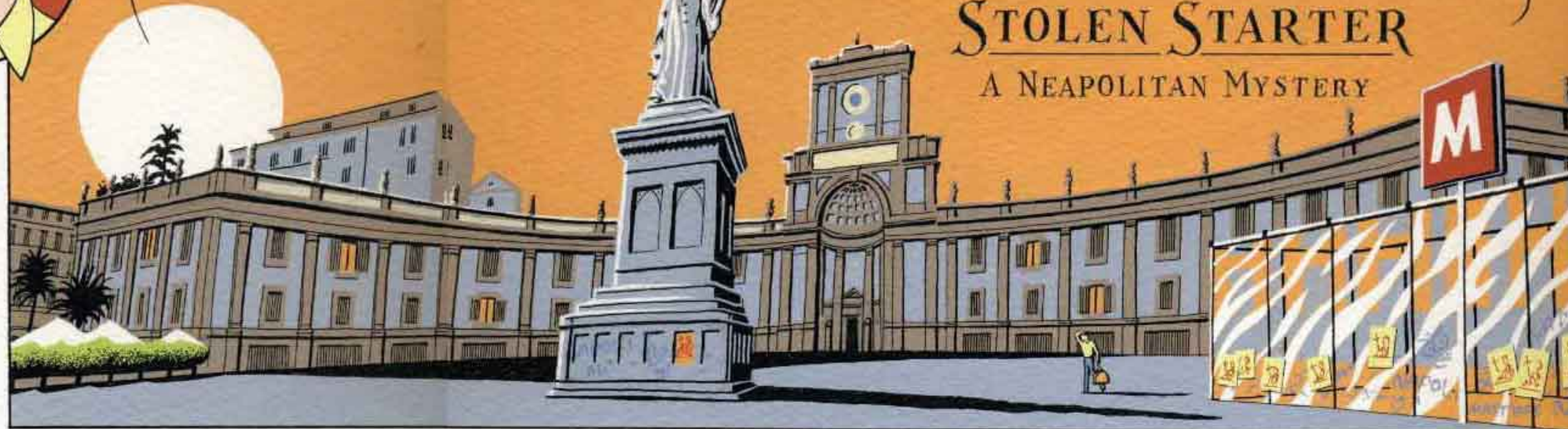


PRESENT
THE CASE OF THE
STOLEN STARTER
A NEAPOLITAN MYSTERY

HI, I'M TOM.
I'VE JUST ARRIVED
IN NAPLES AFTER
MONTHS DREAMING
OF THE PERFECT
NEAPOLITAN PIZZA...

MADE FROM THE BOUNTY OF
CAMPANIA'S VOLCANIC
SOIL... KNEADED BY
NEAPOLITAN
KNUCKLES... AND
SERVED WITH
SOUTHERN ITALIAN
ATTITUDE.



EVEN AT DAWN, PIAZZA DANTE IS HOT AS A
PIZZA OVEN. I CROSS VIA ROMA TO **BAR MEXICO**
FOR MY RITUAL MACCHIATO.



SALVE,
TOM!



MY FRIEND ALBERTO LETS
ME USE HIS SCOOTER
EVERY TIME I VISIT.



ZUCCHERATO?
(SWEETENED?)
AMARO.
(BITTER)



I SPEED THROUGH THE CHAOTIC TRAFFIC, PAST BASSI — FIRST-FLOOR FLATS WHERE LIFE SPILLS ONTO THE STREETS.



NFFFSSSS!

PO-POM!

scrrrrp

GULG!

CUPS ARE HEATED IN THE
GREAT MACHINE'S HOT
WATER RUNOFF, SO YOUR
SHOT STAYS SCALDING.



I DON'T MIND A SPOT OF
DANGER, BUT UNLIKE THIS
CITY'S INHABITANTS, I TRY
TO PROTECT MY MOST
IMPORTANT ASSET.

IN NAPLES, ONE FEELS
DRAWN TO SARTORIAL
SPLENDOR. SO MY
NEXT STOP IS THE BEST
TIE SHOP IN THE WORLD
— YES, THE WORLD.

