

MICHELE'S ORANGES (Italy-New York, 1901) by Vichi De Marchi

Translation Sample by Clarissa Botsford

Chapter Nine

It is not yet dawn and we are all out on deck as we will soon be putting in at the port of New York. Last night we packed our suitcases and washed, but you can't really tell we're clean. After weeks on board our clothes are stiff with dirt, as if they were made of cardboard. Our coats stink because we've been using them as blankets. Mum promises that when we get to New York she will buy us new clothes, if there is enough money that is.

"Can you see the stars? They don't look like the stars back home" my little brother, Giuseppe, says.

My other brother, Giovanni, is quick to answer back. "Of course not" he says. "Those are American stars. Can't you see how big they are?"

I am fed up with their stupid arguments. They never stop those two. The stars are the same everywhere, aren't they? And if they do change, at what point in the ocean do the American stars take over, and how can you recognize them? Are they bigger? Are there more of them? Do they shine brighter? Or all of those things at the same time?

After almost 20 days' crossing nobody has been able to answer any of these questions. The only thing I know for sure is that in the middle of the ocean the stars are bigger, and that is the only clue that they aren't the same stars as the ones back home in San Stino di Livenza.

"Kids, enough!" Mom says.

That's when I realize I don't have my rag doll with me. In the rush I left her behind on my bed in the cabin.

"Mom, my doll, I need to go back and get her! "

I run down the stairs, my heart pounding. What if someone has taken her? It would not be the first time something goes missing here. One man had all his money stolen and never found it again because nobody could really say whether the money was his. They don't write the name of the owner on money, right? But my doll? Who could be interested in my little rag doll? Only a young girl like me.

Luckily she's still there. Nobody noticed her. I hold her tight and whisper "thank you" in her ear. I don't know why I thank her, maybe because she waited for me...

Now I can go back up on deck and enjoy the few hours that are left before we arrive. I can watch the coast as it comes closer and closer and the blue sky as it gets brighter. I have butterflies in my tummy because I know I'll soon be seeing my father again.

On my way up to the deck I nearly jump with fright when I see Michele hurtling down the stairs. I think he realizes he's scared me.

"I was looking for you"

"Who, me?"

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“Yes you. I have something to tell you. But you must promise not to tell anyone else, not even your Mom or your brothers, okay?”

I nod.

“I’m not really 18, like I said I was. I’m only 13. But it’s a secret. Don’t tell anyone or you’ll be in trouble!”

“Why can’t you just say you are 13?”

“Because if I do they won’t let me off the boat in New York. Nobody less than 18 can come to America unless they’re with someone from their family. So cross your heart and swear you’ll keep my secret. If *he* finds out I told you he’ll beat me to death.”

I realize he’s talking about the man he traveled with. I Conjure up his angry glower and suspicious gaze. For the whole journey the man with the moustache kept himself to himself and never let Michele out of his sight.

“I must go now,” dark-eyed Michele says. He’s just a little boy after all, and knowing the truth was a relief. Turning back down the stairs he stops in his tracks and asks, “where are you going to stay when we arrive?”

“I don’t know. They call it Little Italy.”

“Maybe Sundays we could meet in one of the churches there. Do you go to church?”

“Of course I go!”

“I don’t, but I’ll come anyway”

I run up the stairs, my heart beating with excitement. I’ll go to church and sit through three Masses in a row if that’s what it takes to see him again. I want to know more about why he pretended to be 18 and about that horrible man who checks up on everything he does.

I can see the silhouette of my mother outlined against the gray sky. I realize she is still beautiful, her blonde curly hair blowing free from under her head scarf. She looks so soft and kind. I run up to her and hug her without saying a word, like I used to do when I was little, falling asleep by the fireside.

“It’s so beautiful out there,” I say.

She looks at the horizon and nods in agreement.

The ship is putting in at the East Coast port. On the other side of the river Hudson lies America. I screw up my eyes so that I can see coast more clearly.

“There’s the Statue of Liberty!” a sailor shouts, pointing at the huge figure. “And that over there is Ellis island.”

I have heard this name so many times on the lips of people who have never even crossed the ocean. They say Ellis Island is the golden gate of America. If you get past it you are lucky. You become American.

I imagined it as an island with a golden palace in the middle and I am a bit disappointed because all I can see in front of me is a square building in red brick with four towers, as gloomy as a prison.

