

Six Too Many

SCENE 1

MOTHER: Now, remember, kids—we are skipping the usual turkey and stuffing because Nonno asked to share a distinctive celebration from his childhood.

BEN: We know, Mom; he wants to introduce us to the Feast of the Seven Fishes. As if people enjoy eating fish for a holiday dinner!

LYDIA: Well, I do like fish—certain types of fish, anyway. And after all, it's Nonno's house.

BEN: I could understand starting the meal with one kind of fish, maybe, as an appetizer. But honestly, seven fishes? That's at least six too many.

MOTHER: Shh. Here comes Nonno with the first course!

MOTHER: Tell us about the dish, Papa! I see that you've made a delectable baccalà.

NONNO: Well, it's not everyone's cup of tea, but it is traditional to start the meal this way. We'll be having a succession of small plates.

LYDIA: Please ignore Ben, Nonno. He's been complaining about our traditions.

NONNO: Traditions vary and evolve, you know. My family's traditions are a bit older than yours, Ben!

MOTHER: Originally, Italians were holding a vigil, and eating meat was not allowed.

NONNO: That's correct, so we typically ate fish for this meal.

SCENE 2

LYDIA: Oh, Nonno, I honestly don't think I could eat another bite!

NONNO: Nonsense! I spent all day making this from scratch; it's Ben's favorite!

BEN: Nonno! You made a cioppino? I haven't had that since Nonna died!

NONNO: Your grandmother would never forgive me if I didn't include it.

BEN: It was such a big part of our visits. I would help in the kitchen.

MOTHER: I'm surprised you remember, Ben—you were so little back then!

LYDIA: I barely remember, but that smell is reminding me!

NONNO: This is why we keep traditions—to remember our family and pass them down.

BEN: Nonno, next year we'll come early so you can teach me how to make this.

LYDIA: Really, Ben—whatever happened to “six too many”?

Questions

1. Who are the main characters in the play? What is their relationship?
2. Where and when do the two scenes in the play take place?
3. At the end of the play, who changes his or her mind? Explain.
4. Use context to confirm the meaning of the word **succession** as it is used in *Six Too Many*. Write your definition of *succession* here.
5. What is another way to say that a meal is **distinctive**?