AND IT OPENS AT 6:30 EVERY MORNING, JUST IN
CASE YOU NEED NEW NECKWEAR ON THE WAY TO WORK.

SEVEN FOLDS
OF THE FINEST
ENGLISH
SILK

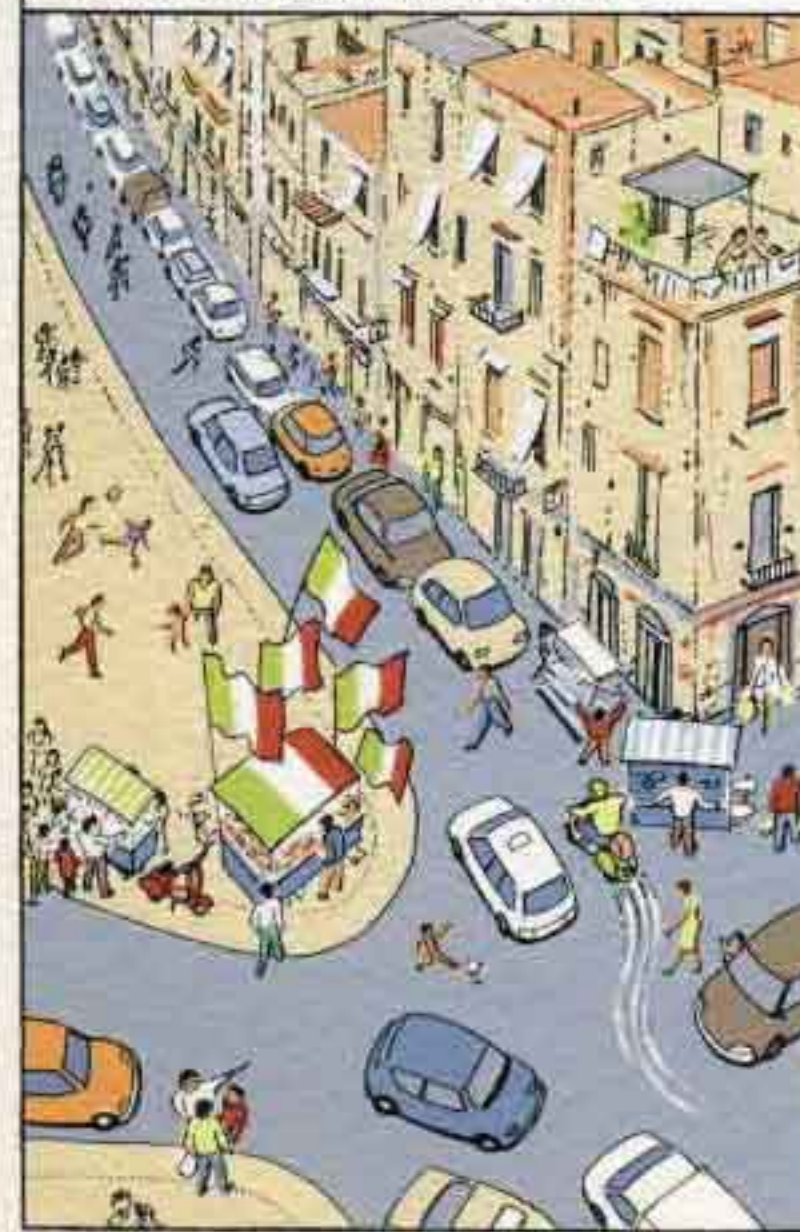
BELLISSIMO!!

WHAT'S MORE, THEY UNVEIL A
NEW COLLECTION EVERY WEEK.

NOW I CAN HEAD OFF
TO PIZZERIA ADDÒ
RICCIO, IN SANITÀ.



SANITÀ IS SITUATED IN A DEEP RAVINE
BETWEEN PIAZZA DANTE AND THE GARDENS
OF CAPODIMONTE. SOME SAY THAT THE
STEEP RIDE DOWN IS A DESCENT INTO HELL.
BUT TO ME SANITÀ IS NAPLES. IT'S THE
MOST INTENSELY COMMUNAL PLACE IN
THE CITY, MAYBE ON EARTH.



