

Gli imbianchini non hanno ricordi
Housepainters Have No Memories

Widow: Coming, coming... Who is it?

Painter: The painter, Madam. Is this the place we're supposed to come to?

Widow: I wasn't really expecting painters. I was expecting decorators.

Painter: What for?

Widow: What do you mean...but you're also decorators, aren't you?

Painter: Um...I don't know...you'd better ask my boss.

Widow: Oh, very well...where is your boss?

Painter: He'll be here soon...wait for him here.

Widow: At last! That gentleman who...who's at the other end of the ladder told me that you...are you the boss?

Boss: Yes, I am.

Widow: Are you also decorators?

Boss: I bet that rascal told you we weren't!

Widow: Well... he didn't say yes and he didn't say no.

Boss: On the contrary, we are....hold the ladder for a moment...I'll just have a few words with him...

Widow: But what are you doing?... I've never carried a ladder...

Boss: But it's not difficult. Naturally you mustn't think it's a ladder or else you'll say 'My God, ladders are heavy.'

Painter: Did you call me?

Boss: What did you tell that woman?

Painter: But I didn't tell her anything...she asked me if we were decorators, and I really didn't know what to say...

Boss: Ah, you didn't...how many times must I tell you that whatever they ask , we can do it!

Painter: But we're not decorators...

Boss: And we are housepainters? What cheek!...the first time in a week that we find a client, you create problems...I don't know... we'll see...who knows...

Painter: Ok...ok...don't get angry...I'll say 'yes'...where is that lady?

Boss: On the other end of the ladder.

Painter: Oh...take it, I'll talk to her...

Boss: Yes, hurry up and don't do anything else foolish!...

Painter: Welcome back... I've just spoken to my boss ...he said 'yes'.

Widow: I'm pleased... but don't you think it'd be better if you took this?

Painter: Oh, yes... it is better... sorry...

Widow: Well then, seeing you are also decorators... there are those two curtains to come down and two more to go up... they have to be cut up... can you do that?

Painter: Of course... we can do everything... everything...!

Widow: Good... but this ladder seems too long... will it fit in here?...

Painter: Well... I suppose we could cut some of it off... but... maybe it'll fit...

Widow: Of course... you're more experienced than I am in these things. You understand... I'm just a woman...

Painter: Ha! Ha! Ha! I'd understood that immediately... from your necklace...

Widow: Very well... as for your fee... how much for two curtains?... you see, I'm a poor widow and I can't afford very much...

Painter: You're a widow?

Widow: Yes.

painter: Me too!

Widow: You're a widow?

Painter: No... I'm a widower...

Widow: Of course, it's a terrible thing to be left alone... you do understand... I hope you'll give me a fair price...

Painter: Yes... but you'll have to talk to my boss about the price..

Widow: Is he a widower too?

Painter: No, he's not...

Widow: What a pity!

Painter: But his wife is....

Widow: His wife!? But when did he die? A moment ago, he was standing here and he didn't seem...

Painter: No... his wife is a widow, but of her first husband... my boss has nothing to do with it... he'll do you a good price, though...

Gentleman: Good day, Signora Lucia. How are you?

Widow: Oh, Signor Milvio....Why are you holding that ladder?

Gentleman: I don't know. I was coming down the stairs... and some guy asked me to hold it for a while... he asked me where the bathroom was, and then went upstairs...

Widow: Oh, you shouldn't have bothered... you're a thousand lire short...

Gentleman: Really? Hasn't the fee always been...?

Widow: Yes... but we've had to put the prices up...we've had a lot of expenses... or at least, we will have them... as you can tell by this ladder... I've called in one of the best decorators... I want this establishment to become a jewel...

Gentleman: Well...it's already most lovely just as it is. I suggest that you don't change it... it would lose this welcoming, cosy feel... You wouldn't believe it, but every time I come here, I think of my youth, when I lived in the country... the time of my first loves... but let's not talk about these things... memories are always painful...

Widow: Oh... don't talk like that... that's not true... memories are the only joys that hold our lives together... at least for me... I can truly say that I live on memories...at times I'm even afraid to open the windows... I fear that part of what still lives in this room will fly away... and be lost forever... So I open them as little as possible.

Gentleman: Yes, you can tell that... Oh... I'd totally forgotten about him... But you know that he seems alive...?

