: And the priest wasn't upset that the girl didn't go to the saint out of devotion?

MOTHER: Do you know anyone who goes on the pilgrimage out of devotion? Only Angelina's daughter, who wanted to become a nun. Aunt Camilla starts cooking two days before. She makes stuffed eggplant for everyone.

NEIGHBOR and MOTHER: How delicious!

MOTHER: Anyway... in the evening, when the pilgrimage returned, I heard my daughter's voice, who also sings solo in church.

FOLK SONG:

IN THE HEART OF SAINT GABRIEL

A ROSE IS BORN

A ROSE IS BORN

A LILY SPREADS FROM THE ROSE
MARY FORGIVENESS, FORGIVENESS, MERCY
ON THE HAND OF SAINT GABRIEL
A ROSE IS BORN
A ROSE IS BORN
A LILY SPREADS FROM THE ROSE
MARY FORGIVENESS, FORGIVENESS, MERCY.

MOTHER: She was with Maria Antonietta, her best friend. My daughter also brought me a little souvenir from the shrine, but she didn't say anything to me. Marie Antoinette went home, she didn't want to stay, so off to bed. End of the pilgrimage. Now we'll see, I thought, if the saint was of any use. The next day my daughter said to me: "Mom, I have to go to church. Don Rosario says there's a lot to do after the pilgrimage."

"Go, dear, go." And once, and twice...

NEIGHBOR: Once and twice? Hmmm... I get it. But who's the boyfriend?

MOTHER: The son of friend Ciavarrone

NEIGHBOR: I don't know him

MOTHER: How come you don't know him! He sold the tractor to your son.

NEIGHBOR: Aaaah! Now I know, yes... yes

MOTHER: Don Rosario had spoken clearly with Ciavarrone. I sent him because I'm alone. I'm a war widow. I have no relationship with my husband's family, and these are men's matters. So we made an agreement. One time I went too, and Ciavarrone's wife was there too. When everything was settled, we hugged and kissed. My inheritance isn't much, you know that. But I only have this daughter. It all goes to her. There's no need to divide it, nor to argue with anyone. Ciavarrone wants to marry off his son, who's no longer a boy... Ciavarrone isn't well, you can see, he can't work anymore, he can't do anything anymore. His son has to take care of it now. So he has to settle down. He has the house, he has the shop, he's a hard worker, Don Rosario told me... Anyway, the following Sunday, when we returned from Mass, we found the cherry branch leaning against the door.

"Can I bring it in?" my daughter asked me. "Do I have to tell you?" I replied, "You know what you have to do. You want that man as a husband? Take the cherry branch. You don't want him? Don't even take the branch." But I was just saying. I made her believe it was her decision, that today's youth claims to be modern... but give me a break... It's all the fault of the cinema! Damn whoever invented it. May he be damned. The nonsense the cinema puts into people's heads is extraordinary. Damn me, and when I took her there for the first time.

NEIGHBOR: You can't stop her. Everyone goes to the cinema.

MOTHER: That's what I'm saying. She went there once with Maria Antonietta. She saw the black gloves and wanted them too, the long ones worn by... what the hell was her name... Gilda!

NEIGHBOR: Oh, yes, yes, I saw that movie too.

MOTHER: Well, I said to her, "Don't even think about it, you're still a child, where have you got that idea from...?"

"I'm not a child," she replied.

Well... they were building the road at the cross. She went there with Maria Antonietta. Didn't she put her arms in the tar!? We had to wash it off with gasoline! And at night, the little girl's screams, her arms all sore, like if the skin had peeled off! I had to take her to the doctor. At night! The doctor wasn't there because he was in the hospital. Go to the hospital. And the little girl screaming in Francesco's car, and thank goodness he was there.

And I was scolding her... "Shut up or I'll knock your teeth out." Here's the cinema. And modern youth.

(Ominous) Who doesn't want to listen to their father and mother...

FOLK SONG:

WHO DOESN'T WANT TO LISTEN TO MOM AND DAD
IS DESTINED TO DIE A DESPERATE
WHEN YOU HAVE A REBELLIOUS DAUGHTER
YOU MUST PRAY THAT SHE DIES A HOLY DEATH

MOTHER: Thank goodness she at least goes to church. Don Rosario is a young priest, but not like the other youngsters

NEIGHBOR: Do you trust Don Rosario?

MOTHER: Why...?

NEIGHBOR: Do you remember when Maria dei Palmareti died? (Palmareti, a wealthy local family)

MOTHER: Well?

NEIGHBOR: She died in Vasto. When they brought her back here, in the coffin, Don Rosario wasn't there. He'd left, saying he had something to do, and the church was closed. They took that poor woman to the cemetery without a blessing, without the sign of the cross, without even ringing the bell, as if she weren't a Christian!! After all the money she gave him... In the eyes of Jesus Christ, money is nothing, but we are not Jesus Christ. The church is supported by the Palmaretis' money! Don Rosario said the Mass outside, do you remember, for fear the roof would collapse on him after all that rain. Is this his appreciation? He left her outside! I'd be careful with that man.

MOTHER: But I'm marrying my daughter to Ciavarrone's son, not to Don Rosario! Ciavarrone is well-off, that's for sure, and nothing bad has ever been said about him. So when my daughter brought in the cherry branch, the dowry paper was ready. I had already written out the entire trousseau list in detail:

12 pairs of embroidered sheets, plus 6 pairs of flannel,

12 pairs of linen towels, plus 6 cotton ones

12 nightgowns plus 6 daygowns

2 wool blankets

4 lace bedspreads

12 panties with bras

12 slips

Pillows and cushion covers

All the kitchen supplies:

12 tablecloths for 12 with napkins

12 aprons

24 dishcloths

Pots, pans, ladles, everything. Ciavarrone and his wife came to pick up the paper that same evening. They didn't raise any objections about everything that concerns them: the house, the furniture, the mattress, the ring, even the honeymoon in Venice, everything. So I couldn't make a fuss about what concerns me.