STONE COLD!
FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN
EIGHTY YEARS

WELCOME,
TOM— WE HAVE
A PROBLEM.

SOMEONE
TOOK MY DOUGH!
NO STARTER, NO
PIZZA, GUYS.
THE FAMILY
HISTORY—STOLEN!

MEET ALBERTO, GRAFFITI ARTIST, RAPPER
IN NEAPOLITAN DIALECT AND APPRENTICE
PIZZAIOLO TO HIS UNCLE RICCIO.

EACH EVENING, NEAPOLITAN PIZZAIOLI CARRY
OVER A FIST OF UNUSED DOUGH AS A
STARTER FOR THE NEXT DAY'S PIZZAS. THIS
DOUGH CONTAINS LIVING YEAST CULTURES.
THUS, A TRUE NEAPOLITAN PIZZA HAS AN
UNBROKEN LINEAGE, TRANSFERRED THROUGH
EACH DAY'S STARTER THAT STRETCHES BACK
ACROSS YEARS OF PIZZA-MAKING.



HOLD ON, ZIO. WHO STOLE YOUR STARTER?

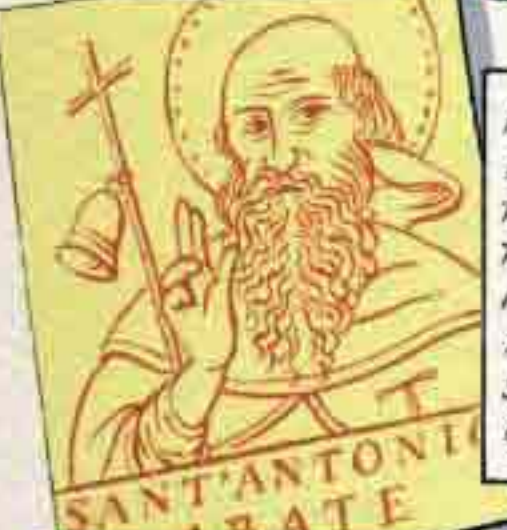
MY GRANDFATHER, GOD REST HIS SOUL, WILL NEVER FORGIVE ME. OUR PIZZA PIE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.

I'LL TELL YOU WHO STOLE IT! A LOUDMOUTH FROM THE MERCATO SANT' ANTONIO ABATE.

HE'S BEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE ALL THE PIZZA-MAKERS IN NAPLES THAT HIS SAINT—SANT' ANTONIO ABATE—SHOULD BE OUR PATRON. MY FAMILY'S ALWAYS WORSHIPPED A DIFFERENT SAINT. NOW HE WANTS US TO CHANGE.

PAY FOR A POSTER, GIVE TO HIS SOCIETY, LINE HIS THIEVING POCKET. IT'S NOTHING SHORT OF BLACKMAIL.

IF I DON'T SWITCH I'LL NEVER GET MY STARTER BACK!



NEAPOLITAN RELIGIOUS FERVOR FOCUSES ON THE FIGURE OF THE PATRON SAINT. THERE SEEMS TO BE A SAINT FOR EVERY TRADE, NEIGHBORHOOD AND PERSONAL PROBLEM. BUT THIS IS NAPLES, SO THERE'S NO CONSENSUS ON WHICH SAINT DOES WHAT.

I COULD GO AFTER HIM, BUT THEY'D KNOW FROM MY ACCENT THAT I'M FROM A DIFFERENT QUARTIERE. WHAT WE NEED IS THE PERFECT STRANGER: TOM, AMICO MIO...

WHERE SHOULD I START?

I BEGIN MY SEARCH FOR THE STARTER THIEF IN THE **MERCATO SANT'ANTONIO ABATE**. THIS MARKET IS WITHIN THE HISTORICAL CENTER OF NAPLES. BUT HERE, HISTORY IS NEVER DEAD. FISHERMEN HAWK THEIR CATCH ON TOP OF ANCIENT RUINS. STORIED PORTALS FROM ROMAN TIMES ARE FILLED WITH TCHOTCHKE SALESMEN. A NEGOTIATION OVER THE PRICE OF A TOMATO CAN LOOK LIKE A CENTURIES-OLD BLOOD FEUD. LIFE IS THEATER. THE STREET IS THE STAGE. AND IF YOU CAN'T LAUGH AT YOURSELF, YOU'D BETTER TAKE THE FIRST TRAIN TO ROME.

