

Tour Guide

by Matt Potter

"I just thought I should *wear Italian*," I said. I looked down at my broken shoe on the floor next to my chair.

"It is not your shoes the Americans complained about!" Roberto yelled, sitting behind his desk, cigar smoke curling around his purple face. "It is your UNDERWEAR!"

"Hey!" I said, standing up. "Where does it say in the Tour Guide rulebook that you must wear underwear when leading an English-language tour through ancient Rome?"

"Nowhere!" he barked. "Because the rulebook was not written for crazy Australians!"

I thumped my fist on his desk. "All of my longer skirts were filthy," I said. "So I *had* to wear this short skirt. And the elastic in my underwear broke on the Via Marsala."

Roberto slumped in his chair and looked away.

"I was professional. I didn't abandon the tour."

Roberto flicked cigar ash on the floor.

"At least I'd waxed."

Roberto's eyes pricked. A smile curled behind the cigar.

"So the busload of eighty year-old Americans can't complain about being treated to wild muff," I said. "When my stiletto got caught between the cobbles and I landed sprawled against the tombstones."

Roberto sat up in his chair, smirking. "I think I would like you to have dinner with me tonight."

I cocked my head. "What about my job?"

Roberto waved his hand dismissively. "Ah, it is nothing. I will tell the Americans this no underwear is a new regulation for all foreigners in Rome."

