

## *Loneliness*

N1: The Italian Resistance was the set of political and military movements that in Italy, after the armistice of Cassibile, opposed the Nazis and Fascists during what is called The Italian Liberation War.

N2: The Resistance movement - historically framed within the European phenomenon of Resistance to Nazi and Fascist occupation - was marked out in Italy by the unitary commitment of various political parties.

N3: Mostly they were united in the National Liberation Committee (CLN), whose constituent parties would have later founded the first postwar governments. The modern Italian Republic was declared to be founded on the struggle of the Resistance.

N1: What we want to tell you is a little story, set in the territory where we live, The Langhe District, in Piedmont, in Italy.

N2: A story of loneliness, from the work of Beppe Fenoglio, who had a firsthand experience of that piece of our history.

N3: We are in January of 1945

N1: In the territory of The Langhe District, today inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list

N2: A land of wines... Barolo, Dolcetto, Barbaresco, Nebbiolo...

N3: And of genuine and high quality food... Cheese, hazelnuts, salami, nougat

N1: Castles, enchanting hamlets and farms

N2: Hordes of people from all over the world

N3: But it wasn't always like this

N1: From 1943 to 1945, the Langhe was the scene of guerrilla warfare and partisan fights

N2: 1945 started in an atmosphere of gross brutality

N3: In the Langhe, many partisans had scattered

N1: A lot of them had died, trying to escape from the great roundup of November 1944

N2: Some had been captured and mostly killed

N3: Survivors roamed in isolated farmhouses with little or nothing to eat and nothing to protect themselves from the cold, waiting for the moment they would have been reunited with their mates to continue the fight for the liberation

N1: And here we are, along a hilly road.

N2: Here's Sheriff. He's armed with a gun and a dagger. Over two or three sweaters, he is wearing a jacket of an indefinite colour and green-grey pants; at the feet, deformed oilskin boots

P1: Here you are, Sheriff. Even if you are alone, you call yourself by your battle name.

P2: Let's make an experiment: Sheriff?

P1: Now, let's do the opposite test: Domenico? Domenico! It's worthless, you don't see yourself as Domenico anymore.

P2- You must call yourself Sheriff, if you want to feel like yourself. You really are an old partisan. Something similar might happen to monks. When they take holy orders, they change their name.

P1- Stop with these stories, Sheriff, and look at the valley. Sift through the valley with your eyes. God, what a glare! The snow is so white that you could see a damn fascist a mile away.

P2- But the sun glares out so much you wouldn't see a platoon ten paces away

P1- Fascist sun!

P2- It's because you are weak. You haven't eaten since yesterday morning. And what did you eat yesterday morning? A glass of grappa! Those farmers! They don't have a loaf of bread to give you, but for sure they have a big, nice glass of grappa.

P1- Because yesterday you were drunk, all day long. But was it yesterday or another day? You have completely lost track of time. Well, you aren't even sure what day it is. But please stop it, Sheriff, take a look again just to be sure.

P2- Do you wonder what time it is? But do you need to know what time it is, Sheriff?

P1- Maybe you want to imagine what your mother is doing right now. She is working. That's for sure....Maybe she's cooking, maybe she's cleaning - for herself or for the mistress of the house...

P1- My ass is frozen

P2- You can't resist anymore. Anymore. Move. But what can you do, where do you want to go?

P1- You can't resist anymore. You can still resist cold and hunger, but you can't resist loneliness anymore.

P2- You have to see people...you want to see people.

P1- You could visit a mate. The closest, the least distant is Kim. Do you know where exactly is Kim's hole located?

P2- But no... Don't go there... you're afraid it's full of scabies

P1- So. Go to Benevello... Go and visit the young seamstress. She's such a dear... She isn't beautiful, her shoulders are too tight and her hips too large, and she has also a bit of moustache on her upper lip.

P2- Yes, yes, go and visit the young seamstress from Benevello. She has a wonderful voice that not even the finest students have. You could listen to her for hours.

P3- She lives right outside the village. You will get closer carefully, as if you were getting close to a checkpoint

P1- You don't want people to gossip about it. They gossip even during these difficult times, those terrible people.