STREET-SIDE SHRINES WERE THE FIRST STREETLIGHTS IN NAPLES—THE ONLY WAY TO DETER CRIMINALS FROM KNOCKING OUT THE LIGHTS.

NAPLES IS THE CATHOLIC IDOLATRY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD, WITH ITS OWN HOLY TRINITY:

- **TOTO**—THE CITY'S GREAT MOVIE STAR CLOWN.
- **MARADONA**—THE ARGENTINE SOCCER STAR WHO LED NAPOLI IN ITS 1980s HEYDAY.
- **MAMMA**—NEEDS NO EXPLANATION.

PIZZA FRITTA! WHADDAYA WANT IN IT?

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING.

DEEP-FRYING MAY BE OUT OF STYLE IN SOME HEALTH-CONSCIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD, BUT DON'T TELL THAT TO THE NEAPOLITANS.



SIGNORA, MY GRANDFATHER SENT ME TO NAPLES TO FIND OUT ABOUT HIS PATRON SAINT, SANT' ANTONIO ABATE. ANY IDEA WHERE I CAN FIND THE SAINT'S SOCIETY TO MAKE A DONATION.

DON PASQUALE'S YOUR MAN. ASK AT TONY'S BARBERSHOP ROUND THE CORNER.

GRAZIE, SIGNORA.

AIR-CONDITIONING HERE. STAY COOL FOR JUST ONE EURO.



THE TRIPPERIE (TRIBE STORES) OF CENTRAL NAPLES ARE A REMINDER OF THE DAYS WHEN YOU HAD TO EAT EVERYTHING JUST TO STAY ALIVE.



SIGNORA, I'M LOOKING FOR DON PASQUALE. I WANT TO GIVE MONEY TO SANT' ANTONIO. KNOW WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM?

TONY

MOVE WITH A SWIFT AND STEADY STROKE, NINO. THE CUSTOMER WILL TRUST YOU WITH HIS LIFE.

AAAGH!

GOT YOU! YOU JUST BROKE YOUR CHERRY NINO!

HI FELLAS. DON PASQUALE HERE?

I'M HERE FROM AMERICA TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE SANT' ANTONIO ABATE SOCIETY FOR MY GRANDFATHER. I HEAR THE DON'S MY MAN.

WHO'S ASKING?

CHECK THE MARKET FIRST. HE SHOPS EARLY TO GET THE VERY BEST MOZZARELLA DI BUFALA.

DON PASQUALE? THAT CON MAN? HE'LL BE IN PROCIDA DIVING FOR HIS MAMMA'S PRECIOUS POLPETTI (BABY OCTOPUS)

STRAIGHT TO PROCIDA

CAPRI'S FOR BRITS. ISCHIA'S LIKE A PROVINCE OF GERMANY. BUT PROCIDA IS RESOLUTELY ITALIAN. THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED ISLAND IN THE MED, FOR CENTURIES IT HAS SENT ITS YOUNG MEN TO SEA.

IT'S JUST THIRTY MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN NAPLES BY ALISCAFO—THE FAST HYDROFOIL.

JUST TEN MINUTES' WALK FROM THE FERRY TERMINAL ON PROCIDA IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SQUARE IN ALL OF ITALY — LA PIAZZA DEI MARTIRI.



PROCIDA HAS ITS OWN CHURCH TO SANT' ANTONIO ABATE—AND A POSTER OR TWO.



CAN I JOIN YOU FOR A DIVE?
SURE, GRAB SOME GEAR.



EVEN UNDERWATER, YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE CULT OF THE DEAD. A YOUNG DIVER FROM NAPLES DIED IN A CAR CRASH. HIS FAMILY WANTED TO HONOR HIM WITH A SHRINE SO THEY SUBMERGED IT AT THE DIVE SITE HE LOVED MOST.



DAMN! I WANTED TO TALK TO DON PASQUALE. WHERE'S HE HURRYING OFF TO?