Widow: Yes, it really looks like him.

Gentleman: You bet! For a wax dummy, it's uncanny how much it looks like him.

Widow: Unfortunately, it's always a dummy... dear Giorgio... do you remember? He was always here... it was his favourite spot... and now he's no longer here... he lives only in my memories... sometimes I imagine that it's still him... I sit on his knee, and talk to him for hours and I seem to go back in time... he seems to listen and answer me... you have no idea how happy this house once was... it was the happiest house in town.

Gentleman: Well, in many ways, it still is!!!

Boss: Wow! What a beautiful bathroom you have upstairs! That bathroom is a dream! Yes, it really is beautiful.

Gentleman: My good man, what about this?

Boss: Ah! Thankyou... I'm sorry. Well, Madam, tell me what we have to do, so we can get started.

Widow: Wait a moment... I'll see this gentleman out and be right with you. This way, Signor Milvio... Thankyou for visiting us... and remember, we want to see you here much more often.

Boss: Now then... where will we put this?... Aldo....Aldo, come in here... there, I knew it... he's disappeared again, damn....

Painter: Wait a minute...!

Boss: Of course, I'm always waiting for you...! Come here right now... where the hell are you?

Painter: Eh... !?

Boss: Who is this? Did you bring him in with you?

Painter: No,.. Oh... I'm sorry, Sir.... are you hurt?... Oh, my God! That's just what we needed... come on, Sir... it's nothing... just a bump... but it'll pass in a minute... it's just the shock and than nothing else... Giovanni we've killed him...

Boss: You've killed him... let me see... what was he doing just there...? Looks like a fatal concussion... there's nothing to be done... can't you see...? he's already the colour of wax...

Painter: What do we do now...? Giovanni... let's run away...

Boss: Great thinking! And how would that help... they know that we were here... they'd catch us immediately... rather... do you know him...? I feel as if I've seen him before...

Painter: Yes... if it wasn't for the moustache and the glasses... I'd almost say... I wonder...?

Boss: I know who he looks like! He looks like you... you can really consider yourself lucky...

Painter: What do you mean? Why is it lucky to kill someone who looks like me?

Boss: I'll tell you why. Grab hold of his legs and lift him up... Now go upstairs... take him into the bathroom that's up there... undress him and put on his clothes....

Painter: But why should I steal his clothes? So after I get a life sentence for killing him, they'll also put me in jail as a thief...

Boss: Don't be afraid... They won't be able to do anything to you, once you're dead...

Painter: What...!? But I don't want to die...

Boss: Try to understand... First put on his clothes, and then dress him in yours... Then we'll stage an accident... and everyone will believe that the dead man is him and not you

Painter: Of course...! And then I'll be able to claim workers compensation... I mean, not me, because I'll be dead... but my family can claim the money... yes, and God knows how happy that'll make them...! Giovanni...!!!

Boss: What now?

Painter: Giovanni, no! I won't give them that satisfaction. No, I'm not dying.

Boss: OK then, so you'd prefer a life sentence.... Get going... move yourself, and give me a hand.

Painter: Here it is.

Boss: And another thing... Upstairs, in the bathroom, you'll find a razor... Shave off his moustache... and you, instead ...

Painter: I'll let one grow.

Boss: Aldo, where are you?

Painter: I'm here.

Boss: But where are you, Aldo?

Painter: Still in my place...

Boss: You idiot!

Painter: But you asked me to give you a hand...

Boss: Come here and help me... No, don't help me, I'll do it myself. I was saying: Up in the bathroom, you'll find a razor... shave off his moustache and you, instead....

Painter: I'll grow one!

Boss: No, I'll paint one on you. Get going, upstairs.

Painter: I'm going.

Anna: Hi, there...! You're the decorator, aren't you?

Boss: Yes, I'm the decorator.

Anna: It was time the Signora did something with this mausoleum... Oh, my goodness... where's Giorgio...? Excuse me... when you came in, did you notice a....

Boss: Yes... He was here.... But then... I don't know... he probably went out for a while...

Anna: He went out...!? But don't be silly.... someone must've come to collect him

Boss: Oh, yes, that's it! Now I remember... a friend of his came... to collect him...

Anna: A friend...? Ah, yes, the Signora's friend.... The restorer... but just look where she's wasting her money

Boss: Oh... yes... it takes all types... But... who was that gentleman... who was sitting where you're sitting now?

