

# **SPYING FROM HOME**

By Jasper Lee-Lindsay

## **STAGE DIRECTION NOTES:**

*Beat* : a small pause.

– : cut off by the next line.

## **CAST NOTES:**

OLIVE: child of Patricia and Stefan. Can be played by any gender (name might be changed to “Oliver”)

PATRICIA: Mother of OLIVE. Can be played by any age.

STEFAN: Father of OLIVE. Can be played by any age.

*The living room. Very sneakily, OLIVE rolls on stage, slithers across the floor, then slowly tiptoes to a laptop that sits on the other side of the room. She looks around before carefully opening the laptop. It's password locked.*

**OLIVE:** How about... "Motherland"

*The computer makes an error noise.*

**OLIVE:** "Glory"

*Another error noise.*

**OLIVE:** "Bear on tricycle"

*Another error noise. As Olive continues to think, her mother, PATRICIA, emerges from a pile of laundry she was hiding under.*

**PATRICIA:** What are you doing?

**OLIVE:** Nothing! What were you doing under there?

**PATRICIA:** Folding laundry.

**OLIVE:** Underneath all of it?

**PATRICIA:** I got lost.

**OLIVE:** You were spying on me.

**PATRICIA:** No. I was... Hiding from the neighbours. They're national security, can't let them see me. A classic spy technique, I'll add it to your training. What were you doing with your father's computer?

**OLIVE:** I thought it was a little dusty, so I was polishing it.

**PATRICIA:** So the typing I heard was—

**OLIVE:** Just me cleaning the keyboard.

**PATRICIA:** You don't usually like cleaning.

**OLIVE:** Ah, well, lockdown and everything. I've discovered how nice it is for things to be clean.

**PATRICIA:** Have you changed out of those clothes at all in the past week?

**OLIVE:** Uh... These? Yeah... I actually have multiple pairs of this exact outfit.

**PATRICIA:** Really?

**OLIVE:** Really.

*Pause.*

**PATRICIA:** Your deception skills need work.

**OLIVE:** What deception skills?

**PATRICIA:** Don't push it. You need to keep training.

**OLIVE:** I'm tired of training all the time. I mean I've already mastered every disguise you can think of, I've forged passports from every country in the world, and I've even managed to tap into the radiowaves of the neighbours' house so I can eavesdrop on them. They had a full conversation about porridge yesterday. Porridge! That's not government intel, that's just sad.

**PATRICIA:** Try to enjoy it. Think of the disguises and passport-making as arts and craft. Maybe the radiowaves are a science experiment.

**OLIVE:** That just sounds like school assignments to me. Can't I do anything else? I mean, was it really necessary for you to take my phone?

**PATRICIA:** It would distract you. Besides, we just bought you your own laptop. You don't need so many screens.

**OLIVE:** "Laptop?" You mean the foldout aircraft radar? I want to go on the internet, not look at a green circle that beeps whenever Jetstar flies over our house.

**PATRICIA:** You've got to keep training, Olive. It's a prime time for it. You want to be in tip-top shape, so when the time comes you can be an effective insurgent spy for our glorious Motherland.

**OLIVE:** You mean Perth?

**PATRICIA:** I mean your father's Motherland.

**OLIVE:** But you're not from...

**PATRICIA:** I know, but I married into it.

**OLIVE:** But aren't you also bored, being stuck inside?

**PATRICIA:** No, I told you I'm keeping an eye on the neighbours. Porridge might be code for... something. Anyway, leaving the house will be extra suspicious now. No one's supposed to be out.

**OLIVE:** Isn't that a great time for us to go out? Now we have the element of surprise. No one's expecting to see people outside.

**PATRICIA:** But people *are* expecting that people *aren't* expecting to see people outside, so people won't go out.

**OLIVE:** Because they're expecting people will go outside, expecting no one to be outside, expecting people will be outside when they're supposed to be inside? Meaning they're expecting inside and out?

**PATRICIA:** Exactly.

**OLIVE:** Understandable. Doesn't change the fact I'm so boooooooooooooored.

*Olive tries to sneakily grab the laptop without her mum seeing.*

**PATRICIA:** Put it back.

**OLIVE:** Put what back? (*Beat*) Oh the laptop? I was just trying to see if I could sneak it past you. Practising my thieving skills. Darn, you caught me. (*Beat, very slyly*) Well, I guess I'll get back to my training. Hey... Maybe I could use dad's computer to practise my hacking skills. They're pretty rusty.

