

**DAPHNE: AN
AUTUMN
PASTORAL**

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Daphne: An Autumn Pastoral by Margaret Sherwood

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MARGARET SHERWOOD

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BY

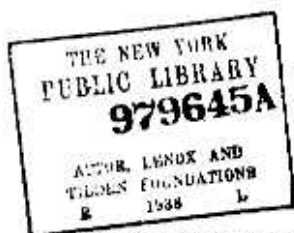
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CHAPTER

I

"HER Excellency, — will she have the politeness," said Daphne slowly, reading with some difficulty from a tiny Italian-English phrase-book, "the politeness to" — She stopped helpless. Old Giacomo gazed at her with questioning eyes. The girl turned the pages swiftly and chose another phrase.

"I go," she announced, "I go to make a walk."

Light flashed into Giacomo's face.

"*Si, si*, Signorina; yes," yes, he assented with voice and shoulders and a flourish of the spoon he was polishing. "*Capisco*; I understand."

Daphne consulted her dictionary.

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"Down there," she said gravely, pointing toward the top of the great hill on whose side the villa stood.

"Certainly," answered Giacomo with a bow, too much pleased by understanding when there was no reason for it to be captious in regard to the girl's speech. "The Signorina *non ha paura*, not 'fraid?'"

"I'm not afraid of anything," was the answer in English. The Italian version of it was a shaking of the head. Then both dictionary and phrase-book were consulted.

"To return," she stated finally, "to return to eat at six hours." Then she looked expectantly about.

"Assunta?" she said inquiringly, with a slight shrug of her shoulders, for other means of expression had failed.

"*Capisco, capisco*," shouted Giacomo in his excitement, trailing on the marble floor the chamois skin with which he had been polishing

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the silver, and speaking in what seemed to his listener one word of a thousand syllables.

“The — Signorina — goes — to — walk — upon — the — hills — above — the — villa — because — it — is — a — most — beautiful — day. — She — returns — to — dine — at — six — and — wishes — Assunta — to — have — dinner — prepared. — Perhaps — the — Signorina — would — tell — what — she — would — like — for — her — dinner? — A — roast — chicken, — yes? — A — salad, — yes?”

Daphne looked dubiously at him, though he had stated the case with entire accuracy, and had suggested for her solitary meal what she most liked. There was a slight pucker in her white forehead, and she vouchsafed no answer to what she did not understand.

“*Addio, addio,*” she said earnestly.

“*A rivederla!*” answered Giacomo, with a courtly sweep of the chamois skin.

The girl climbed steadily up the moist, steep