Anna: The master, the Signora's husband.

Boss: What a handsome man, ehi?!

Anna: That's true, and also a real rogue, as we all knew him when he was alive.

Boss: Why...? When he was alive...?

Anna: Yes, because... he's dead!

Boss: Ah... that idiot mate of mine... he gave himself away!

Anna: Poor Signora, how she suffered... She was almost driven mad with grief...

Boss: I can imagine... but it was just a tragic accident...

Anna: It was really a release... We should all be grateful to you...!

Boss: You're welcome, I'm sure... If we can be of any assistance... if you want someone "bumped off", just call on us...

Anna: Oh, you don't understand... I'm suffering too... I loved him also. Everyone loved that rogue! But not to the point of wanting him embalmed, as she wanted to do....

Boss: She wanted him embalmed? Oh!

Anna: Luckily, we managed to convince her to make a wax dummy, instead....

Boss: A wax... He was made of wax...!! Oh!

Anna: Yes, but always finding that... "thing" under your feet, really gives me the creeps.

Boss: When did he die... that "thing" that... gave your feet the creeps?

Anna: Giorgio? Three years ago!

Boss: He died three years ago, that Giorgio... that creep under your feet?

Widow: Anna.... Anna.... You're wanted now...

Anna: Coming! Do excuse me, won't you...

Painter: How do I look? This time you can't complain... I've done well, haven't I?

Boss: What do you mean 'well'...? You're a blithering idiot... How come you didn't realize that guy wasn't alive?

Painter: Exactly! I knew immediately that he was dead, didn't I?

Boss: What do you mean... alive... dead...? That's a dummy... a wax dummy...

Painter: What?

Boss: Yes, it's an exact copy of the husband of the Signora... he died three years ago... that "creep under your feet"!

Painter: OK, then, but we weren't here three years ago! So... it wasn't us who killed him... thank goodness...!

Boss: Thank goodness, my foot! Now you have to go upstairs straight away and bring him back down again... put his clothes back on him...

Painter: ...and his moustache, too....

Widow: I'm sorry, my good man, but I've had people to attend to, and so.

Boss: Stay still, don't move... Please, madam, there's no need to explain...

Widow: Have you been admiring my Giorgio...? Oh, how thoughtless of me, I've forgotten the curtains... I'll get them at once...

Boss: Quickly... before she comes back... where are the paints?

Painter: Over there... but why... what are you going to do?

Boss: Dress you up as Giorgio... give you a moustache, and so on...

Painter: But why?

Boss: We don't have time to get the real Giorgio... so I'll turn you into a dummy... There'll be trouble if the Signora realizes what we've done! We'll be thrown out like a couple of old brooms and... goodbye work...! Goodbye money! Stay still...

Painter: But you're tickling me... eeeheeeeeheetchoo!

Boss: You idiot! Put these glasses on... you brought them down, I hope...

Painter: Of course... There.... how do I look?

Boss: Great...! Wait, wait... Giorgio had a bitter crease here... just like this...

Painter: Yes, but not too bitter, please...

Boss: No, it's not... and now I beg you, when the Signora returns, don't do anything... and don't breathe!

Painter: What do you mean, don't breathe? Not even through my nose?

Boss: Not even through your nose!

Painter: Excuse me, but if I don't breathe through my mouth or my nose...

Boss: Give me a break, will you...! Why do you need to breathe through your nose...? There are deep-sea divers who go dive kilometres under water....

Widow: What are you doing... With that paintbrush...?

Boss: The paintbrush? Ah... I was seeing if... You know... I was just... I noticed that he had a crooked moustache and so...

Widow: Oh, are you also restorers?

Boss: Well... restoring is my real profession... I noticed it was fading a bit... and so...

Widow: Ah... good... I was waiting for my friend who works in this kind of restoration work... but since you can do the job... let me see what you've done so far... Ahhhhhh...!!!

Boss: You idiot, help me. Can't you see that she has fainted?

Painter: But you told me not to move...

Boss: No, don't move...! The lady is coming to...

Widow: Aahh! *Pardon*...

Boss: No, no... the *Pardon* is all mine...

Widow: Oh, my God... I had the feeling that he was alive... you've done a brilliant job... you are the best restorer I've ever come across...

