

## The Italian Incident: Lynne Vertannes

“I’m looking forward to staying on the Amalfi Coast – it looks so pretty.”

Jacinta’s daughter Bella was dreamily looking out the window of their hire car. Jacinta didn’t dare take her eyes off the ridiculously winding road, that brought them perilously close to the edge more than once!

“Me too darling.”

Beep, beep – “Mum, look out!”

A bus blared its horn at a deafening pace as Jacinta swerved, narrowly missing a head-on collision with it by centimetres.

“I don’t think I can take this. How does anyone drive on these roads? I’m surprised there aren’t more accidents.” A sweat-bead gathered momentum down her forehead.

“Bella, I’m going to have to pull over somewhere, I’m shaking like a leaf.”

“Like where mum. Look at the winding road, there’s nowhere to pull over.”

“Just let me think. Anyway, you were so happy to be on the Amalfi Coast a minute ago and now you’re back to a sullen teenager.” Silence.

Jacinta checked the rear-view mirror, Bella had conveniently put her headphones on and was nodding to her music, eyes closed. Bella preferred to travel in the back seat of the car, the front seat made her dizzy. Jacinta could only imagine what her daughter would have said if she had been sitting up front. Jacinta was now driving at a snail's pace and a glance at her rearview mirror provided a nerve-wracking image, a line of cars, bikes, buses and trucks were trailing impatiently behind and incredibly close to her bumper.

“Get off my backside. It’s alright for you guys, you drive this road daily.” But to her surprise, she wasn’t getting beeped. “If only the drivers back in Sydney were like this on the roads, the slightest change you make in traffic you are getting a horn blaring, someone swearing, or a radical overtake manoeuvre”

Then she saw the opportunity to get off the windy road. A driveway, but because the car behind her was so close to her bumper, she couldn’t take the turn slowly. She quickly pulled to the left and down the driveway. She missed the sign, it was written in Italian “Ingresso Vietato” – Entry Forbidden. The cars were now beeping their horns madly at her because she was not supposed to go down there. The car bumped along, jolting Bella awake “MUM!”

Screeching of brakes, screaming. Bang. She had entered a construction site.