P2- Now go...I just hope it's the right time. But in a moment you'll be able to see the clock tower well. And if it isn't the right time, you'll wait.

P3- But what are you going to tell the little seamstress? That you came to chat with her, and she's supposed to put up with you for the love of the cause, isn't she? It doesn't work like this.

P1- You have to show up with a necessity.

P2- Go on, Sheriff, find something for the little seamstress. Even though she understands that it is an excuse. An excuse which makes her smile and not laugh.

P3- There you go. You could ask her to sew that tear, couldn't you?

P1- She won't believe it...Miss, but a draft comes in from this tear, a draft which could cause a fatal pneumonia.

N1- Sheriff is going up the escarpment to Benevello. Halfway he stops and he looks towards the field.

N2- He's traveling light since he has buried his weapons. He has wrapped them in a handkerchief and they won't suffer under the snow for one hour.

N3- He won't need them and the girl will be calmer, at ease. He hopes she'll appreciate his finesse. He has disarmed himself to visit her. Not to compromise her, in case...

N1: But it can't happen, the closest fascist is six kilometers as the crow flies.

N2: He climbs up the road, when an undetectable dog starts barking.

N3: Sheriff gasps... the bark gets deafening, eventually it stops

N1: At the seamstress' in Benevello: the door and the window face the farmyard

N2: Rita is working at her sewing machine. She's about 20. She seems a home-made doll with the black dress and knee-high white woollen socks she's wearing.

(song)

Sheriff: Don't be afraid.

Rita: No, I'm not.

Sheriff: I've frightened you, what a monster I am! I should have introduced myself differently.

Rita: It would have been the same.

Sheriff: No it wouldn't. I wouldn't have frightened you that much. But I hope it's over now. Please tell me it's over!

Rita: Yes, it is.

Sheriff: I sound like an idiot, don't I? The heat here is affecting me. I'm burning up. It's a great feeling... can I sit down please?

Rita: The chair is free. It's my worker's, but she has a sore throat.

Sheriff: I thought you didn't work alone. It's rumored around that you're up to your eyes with work

Rita: Oh really? Does a partisan have time to waste with rumors?

Sheriff: Why not? We are often bored to tears and we find interesting anything we hear. What are you doing?

Rita: A trousseau. For a friend of mine who's getting married.

Sheriff: She's getting married?!

Rita: At the end of this month

Sheriff: She must be crazy to get married in times like these!

Rita (laughing): Someone must prevent the world from ending

Sheriff: That's right. (laughs) Well, I've came here to bother you, as you've probably guessed, to make you do some extra work.

Rita (leaving the dress aside): I'll do it anyway. Come on, show me what you need.

Sheriff: Can't you see it? I am wearing it. (he points the tear in his jacket by waving his hand in it)

Rita: Come over here. It's a remarkable rip.

Sheriff (getting closer): You won't believe it, but the air that gets through it can easily cause a fulminant pneumonia.

Rita: Of course I believe it. I'll mend it in a second.

Sheriff: Shall I take it off?

Rita: Yes please. (Sheriff takes the jacket off and gives it to Rita. While the girl is looking for what she needs, he sits down again)

Sheriff: I've been wearing it for months, day and night, so don't be surprised...

Rita: The fact is that I do not have a thread the same colour as the fabric, and the mend won't be hidden. How did you do it?

Sheriff: the tear? Oh... it's a long story. But it's a story that to a girl... Not that it is indecent. It's just a bit... a bit harsh. But if I were to tell it, for example, to a mate, I'd use a completely different style.

Rita: Well, it's understandable

Sheriff: That jacket was torn by a branch with finger-length thorns and as sharp as knives. A thorny branch that could have killed me.

Rita: No way! When did this happen?

Sheriff: Yesterday morning, I was wandering about my slope. It's the slope just opposite. I was doing some patrolling on my own.

Rita: You have to be very cautious now that you have no place to go.

Sheriff: I was being even more than cautious, but they came from behind

Rita: Who?

Sheriff: Who? The soldiers!