NEIGHBOR: So? Then why are you so worried? The trousseau is ready, your daughter sews her own wedding dress.

MOTHER: And the honeymoon dress? You need fabric for that too. It has to be good fabric, so everyone can see it. I even had a fight with my daughter because she doesn't want to

wear it.

NEIGHBOR: She doesn't want to wear it?

MOTHER: She wants to go away in her wedding dress. She says it's an American trend. Another movie nonsense!!

NEIGHBOR: What movie is that?

MOTHER: How do I know...! On the train to Venice dressed as a bride. She'll make people laugh. Saint Rita, help me...

NEIGHBOR: But you can always re-wear a dress... and for wedding favors, you can make tatting doilies. Aren't they used anymore? What do you care? Just say it's traditional. You'll save money and make a good impression.

MOTHER: Okay, but I'm responsible for the lunch. Do you know how many of us there are?

NEIGHBOR: The whole town.

MOTHER: Two towns! I don't have any relations with my husband's relatives, but I have to invite them all anyway. They provide me with tables and chairs, and that's fine, but I have to cook. Plus the reception two weeks before, with a different dress, desserts for the guests to take home, the bedroom... Do the math.

NEIGHBOR: You'll make up for the expense with the gifts.

MOTHER: Maybe, but you can't count on it. Few people give money and valuable gifts. Everyone's trying to save money. Didn't you just tell me to save on tatting-dot favors? If they can, everyone gives something they have at home. When I got married, everyone gave me food-trays. They're still there. Do I eat the trays? Sure I can give them to the people who help me prepare lunch. You have to give them something. Rather than ruin my daughter's trousseau, I'd finish ruining my own. I still have the nightgowns I inherited from my mother.

NEIGHBOR: Are they enough?

MOTHER: No, that's not enough. I'll give away chickens and rabbits, but it takes money.

NEIGHBOR: Peppinella says she's coming to help you.

MOTHER: Did she tell you? She should have told me, I didn't even ask!

NEIGHBOR: She saw that you need help...

MOTHER: She saw my rabbits, I'm telling you.

NEIGHBOR: Come on, don't talk like that. We know how Peppinella is, but when someone is in need...

MOTHER: Eh, I think night and day about what's needed, what's needed, what's needed, that, that, that... Not that simple... organizing everything... only a head like mine. If I'd been born a man...

NEIGHBOR: Eeeh... You would have been the conductor of the Atessa band, which conducts itself... Listen to me, are you going to give invitations?

MOTHER: What are they?

NEIGHBOR: Written invitations. That's what they call them these days.

MOTHER: Ah! Well... it depends. Those who invited me verbally to their children's weddings, I'll invite verbally, those who sent me a written invitation... But I don't like it. The Ciavarrones can write an invitation, but what do I write alone?

NEIGHBOR: Well, write whatever it is: the widow, etc., announces her daughter's wedding...

MOTHER: Ah. I don't like it.

NEIGHBOR: Why? You don't have to be ashamed. Giovina is also a widow and did it for all her children.

MOTHER: Yeah, yeah, fine. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it. It's just me...I don't like it.

I don't like it without the father's name.

NEIGHBOR: Who walks the girl down to the altar?

MOTHER: My first cousin, so that I'm not offending anyone. He lives abroad. When he went to serve in the army in Northern Italy, he stayed there, and bye bye. Every now and then he comes to visit me... but he never wanted to have anything to do with anyone. So...

NEIGHBOR: Well... you invite everyone verbally and save money. You can put three confetti instead of five in the wedding favor.

MOTHER: Oh no... No. What would people say? That I'm stingy? Or that I don't have money? And it's also bad luck. Five confetti must be there: health, wealth, fertility, long life, and happiness. My daughter must have it all.

NEIGHBOR: But her mother-in-law, did she give her the Presentosa? (*Traditional regional neck lace that is believed to bring good luck and fertility*)

MOTHER: Of course! When she'll lay out the trousseau, you'll see it. Oh... it's gorgeous. Beautifully large. She'll show the Presentosa and the Sciacquajje (*Traditional regional ear rings that are believed to keep evil-eye away*). I told my daughter. You must always wear these jewels. The Presentosa, and the Sciaquajje too because when they shake and rattle they keep the evil eye away.

NEIGHBOR: And the coral necklace?

MOTHER: Actually, no... But if they don't give it to her, I will ! When she has children, my daughter should be able to breastfeed them (*Again, in popular folklore the coral necklace was believed to help with breastfeeding*)

NEIGHBOR: Then everything's fine. She can marry soon!

MOTHER: Soon? What's this rush? Do you think we're making pizzelle? (*A type of sweet wafer easy to make and ready in a short time*) Things have to be done properly. Weddings have to be held on time, otherwise they end in bad luck. You don't get married during Lent, during the month of the Dead, or the month of the Madonna. My daughter has to get married when the wine is clear and ready. April, well... April's gone. September or December.

NEIGHBOR: Oh no, no... September is fine, otherwise in December everyone will see the baby bump...

MOTHER: (*surprised and incredulous*) And how do you know?

NEIGHBOR: Peppinella told me.

MOTHER: Peppinella told you...!? And who told Peppinella?

NEIGHBOR: Whoever it was... Isn't that the truth...?

MOTHER: (*in despair*) Oh my God! If she told you, she told everyone!! Everyone found out!! Now people will say that I didn't know how to look after my daughter?

NEIGHBOR: (*with sarcasm*) Nooo... Dear... They don't blame you... It's the movies...