“Is that where we’re going?” I ask my grandfather.

“Yes” he answers, but he sounds uncertain. He is exhausted after the long journey, as if the weeks spent on the ship had turned into years.

We have to wait before we can go ashore, giving way to passengers with first and second class tickets. Then to American citizens who had traveled with us in third class. Only then are we allowed to disembark, as one of the ship officers explained to us the night before, wishing us all good luck.

It is as if we have gone back to the beginning of our journey: the same confusion, the same fear of the unknown that filled me with dread at the port of Genoa.

We start disembarking, but only to clamber onto the boats waiting for us below. They are enormous and yet they look tiny compared to the steamship that has brought us this far.

The air is cold, though it is nearly the end of March, but there is nowhere to go and get warmed up.

"Can we go now?" Giuseppe asks. He can't wait to arrive.

“Of course, they are not keeping us here for nothing!” Giovanni rebuts.

But this time Giovanni is wrong. We wait for hours and hours. Then finally we get to move on to Ellis Island.

“If you get past the golden gate, America is yours.”

There's no gold in sight. All I can see are red bricks.

[...]

Chapter Fourteen

“Lauren Astrid.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Angela Ceccolin.”

“Yes, Sir.”

The teacher peers at the class through his thick lenses. With every name he calls out, he inspects our faces as if he wants to commit our features to memory. It is obvious he would be happier without *Michele's Oranges* by Vichi De Marchi, Translation Sample by Clarissa Botsford

us. Especially us Italians, as there are seven of us in a class of 30. At school we may all look the same, in our dark pinafores which never show the dirt, but everyone can tell we are Italian, first from our names and then from our faces.

Assunta, Concetta, and Rosaria's hair is black as ink, darker and curlier than the others'. My hair is blonde and curly, and I am really thin. There's no way I look American. Cecilia's skin is full of white blotches. The teacher says it's because of what we Italians eat, and that we should drink more milk.

"Lucky they give you a whole glass every day in American school" the teacher says, as if we were stealing it.

Even though I don't drink milk at home, Mom always sends us to school with our uniforms in order and our hair brushed. She's crazy about these things.

"Cleanliness always comes first if you want to be respected" she always says.

Grandpa Vittorio always says it's important to be respected and preserve your dignity, but the respect Mom is talking about feels different, worse somehow. Because of this matter of respect, I don't talk much in class about what I do at home, about my afternoons playing in the street, or how my Mom and Dad live. I don't know why, it's just the way I am. Anyway, being quiet is easy because I still speak very little English. Every day the teacher makes me copy lists of words into my note book.

"Make your handwriting nice" my teacher says. "At the end of the year there's a hand writing contest, and even if you have just come off the boat you still have to go in for it."

I like doing these exercises, because while I am copying the words I can daydream. First the words that begin with the letter A, then the ones that begin with B, and so on until I finish the alphabet. The next day I start over but with new words every time.

When the teacher asks me questions, though, I freeze and I know that everyone is laughing at me, except two Italian classmates who never open their mouths. When I play dumb my teacher jeers, "Angela Ceccolin, did you leave your tongue in Italy?"

Mom always makes everything sound easier than it is. "You'll see. You'll learn English in a flash," she says, but she never tries to say anything in English herself.

"I don't need to. Everyone speaks Italian here. Anyway I have you," she says pointing at the three of us. "You can speak for me. I never went to school and you have the chance now."

Dad never went to school either, but he speaks English. Admittedly, with a weird accent like all of the people in Little Italy who use words my teacher would never use. They say *giobba* instead of 'job', *tichetta* instead of 'ticket'. It seems to work because everyone understands.

"Tomorrow I want to see you with your uniforms clean and tidy!" The teacher ends every lesson with these words.

I grab my notebook and run to the door. I'm in a hurry to leave so I can see if Michele is outside.

Four days have already gone by since last Sunday when he appeared with his violin, and he still hasn't kept his promise. But I'm not worried. If he said he would come, sooner or later he will.

Outside the school gate there is no sign of Michele. I look around and start walking home slowly in case he is late. I give the other Italians in my class a wide berth because I don't want to walk home with them.

They're going to hate me but it's better this way. If Michele comes we will be free to talk. Giovanni and Giuseppe come home later than me because they lunch at school. I am two classes ahead of them so I get out early.