Boss: Well... you know... in my own way, and modestly...

Widow: No, no, you're truly an artist, a great artist. Take it... you truly deserve it... you've given me an unimaginable gift...

Boss: No, it's too much.... After all, it took only three or four brush-strokes to restore his... moustache...

Widow: But I insist! Please accept it... you've truly done me a favour...

Boss: No... it's too much... I'm embarrassed...

Widow: Very well, I won't look...

Boss: Well, if you really insist, thank you... I will accept this money for touching up the moustache. It's the most I've been paid for a moustache.

Widow: Blast...! I dropped the money... I wonder where it's gone.

Boss: Rogue, thief, give back that money or I'll smash your face.

Painter: No way... why don't you give her your money?

Boss: Give back the money or I'll bash your head in.

Widow: What happened? What are you doing?

Boss: With the brush? Without the brush? Ah, I was skirmishing with a blowfly on Giorgio's nose...I was saying: "Scram, you ugly fly!" Now I'll catch the fly on Giorgio's nose... Look how you catch flies... you place your hand like a small shovel and then you say... one, two, three... zap! Damn, it escaped!

Widow: But I can't see it...Oh I can see you've found my money...thank you.

Boss: But really...well...yes...I found it under the armchair...see if it's all there...

Widow: Heaven forbid...I can trust a person like you...it's obvious you are a gentleman...I have experience...Giorgio was a gentleman, too...and maybe that is why he didn't have a lot of luck.

Boss: Well...I wouldn't say so...wouldn't you say that being the dead husband of a widow like you really suits him...it's a real stroke of luck?

Widow: Very gallant of you...In any case, I can really say that I've never caused him any disappointment... any grief...not once ...but he deserved it...you know...he was a marvellous and intelligent man. Look at him, you can clearly see that he must have been very different from other men.

Boss: Turn his head the other way, he gives me the creeps.

Widow: He was a thinker...he wanted to write of writing a book on the habits and customs of Oriental civilisations but he didn't make it in time...Look around if anyone's coming!

Boss: Who? Where...? But what are you doing?

Widow: I'm putting away this money before...you see, when he was alive...he managed the housekeeping money ...and even now I feel compelled to give it to him...it's safer with him ...no one would think of looking here.

Boss: Oh yes, very safe...it's like putting it in the bank

Widow: Damn, it's already a quarter past six...I have to give him his injection right away.

Boss: His injection? What kind of injection?

Widow: As you know there are many ravenous insects that love to eat wax...moths, bugs etc. Now, if I didn't give him a daily dose of pesticide, in less than a week my poor Giorgio would fall apart...

Boss: Of course, because Giorgio is made of wax. Ah, ah...oh yes, you must give him his pesticide injection...what a great idea!

Widow: Exactly... I'll go and get the syringe.

Boss: Since he's made of wax, he must receive his pesticide injection...just for Giorgio made of wax... This is a new one...ah...ah!

Painter: But I'm not made of wax so she can give you an injection, because I'm off...

Boss: Wait...use your brains for once...don't make such a fuss for a small injection; you want to throw away all this dough! Think how lucky we are...look what we have in our hands...

Painter: First of all I'm the one who's lucky, but that doesn't mean I want to cop something else in some other place...See you!

Boss: Keep quiet, don't move.

Anna: Oh, hello again! Where is your friend?

Boss: Which friend?

Anna: Well, yes, the other decorator.

Sonia: For more than an hour he's been in the bathroom...maybe he's not feeling well?

Boss: Who, him...? He only feels unwell at the thought of work...that's for sure...every time there is something to do, he locks himself in the bathroom and you won't catch sight of him for hours!

Daina: Oh, but look how gorgeous our Giorgio looks today,...but what's happened to him?

Boss: I gave him a touch-up with the brush.

Sonia: My goodness... but if you're so good, you can give me a touch-up too...my God! He looks alive...move over, I want to cuddle him a bit too...

Daina: Not even in your dreams...and don't push, I was here first.

Sonia: Precisely...and now it's my turn...and don't treat him that way, because you're going to wreck him.

Anna: That's exactly what he deserves...that blasted dummy!

Sonia: Of course...look who's talking...you are still jealous...You wretch! You'll make me fall...

Daina: Who is a wretch? Take back what you said, or else...