*Beat.*

**PATRICIA:** Do you promise you're just going to use it to practise?

**OLIVE:** Of course.

**PATRICIA:** Okay then.

**OLIVE:** Cool... What's the password?

**PATRICIA:** I thought you wanted to hack.

**STEFAN:** (*Eastern European accent*) And this is where I catch you!

*Olive's dad, STEFAN, has been standing in the corner this whole time with a lamp shade on his head. He speaks with a bizzare accent of possibly Eastern European origin. He removes the lampshade and places it near Patricia.*

**STEFAN:** Egh, this needs dusting.

**PATRICIA:** I did tell you not to put it on your head.

**STEFAN:** I know, I'm sorry. But it worked, no?

*Patricia shrugs.*

**STEFAN:** (*To Olive*) Young lady, I am hearing you this whole time.

**OLIVE:** Why were you both hiding?

- STEFAN:** Camouflage was good idea to catch you hacking my computer.
- OLIVE:** Just for practice.
- PATRICIA:** Didn't you hear us, honey? We just talked it through.
- STEFAN:** I hear well, I hear the lies. You were wanting my computer for the Flicking Net and the Book of Faces.
- PATRICIA:** Stefan, you know that's not what they're called.
- OLIVE:** Seriously, Dad? You have nothing better to do than to spy on your own daughter?
- STEFAN:** No... I mean, yes. We are doing better things. We are investigating the mailman—
- PATRICIA:** The neighbours—
- STEFAN:** The neighbours. We think they are our secret allies of—
- PATRICIA:** National Secur—
- STEFAN:** National Security, our enemies. Also, I hear you say “bear on tricycle.” That is no joke. He is evil bear in Motherland. Never would be password. If Great Leader heard insurgent daughter say that, he would not be kind.
- OLIVE:** Hey...
- Olive types in the computer.*
- OLIVE:** “Great Leader.”
- The computer makes a ‘ding’ noise.*
- OLIVE:** I got it. Wait, there's more?
- STEFAN:** Ha! I put multiple locks on. Now you have voice identity lock, which only responds to my voice. Good luck, this will be extremely—
- The computer makes a ‘ding’ noise.*
- OLIVE:** I think it heard you.
- PATRICIA:** You were raising your voice again.
- STEFAN:** You know my locks excite me.
- OLIVE:** What's this next one?

**STEFAN:** Voice lock number 2. This one requires a specific word that only I can say. Even if you guess the word, which is big maybe, it will only recognise my voice. What are you gonna do, Olive?

*The computer makes a 'ding' noise.*

**OLIVE:** Hey the word was "Olive."

**STEFAN:** Argh, the machine of traitors!

**PATRICIA:** Using your daughter's name as a password is very lovely of you, sweetie, but probably not very secure.

**OLIVE:** It says this is the last one. Is it another voice lock?

*Stefan is trying not to speak. He nods instead.*

**OLIVE:** What is it? Another word? Or a phrase?

*Stefan does an exaggerated shrug, pretending he doesn't know.*

**OLIVE:** Is it...

*Olive thinks really hard, then turns to the computer and hesitantly, in her best impression of her father, says...*

**OLIVE:** "Bear on tricycle."

*The computer makes a 'ding' noise.*

**OLIVE:** I've unlocked it!

**STEFAN:** I do not sound like that!

**PATRICIA:** It was "Bear on tricycle"?

**OLIVE:** I thought it would've been the last thing anyone would've guessed, since dad apparently hates that bear.

**STEFAN:** No, I actually think he's pretty cool. He rides the tricycle, that is talent for a bear.

**OLIVE:** Wait, what? Why isn't the internet working?

**PATRICIA:** Ah yeah, the NBN is down. Why couldn't we be foreign insurgents in a country with working WiFi?

**STEFAN:** I know. I'm so bored, I've started reading. Somehow it's even more boring than doing nothing.

**OLIVE:** So you guys are both bored?

*Beat.*

**PATRICIA:** Look, Olive, we were spying on you. Not because we don't trust you, we just miss doing espionage outside so much.

**STEFAN:** We're struggling to distract ourselves.

**OLIVE:** Then why are you making me train? We could be doing stuff together.

**PATRICIA:** I was serious before. This is prime time for you to get some training done.

**STEFAN:** You must be great spy for Motherland. I just wish your training was not the making of sleepiness it is now.

**OLIVE:** Well, maybe we could think of some spy things that aren't "the making of sleepiness". Something we can do together, that's fun, but also helps me train.

**PATRICIA:** Like what?

**OLIVE:** Like... Hide & Seek?

*Pause. They look at each other.*

**OLIVE & STEFAN:** Bags not being it!

**PATRICIA:** Argh, okay! I'm counting to 20. Go!

*Patricia covers her eyes and starts counting. Olive runs off to hide. Stefan starts to run, but quickly runs back for his lampshade, then exits as he puts it on his head.*

**THE END**