I go up the stairs to our apartment a little disappointed. Another wasted day. What is the point of going to school if I can't see Michele? My dashed hopes have not made me lose my appetite, though. I can't wait to eat.

As I come in, Mom greets me with a big smile on her face.

"Guess what?" she says.

I would like to guess, but today I am not in the mood.

"I have a job!"

"Really?" I'm so surprised I almost forget Michele for a second.

Mom suddenly looks ten years younger. She explains that her friend Ginetta found the job for her. She was from our village back home and works as a wet-nurse for a family in New York. She's always well-dressed and eats horsemeat every day, even though she can never go out because she has to nurse the newborn baby of these rich people who brought her over from Italy specially.

"They shipped her over," Mom tells me, "because Italians have the best milk and they are light skinned, which rich people like."

When my little brother Giuseppe hears this, he pipes up and says, "What has light skin to do with it? Is black skinned milk bad for you?"

"Of course not," Mom answered. "The baby is happier seeing a white breast, that's all!" Giuseppe looks perplexed by this answer.

The long and the short of Mom's story is that Ginetta's employer has these amazing hats and her milliner is looking for workers.

"Will you go and work in a factory?"

"No, I'll work at home. I have to make artificial flowers for ladies' hats. It's a job that requires nimble fingers and a good eye."

"How much will they pay you?"

"I don't know yet. I'm going today. The milliner's is close but I need to go with someone. Who speaks English round here? Not many of us."

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“Is Ginetta coming with you?”

“Ginetta isn’t allowed out. Maria’s coming. She knows the neighborhood and she already works as a seamstress. She can talk them into giving me a job. If all goes well, by the end of the year you will have a new dress.”

Mom straightens her skirt. It is the only one she has, but she has put on her Sunday blouse to make a good impression on her future employer, Mr. Weiss. She ties her hair into two braids and knots them on the top of her head as if they were a crown.

“Mom, now you look like you’re wearing a hat too” I laugh.

She runs down the steps to meet Maria, who lives in their apartment below us and who used to live in the Veneto region when she lived in Italy, high up in the hills.

It’s the first time I am alone in my new American house.

I like the idea, and open the windows wide so I can watch all the people on the streets coming and going.

[...]

Chapter Sixteen

Today Michele’s face is cleaner, but his clothes are as filthy as they were yesterday.

“Where is your violin?” I ask him as soon as I see him outside school.

I knew he would come, sooner or later.

He looks totally relaxed, as if he has time to spare.

“Today I’m a shoe shiner. I’m working with the violin tonight.”

I didn’t realize he played the violin to earn money.

It feels like the first time that Michele really wants to talk.

“Shining shoes is easy,” he says. “ All you have to do is polish them so hard that you can see your face in them.”

“But at your age you shouldn’t be working!” I say, thinking of the kind of conversations we have at home. “Here in America you’re supposed to go to school until you are 16. It’s the law.”

“Come on! Who’s checking anyway? New York is full of kids like me. People just pretend they don’t see us.”

“When you’re playing the violin there’s no way people won’t see you.”

“In the evening I’m careful. My boss told me to run if I see a policeman, because street musicians are banned.”

“So where do you play?”

“Outside restaurants, on the street, wherever there are people. Sometimes I play until late at night.”

Michele seems proud to live a grown-up life. I remember when we were back on the ship, when he lied about his age, and that scary man that was traveling with him.

“Tell me about the policemen on Ellis Island. How did you make them believe you were 18 years old?”

“Easy! I’m not stupid you know. I wasn’t traveling with my own papers, I took my brother’s, who is really 18 but will never be able to come to America because he has a screw loose.”

“What do you mean?”

“What I mean is he’s stupid and they would never want him here.”

They didn’t want my grandpa here either, I think to myself, remembering his eyes glazed over with exhaustion.

“Why couldn’t you come to America with your uncle, declaring your real age like we did?”

“What uncle?”

Michele looks at me quizzically. His eyes are so black they look like shiny stones and his solemn, surprised expression makes him look even more handsome. I am so curious to find out more about him that I try not to stare at him and look down at my feet instead. I’m afraid he’ll stop talking otherwise.

“You know, your uncle. The one that was on the ship with you!”

Michele bursts out laughing, louder than I’ve ever heard him laugh before.