Anna: Stop it...must you squabble like fish-crives over that "thingo"

Widow: At it again? You hussies...how many times have I told you ...get out, go back to your rooms...you are all fined. How disgraceful! Well, where has he gone now? Where were you?

Boss: I thought I was in trouble too.

Widow: Quick, help me! We need to be quick otherwise the time for the injection expires and it would create a big problem...what are you doing? Hold him up! Damn! Okay, then we will give it to him here. But, why have you turned him over? Come on, quick, put him back as he was, turn him around...

Boss: There you are, this way he won't move again. I would like to ask you something, madam: Who are those girls you fined a few minutes ago...your relatives who have to pay a fine?

Widow: In a certain way yes... they are my co-widows...

Boss: Your co-widows have to pay a fine?

Widow: Yes, my co-widows...who before Giorgio's death were my co-wives...in other words they were Giorgio's other wives...

Boss: The other co-wives?

Widow: Yes, I know it seems strange, but as I told you earlier, my husband was interested in studying Oriental civilisations... Unfortunately, Giorgio didn't have the means to go to Asia and study closely the habits and customs of those people. So, I had to reconstruct, as best as I could, an environment that would give him, if nothing else, the illusion to find himself among the Orientals, who, as you know, are polygamists.

Boss: The Orientals are polygamists... Oh, how gross are those Orientals... how polygamous, they are... Yes, they're great big polygamists!

Widow: I had to work hard to find girls prepared to share the dinner table...and everything else with other women...

Boss: I can imagine...

Widow: But in the end, I made it...

Boss: And how?

Widow: I bought a "pleasure palace", lock stock and barrel.

Boss: A "pleasure palace"... so those women are...

Widow: "Toy-Girls"...exactly... I know it's despicable and even a bit unusual... but still, my Giorgio had to continue his studies.

Boss: Of course, what wouldn't we do for culture...

Widow: That's right... and then they say that intellectuals are rotten and soft.

Boss: With all of those... do me a favour...

Widow: Now hold him still because I'm going to inject...

Boss: No... no... you cowards!

Widow: Exactly... the only trouble is that, those wretched women ended up falling in love with my Giorgio... so bye-bye domestic tranquillity... he had to die so they came to their senses... and went back to work, as they should.

Boss: Ehe-che... mum-my!

Widow: Oh, yes, they have to work as they used to... I can't keep them, you know... if they want to stay, as they say... they have to...

Boss: Ehaa-kee... dad-dy!

Widow: But I can see I'm annoying you with my conversation... I'm sorry, I'll leave you to it... see you soon...

Painter: I can't believe this place... eh... but why are you looking at me like that... now you're mad at me... what is it after all... you said it too, it's only a small injection... God you look awful... ok... sorry... I won't do it again, Giovanni, don't you feel well... maybe it's the injection... Oh my God... you are as cold as marble... wake up... don't do this... Giovanni... stare like that... but what the hell was in that syringe the widow-woman injected you with?

Dummy: I will tell you what was in that syringe.

Painter: Oh, my God... the dummy is alive...

Dummy: That injection was meant for me...

Painter: Yes, yes, I know... and I nearly copped it...

Dummy: And was it you who took me to the bathroom... and dressed me like this, and shaved my moustache...?

Painter: Yes, yes, it was me, because at the beginning I thought...

Dummy: It doesn't matter... I owe you my life, Sir...in fact if it wasn't for you, at this moment I would still be sitting on that chair, embalmed.

Painter: Embalmed? Ah, so then you are not the dummy of the dead man.

Dummy: No...I was never dead... I've been the victim of my wife's jealousy... it was she who embalmed me... to stop me from going to Morocco.

Painter: To Morocco? The stuffed dummy was going to Morocco?

Dummy: Exactly so! And then that evil woman faked an accident to make everyone believe I had died... so she could have me all for herself...

Painter: And what could she do with a dummy?

Dummy: You don't know women... they are the most selfish men alive... but my wife is an absolute monster! Just think, she kept me embalmed for three years...!

Painter: Three years? So, now my boss will stay embalmed for three years, too?

Dummy: Don't worry... those injections work for a maximum of 48 hours... if you don't get another one... as my wife used to do... every single day...

Painter: What can we do? If she comes to give him another injection, we are ruined... Giovanni... three years stuffed like that... we're going to starve!