HE'S ALWAYS RUSHING BACK WITH THOSE POLPETTI FOR HIS MAMMA'S TRATTORIA IN THE QUARTIERE SPAGNOLI.



AND BACK TO NAPLES ON HIS TRAIL

THE VESPA'S NO GOOD TO ME NOW. I NEED TO PICK A LOCAL BRAIN... AND FAST.



NO, JUST RUN THE METER AND TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND THE FRESHEST BABY OCTOPUS IN THE QUARTIERE.



THANKS. BUT I WAS THINKING MORE OF A TRATTORIA.

THERE'S A TINY PLACE BEHIND THE HOSPITAL. NO NAME. THEY SELL OLIVE OIL OUT FRONT. SUBLIME POLPETTI THERE.

NEAPOLITANS MIGHT BE WORLD-CLASS HUSTLERS, BUT THEY KNOW THEIR FOOD.

THAT'LL BE NINE EUROS.



IT SAYS SIX-FIFTY!

AH, BUT THAT'S WITHOUT THE SAINT'S DAY SURCHARGE, FOREIGNER'S TAX AND A CONFESSIONAL SUPPLEMENT. C'MON, I'M CUTTIN' YOU A DEAL HERE.

TODAY'S YOUR LUCKY DAY—HERE'S SEVEN EUROS.

TRATTORIA CASILLO ENZO IS HIDDEN BEHIND A VINI E OLI SHOP. A PIZZERIA IS A MAN'S WORLD. THE TRATTORIA IS A FAMILY AFFAIR, AND TENSIONS CAN RUN HIGH. MAMMA'S IN THE KITCHEN, HER SON WAITS BUSY TABLES...



...AND PAPA SULKS OUT ON THE STREET.

WITNESSING AN OEDIPAL DRAMA IS THE PRICE FOR EATING FOOD THIS GOOD.



YOU WON'T FIND THE ESSENCE OF NAPLES IN PRICELY RESTAURANTS.



YOU'LL FIND IT HERE, WHERE THE SIMPLEST, FRESHEST INGREDIENTS



ARE TRANSFORMED INTO MASTERPIECES WITH A MINIMUM OF FUSS.

MAMMA, IT'S FOR OUR OWN GOOD. HELL PROTECT THE TRATTORIA. WE NEED TO PUT UP A POSTER.



I PROTECT MY OWN TRATTORIA, THANKYOU. GET BACK TO WORK!

I'VE SPOTTED A WEAKNESS I CAN EXPLOIT—MAMMISSIMO. IN OTHER WORDS, EXCESSIVE DEVOTION TO YOUR MAMMA.



DON PASQUALE, SIT DOWN. A FRIENDLY WORD IN YOUR EAR.

LISTEN, I WON'T BUST YOUR LITTLE SAINT SCAM, BUT I WANT ADDO RICCIO'S STARTER BACK. GIVE IT TO ME NOW AND I WON'T TELL YOUR MAMMA WHAT YOU'RE UP TO.



HE HANDS OVER A KEY TO A BOX IN THE CENTRAL POST OFFICE. FORTUNATELY, MY VESPA ISN'T TOO FAR AWAY, AND I'M OFF AGAIN.



THE POST OFFICE IS A WORK OF FASCIST MODERNIST GRANDEUR.



FIRE UP THAT OVEN, RICCIO!



THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I'LL ACCEPT AS PAYMENT.

THE CRUST IS THIN AND CHARRED
THE DOUGH IS A LITTLE CHEWY. NEVER CRISP.
ALWAYS EAT WITH A KNIFE AND FORK...



THE CHEESE ISN'T BUFFALO MOZZARELLA, IT'S FIOR DI LATTE. PIZZAIOLI CLAIM IT'S BETTER BECAUSE IT PRODUCES LESS LIQUID. IT'S ALSO FAR CHEAPER.



GENTLEMEN, HERE'S A MIRACULOUS MAN—SAN TOMMASO, THE ONE TRUE PATRON SAINT OF THE PIZZA OVEN. HE WILL PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS, SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH AND PROSPERITY...



ZERIA Addo Riccio