“Did you really think that animal was my uncle?”

“Who is he then?”

“He’s my owner. He’s Italian too but he speaks good English. One day he introduced himself to my parents. He said he could take me on as an apprentice and train me if I went with him to New York. He said he would give me a violin to play and promised he would feed and clothe me.”

“And give you somewhere to stay?”

“Yes of course he offered me a place to sleep. In exchange he gave my parents some money. It wasn’t that much, but it wasn’t even that little for poor folks like us. All they had to do was sign a contract saying I have to work for him and give him all the money I earn for three years. If I don’t, or if I run away, break the violin, or pretend to get sick, my parents have to pay a kind of fine.”

I'm pretty sure my parents would never let me leave with a stranger, and they wouldn't let my brothers go either.

"Back home, what did your parents say?"

"Better you in America than all of us here dying of hunger."

A dark shadow crosses Michele's face, a bolt of summer lightning. Then he starts talking again as if what he's saying is totally normal.

"I'm not the only one. Where I live, at 45 Crosby St., there are six more kids like me."

"And they all work for him? For your pretend uncle?"

"Yes. It's his job. He finds kids and makes them work. Sometimes he finds them for other men too."

I realize that, instead of going towards my house, we are walking in the opposite direction. I'm going to be late, I think, and turn back. I'll tell Mom that I stopped to chat with the coal man. I'm suddenly hungry. To tell the truth I am always hungry.

"Have you eaten?" I ask Michele. He is thinner than I am, though his shoulders are wide and his clothes so baggy they look like an adult's.

"No, I only eat in the evening," he says, as if he didn't care.

Maybe he is ashamed he has nothing to eat. When I see him again I'll bring him some bread and cheese.

I hear the church bells ringing. It's already 2 o'clock. I should hurry back because it's getting late, but I don't tell Michele.

I soon discover he's late too.

"I need to go now. Wait for me tomorrow, I will come back and see you," he says smiling.

He walks away with long strides, his dark clothes dancing around him, filling with wind as if he were about to take flight.

Chapter Seventeen

"Angela, why are you taking your bread and cheese now? Eat it when you get back from school."

"No, Mom. I want to have it now while I'm walking to school."

I hope nobody in class smells the cheese. I wrap it up in a piece of paper and run out of the house so I am not late.

It's warmer now. Spring brightens up even the dusty streets of Little Italy.

Michele's Oranges by Vichi De Marchi, Translation Sample by Clarissa Botsford

I start copying my word list as soon as I get into class. I know quite a few words now, and have learnt a lot of new ones on the street listening to adult conversations. My teacher doesn't want to hear any of them. He says they are not real English, and that if I learn to speak like that I will always be a poor Italian and everyone will know that I am a bird of passage. That's what he calls me as he screws up his eyes, and cranes his neck forward.

I would love to be a pigeon or a seagull, flying over the roofs of the city all the way to the sea so I can follow the routes of the big ships. But the sour, hissy tone my teacher uses when he spits the words 'birds of passage' at me make me realize he's thinking of vultures rather than birds with bright, shiny feathers.

Today he can say what he likes. I'm happy because I'm going to be seeing Michele soon.

"Tomorrow I want to see you with your uniforms clean and tidy!"

It's the signal we've all been waiting for. We stand up, making a terrible racket with our chairs. I try and avoid my classmates, especially Concetta, who sometimes asks if she can walk home with me. Michele is waiting for me on the corner of the street.

"Here I am," I say as soon as I see him. "Do you want some of my bread and cheese?"

He grabs my sandwich without even answering. I'm rather upset, as I'd imagined having to insist a little, so I could show off how generous I was being. But the truth is, just like me, he's always hungry too. Maybe more than me, since he never gets any food before sundown.

"Can't you buy food with the money you earn shining shoes?"

"Sometimes I can, but I have to do it on the sly, because if my owner finds out I'm in big trouble," he said, his mouth stuffed with bread and cheese.

Just then I realize Michele has nothing with him. No rags, brushes, or shoe polish.

"What are you going to shine shoes with?"

"I have a box with everything I need in it. But when I come here I hide it in a doorway where hardly anyone ever goes. Then I go back and get it. First, though, I have to wait for my owner to go down to the port. He always goes at lunchtime because there are other kids down there working for him."

"Does he check up on you?"

