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Lezione 10

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Characters

The first quirky characters you'll encounter in this pre-course (the A1 prep course) are six in total: Ermanno (an Italian native), Oliver (an English native), a talkative lady, an invisible waiter, a taciturn painter, and Elisa, the heart of the hotel.

Ermanno Senzasosta

- Nationality: Italian (a foreigner in Germany)
- Profession: Former literature teacher, currently job-hunting
- Personality: Thorough, willing, and tireless—determined to learn German quickly and effectively
- Quirk: Always accompanied by Zampettone, a large white Maremma sheepdog who keeps the 'flocks' of words together
- Key Episode: After losing track of his students during a trip to the Colosseum, Ermanno decides to change his life. His motto: "It only takes a second to get lost." Someone gifts him a dog, and together they emigrate.



Oliver Laurence (the forgetful young actor)

- Nationality: British (a foreigner in Germany)
- Profession: Young actor
- Personality: Extremely sensitive, creative, witty, and fragile. He swings from total bewilderment to sudden flashes of brilliance.

- Quirk: He's accompanied by Oreste, a little monkey who helps him learn German and acting, urging him to memorise and learn by playing.
- Motivation: He'll stay at the hotel until he learns German—and acting.
- Key Episode: His stage name comes from Laurence Olivier, but unlike the great British actor, he tends to lose his thread. In a crucial performance, he froze on "To be or not..."



Margherita Mutter (The Lady)

- Nationality: German — long-time hotel guest
- Personality: Charismatic, refined, witty, and bossy. She loves discussing every detail, is curious and talkative, and often questions the rules. She demands attention and freedom, yet faces vulnerable moments with humour.
- Quirk: An expert on Italian and world cuisine, she turns every breakfast into theatre.
- Typical Behaviour: Every order at the bar or breakfast is a mini-show packed with refined choices, unexpected questions, and a dash of irony that challenges the rules. The waiter knows her well and often asks her to wear a mask, because with the mask on she's more polite. She'll be the undisputed star of the A2 course.



The Waiter (the Invisible Man)

- Profession: Hotel waiter
- Personality: Impeccable, polite, very discreet, and always ready to step in when needed—yet never intrusive
- Evolution: Initially, he is very present and helpful, smoothing communication and suggesting the right phrases; as lessons progress, he fades into the background, allowing the guests to stand on their own feet.
- Quirk: Nobody actually sees him, yet the service is always perfect; when needed, he pops up as if by magic.



Max Ludwig (the painter)

- Nationality: Northern German
- Profession: Painter, solitary artist
- Personality: Calm, thoughtful, detail-oriented. A keen observer.
- Quirk: He speaks little and almost only in single words, seeing no point in full sentences—so it's often the listener who turns his words into full sentences.
- Typical Behaviour: Sitting on a chair, he ponders connections and hands his listener five key words to turn an empty space into a scene. He loves Ermanno's and Oliver's company. Five words are all they need to spin a little story—useful for his sketches and their German.



Elisa

- Nationality: German, the innkeeper's daughter
- Profession: Polyglot traveller, blogger, and evening entertainer at the piano bar
- Personality: She mixes traits of literature's great heroines: mysterious, multifaceted; at times childlike, at times wise, at times passionate and free. Always on the move, always gathering stories.
- Quirk: She collects the world's finest literary dreams—a trove of tales that will form the basis of the B1 course.



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Questa lezione e' stata realizzata grazie al contributo di:



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