Dummy: Is this his brush?

Painter: Yes, but what do you want to do with it?

Dummy: Very well... pick it up!

Painter: Ah, I understand... we'll make another dummy... ah, ah. Giovanni, now I'll have fun... I'll draw you a moustache like Giorgio's... a bitter crease here... Ah, ah, how cute you are!

Dummy: We are lucky, in my wardrobe I found this suit jacket, and now, if you don't mind do the same thing to me.

Painter: Short back and sides for the gentleman coming right up, the gentleman is served! Bless you!

Dummy: Bless you!

Painter: Thanks... but it wasn't me... I t was him...

Dummy: Impossible... he's embalmed...

Painter: He might be embalmed, but it was him... Look for yourself... see...?

Dummy: Do it again... Do it again... it's incredible... without knowing it, you have discovered the only cure for this hypnotic sleep...

Boss: Aaacchhooo...!

Painter: Yes, yes, keep going... bless you...!

Boss: Thanks... you are welcome... aacchhoo!

Painter: Wake up... come on boss, we're nearly there...

Boss: Eh...what happened? I can't move.

Painter: Don't be afraid, boss... it's just a passing paralysis.

Dummy: Quick, help him to stand up...He has to walk...

Painter: Yes, yes...be strong, boss... let's go for a walk.

Dummy: No, you stay here... and don't move...

Painter: Again! If that woman comes back in and decides to embalm me, too... of course, you can sneeze and perhaps...

Widow: Oh, my God... he's waking up. I must give him another injection... before he wakes up completely.

Painter: Eh, no... this time I'm really off. Damn it... where can I run to? Giovanni, I'm ruined! I'll hide behind here... let's hope she won't see me...

Boss: Thank you, I feel much better now... at least I can move. For a minute I had the impression... of being almost embalmed... but my

partner was here a little while ago... and now I can't see him anymore... where is he?

Dummy: I don't know... I begged him not to move... wait, I'll go and see if he has gone that way.

Boss: Yes, yes, go wherever you want, I am not moving from here... ohohi...

Widow: Damn, I got here too late...where has he gone? Oh good... there you are!

Painter: No, no I'm here!

Widow: What?... Who are you...? He's gone...! Where are you...?

Painter: Here I am... but I'm warning you, you're not sticking me again!

Widow: But my dear Giorgio... I'm doing it for your own good.

Dummy: Oh, yes! Who are you kidding...?!

Widow: Where did you come from?

Dummy: I'm not telling you.

Widow: But... but... what's going on? Giorgio, please... listen to me...

Boss: I'm listening to you, my dear... over here, I'm listening to you... see how I'm listening to you.

Widow: Oh, stop disappearing that way... you are driving me crazy...

Dummy: It's all your fault, my dear; all the injections you gave me have killed me... and now what you see in front of you is not your Giorgio... but his heavenly image.

Widow: Oh, no Giorgio... it's impossible...

Painter: Oh yes, my dear, that's the way it is... this time you can really say you *are* a widow... ahahah!

Boss: Ah, ah, you'll have to live with your memories... your ghastly memories that will haunt your nights...

Painter: Your sleep will be crammed with nightmares.

Widow: No, Giorgio, stop it... forgive me, I beg you...

All three: It's too late now...

Widow: Three Giorgios... Noo! This is too much...

Boss: She has fainted!

Painter: She's dead... feel how cold she is...

Dummy: Oh no, that would be too much... But, what are you doing, come on, old man, show some respect, after all she is *still* my wife...

Boss: Just as I thought, she injected herself...

Painter: Well, we each must have a turn at being dummies.

Dummy: Well done...now I'm the one who's going to have fun.

Painter: What if I give her a moustache.

Boss: For God's sake, no...! If she sneezed, that would be the end of it!

Dummy: How can I thank you?

Boss: Well, maybe there is a way...

Painter: What way?

Boss: Since we are three Giorgios... and our Giorgio has another *three* wives...

Painter: Of course! Share and share alike!

Dummy: But of course... we could...

All three (girls): Oh, Giorgio... one, two, three?...

Sonia: But how is this possible... before you were dead, and now you are *three*...

Other two girls: Three Giorgios?

Dummy: Don't be alarmed, dear ladies... the ways of divine providence are truly infinite!

All three girls: Oh! Giorgio...!