"Yes, he comes by a lot, but not at lunchtime."

"What if he finds out that you wander around town, leaving your box in a doorway?"

"He mustn't find out!"

I don't know how he can be so sure of himself. I would be terrified.

Michele says that sometimes he goes down to the port to help the others unload cargo from the ships. When he does, he says, he works late and can't come and see me at school. This week, though, he's working as a shoe shiner.

"It's the best job of them all, because your arms don't get too tired. But you have to shout to be heard. People have to notice you."

"Is that what you want to do when you grow up?" I ask him, already convinced that polishing leather and making shoes look like new is the best job in the world.

"Of course not!" he says. "When I grow up I want to have a fruit and vegetable cart all of my own. Actually, what I really want is a stall piled with oranges. *Michele's Oranges* I'll call it.

"But there aren't any oranges in Little Italy."

"Yes there are!"

"I've never seen any. If they existed here I would have seen a cart selling them or someone eating them."

"I'm telling you there are oranges here in America! You just don't want to see them."

I don't answer back because I don't want to argue with Michele over something so stupid. But I know in my heart there are no oranges in Little Italy. Maybe he remembers the oranges back home in Sicily. The only things I see here are potatoes and cabbage.

"Okay" I say. "Even if I haven't seen them I can always imagine them and pretend they actually exist here."

"What?"

"Oranges.

But Michele has already changed the subject.

He says I have to help him write a letter to his parents. He tells me about a group of illiterate peasants like him who had emigrated from Caserta and come to America.

"They were clever. They brought a kid who had done three years of elementary school with them. That way they have a secretary who can read and write for them."

"I can be your secretary if you like," I say laughing.

"Yes, but we have to write the letter secretly."

"Why secretly?"

"My owner says that he's the one that communicates with our families, and we can't do anything about it."

I'm nearly home. Michele leaves without giving me another date. But he has already said that whenever he is shoe shining he can come and meet me outside school.

I run up the stairs. Mom will definitely still be at work sewing flowers. Last night I gave her a hand. Even Giovanni did. I may be able to grab something to eat if she forgets I took my bread and cheese to school this morning.

The door is half open and I can hear my parents' voices coming from inside. Mom sounds agitated. Dad is sitting at the table. When I go in I see his eyes are red. He looks totally done in.

He's talking about work. Down at the building site one of the workers fell off the scaffolding and died.

"They were moving a steel bar with a crane when the metal arm of the machine hit him. We saw him on the ground, as white as a sheet. We ran over to him but there was nothing we could do. The Union men came and said it was disgraceful. They were angry with us Italians because we work in these conditions with very low pay. You need to strike they said. Stop working or they'll kill us all off like rats."

"What did you say?" I have never seen him look so sad, not even when he left for America and kissed us as if he would never see us again.

"We didn't say a thing. What is there to say?"

I realize that Dad had looked the other way and carried on working. He does the same thing when Mom says she can't make ends meet with the few dollars he brings home, and that if things don't change we won't be able to go to school anymore.

Whenever my brother Giuseppe hears her say this, he always says he's happy not to go to school anymore.

"Do you want to be a builder all your life like me?" Dad usually answers.

But today he's keeping his mouth shut. He is scared the building site will be closed tomorrow. And if it is closed, then he can say goodbye to his job. That's what he's thinking, but he's not saying it.

[...]

Chapter Twenty

Dad is smiling again because he's found work at the glass factory. Mom is not too happy about it, though. She says all day working at the furnace will ruin his lungs for sure.

I take no notice of their talk. I'm still feeling bad, and have been in a dark mood since the last time I saw Michele. It's as if a black crow were flying over my head in tighter and tighter circles. I've tried to shoo the bird away, but it never leaves me, even when I'm playing in the streets, or eating my Sunday lunch of *tagliatelle*.

Luckily, my teacher is relaxed today, though he is never as nice as Giuseppe's teacher, who tells everyone they are doing well even when they speak the macaronic English we speak in Little Italy.
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I leave school with the crow still flapping its wings above me. I look around, but I can't see Michele. Maybe he'll never come again.

He is standing at the corner, holding his violin, his face bathed in sunlight. I want to jump for joy. The crow flies away, chasing away all my dark thoughts. Now I can go back to taking walks with him, as if nothing has changed.