Rita: Of course, what a fool! How many of them were there?

Sheriff: Five, six, maybe ten. I didn't stop and count.

Sheriff: I was alone against at least six people, and I only had a pistol... If I had had a Sten gun, maybe...

Rita: You made the right choice by running away. What did they do?

Sheriff: They yelled: "Surrender", but I was already running like the wind.

Rita: Of course

Sheriff: You see, Miss, "Surrender!" is a word that makes anybody's blood freeze. No exceptions. But there are people who can react, who are able to defrost their blood and save themselves. And there are those who cannot and are frozen and are fu... doomed.

Rita: Unbelievable! But can blood really freeze?

Sheriff: Just like the water in the farmyard on New Year's Eve. By the way... I was motionless for a second but then I started running, and what a fast run!

Rita: And the people behind you were shooting at you?

Sheriff: Of course!

Rita: Yesterday morning? It's strange I didn't hear the shooting from here.

Sheriff: It was on the slope on the other side. And then it happened in the wood, and it's incredible how the wood imprisons the noises...

Rita: And then?

Sheriff: And then I lost them. I was running very fast, I was running at sixty miles an hour! I was only terrified of a possible hitch on the road.

Rita: And the tear?

Sheriff: I was about to be shot at. Discarding the blows I ended up against that famous branch with long thorns. The gunfire stopped and I tried to jump on the road, but I got caught.

Rita: It must have been terrible.

Sheriff: Then I ripped... luckily the thorn gave way. If it had forced me to give her a second rip....

Rita: Of course you are special boys. If you weren't special, you wouldn't do the job that you do. Here is his jacket. Mended as best as I could do it.

Sheriff: I see from here that it is a perfect job.

Rita: But you miss the buttons here, all of the buttons.

Sheriff: I know, but I have already bothered you so much.

Rita: Not at all. The buttons have their importance.

Sheriff: Tell me about it. I've been marching against the wind for dozens of nights and I have to hold my jacket with my hand. But the damn wind still blows through and on top of that it freezes my hand. Don't go too crazy. Sew only two, up here. Any two buttons, even chipped ones.

N1: A head cloaked in a black balaclava appears at the window, it disappears. Moments later the door bursts open wide and a sergeant, armed with a modified submachine gun, rushes on Sheriff

N2: They both scream, short and unintelligible screams.

N3: A lieutenant enters, with a machine gun and binoculars on his chest, and a leather aviator helmet on his head

Sergeant You're done for, partisan

Sheriff I'm not a partisan

Lieutenant If you're not a partisan, what are you?

Sheriff I'm...nothing

Lieutenant You'd like that, wouldn't you? Be nothing...

Sergeant How many of our men did you kill?

Lieutenant You were having fun with your little slut, weren't you?

S2 You know what we're gonna do to you right now, don't you?

Sheriff You can't hurt me

Sergeant We'll shoot you, bastard!

Sheriff You can't! You've found me unarmed!

Lieutenant You were armed, damn coward. It's just that you saw us and you threw your weapon away

S2 You 've hid it!

Sheriff I didn't have any weapons on me, I've never had

Sergeant Blast murderer!

Sheriff Look for my weapon, and if you find it, you're allowed to shoot me

Lieutenant: Search! Not outside, in here, inside!

Sheriff: If you happen to find it, I authorize you to execute me

Lieutenant: Look around

Sheriff: Search for as long as you wish, you'll only find needles and thimbles

Lieutenant: Shut up!

N1: It is at this point that the sergeant pulls out his gun and throws it flat towards the soldier. He receives it skillfully in the palm of his hand, without a noise.

N2: Afterwards he slips it under the chairs and after a few seconds he acts as if he has just found it under the pedal

Sf1: Lieutenant, it was under the pedal!

Sheriff: Ah, you bastard!

Sf1: A Beretta 9

Lieutenant: Now you're dead

Sheriff: Ah, Damn you!

Lieutenant: Outside, in the farmyard!

Sheriff: Bastards!

Sheriff: Ah ba....

Sheriff: We'll meet again

Sergeant: In hell maybe, but as for now you're the one who's going