But my hopes are soon dashed. Michele's expression is forbidding. In the sunlight I can see his cheekbone is swollen, and his face is almost blue. Has he had a fall?

"What did you do to your face?" I ask him, pretending I'm not concerned. The truth is, I'm embarrassed that I went all the way to Crosby St. to look for him last Friday.

"My owner beat me up because my box of shoe polish and brushes was stolen."

Cold creeps into my bones, even though the sun is warm. I remember him telling me about hiding his box in an empty doorway, and I think it's my fault. He hides his stuff and leaves it unguarded so he can come and see me outside school.

"How did they steal it?"

"I didn't go to my usual place. I hid it in a different doorway. I don't know who took it. The only thing I know is that when my owner found out he beat me and locked me up for a week to teach me a lesson."

"What about the other kids who live with you? Didn't they defend you?"

"No, they're too scared to talk. My owner said that if I get into trouble again he'll make my parents pay a fine. He only gave me the violin back last night, and then I went and did my rounds as usual."

Michele tells me about the thousands of lights, how people laugh their evenings away, and how women dressed in silk swish by leaving behind wafts of perfume.

It's as if he wants to forget the streets of Little Italy and his room in Crosby St., where there is nothing but dirty mattresses thrown on the floor. It makes me think of my apartment on Mulberry St., which is humble but clean, of my neighbors who drop in to have a chat, the smell of garlic and tomato sauce, our school notebooks, even the giddy happiness of some evenings when we all sit on the door steps and share our days.

In Mulberry St. you can dream of another life. Where Michele lives you can't.

I don't know whether Michele hears my thoughts or reads them on my face, but suddenly he announces, "I'm running away. I've made up my mind. I don't want to stay here any longer. I don't want this life anymore!"

His bruised cheek looks ghostly in the sunlight. I feel a stone weighing on my stomach, but I try and pretend everything is fine. I wouldn't want to hang around if someone were beating me up either.

"Where will you go" Back to Italy?"

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“No, I can’t go back there. My owner would find me in a flash and my parents would have to give him a whole load of money because that’s what’s written in the contract. Anyway, they wouldn’t understand. They would say I had ruined them, and that I should have stayed in America where I could have learned a trade. No. I can’t go home. I’ll go somewhere else.”

“Your parents are going to have to pay anyway, even if you go somewhere else. That’s what you said. You told me there was no way you could escape.”

“Well, my owner would first have to prove I had escaped. It could even be his fault. Lots of kids just disappear and nobody is any the wiser.”

Michele is right. Another country would be safer. Maybe he could even go to school like me, or work for himself.

“So where are you going to go?”

“Somewhere down south. Maybe Brazil!”

“But that’s so far away. How will you get there?”

Suddenly Michele can’t stop talking. It’s as if he used the week he spent locked up to think about every detail of his getaway plan. Now I know why he didn’t want me to come to his house. It wasn’t because he was scared he’d be punished again. It was because he didn’t want his owner to suspect anything. Michele wants him to think he’s learned his lesson, that he will carry on playing the violin, shining shoes, and handing over all his earnings. Otherwise he’ll never escape.

Michele tells me he plans to stow away on a ship. He’s going to do it in two weeks’ time, when he’s due to work at the port. There’s a steamer for Brazil that leaves every Friday. He has to be really careful that nothing goes wrong in the next few days. He’s sure he’ll find a sailor willing to hide him until the steamer casts off. If they find him after that, well, there’s no way they can send him ashore, is there? He could hide in the engine room or one of the cargo holds. He knows ships like the back of his hands. All he did the whole way across the ocean from Genoa to New York was observe all the goings-on, find out how things work, and watch the sailors. His owner didn’t let him talk to anybody or make friends so what else was he supposed to do?

“But I need money to run away,” he adds, almost as an afterthought.

Now his plan seems less well laid out. If his owner is not supposed to suspect anything, how can he get the money he needs? And if he’s going to stowaway on the ship, why does he need money? Certainly not to buy a ticket.

“You don’t know a thing, do you?” Michele says. “They don’t let you hide on the ship as a favor. You have to pay the sailor, give him some dollars. He does it for the money, not because he likes you.”

“Where are you going to get the money from?”

“I can always sell the violin.”

“Would that be enough?”

“No, it’s not enough.”

“I have an idea,” I tell him.

I’ve made up my mind too. I’m going to help Michele run away.