

ACT II

[A large room in the Palazzo Farnese. On the backdrop, three windows over a balcony that overlooks the lighted piazza. On both the left and right, in the background: side doors. In the middleground on stage left, the platform for the musicians; stage right a mirror and in front, a platform and a seat for the queen. In the foreground, on both the right and the left, doors. On stage left, a couch. The whole scene is filled with gaming tables, with players of both sexes who move around constantly, amidst the buzz of voices, hushed laughter, the noise of the chips. [New guests enter, greet each other, come and go. An orchestra plays a minuet in the next salon. Attavanti and Trivulce are sitting at one of the tables.]

First scene

TRÉVILHAC, CAPRÉOLA, THE MARQUIS ATTAVANTI, TRIVULCE

Capréola, entering with satin programs in his hand and continuing a conversation begun in the wings:
And then, sir?

Trévilhac: And then, sir, my father, who had no illusions about the late Louis XVI, said to me one day, "Things are falling apart, my friend, let us go!..."

Cp, after having gestured to him to sit down in an armchair stage right: And Your Excellency emigrated?...

T, sits. Capréola, after him, sits on a chair: And my Excellency emigrated...and, for ten years now, we have gone from city to city: Petersburg, London or Vienna; but all of this cannot make me forget France, and my beloved Paris that I miss so much.

Cp: They cannot be happy tonight in Paris, can they?

T: Neither will this good-for-nothing Bonaparte, who will be beaten by your Melas.

Cp: You complain...This victory will perhaps give you back your country.

T: Ah yes...but how can I be delighted as an exile, when I am enraged as a Frenchman!

Cp: In a word, your exile will not last much longer now and we would advise you to be patient until peace is declared. Moreover, you got here at a good time. The presence of Her Majesty the Queen Caroline is enlivening the city. And the next visit of His Holiness will signal great rejoicing. After all, Rome has some things that might amuse you and, provided that one does get mixed up in politics or religion, one can be completely free.

T: I have only been here for three days, and life here seems very pleasant.

Cp: There is a feeling of well-being here, sir, especially in respect to the ladies.

[Trévilhac looks at the table in the middle where the players choose their cards off of their female partners' laps and place them on the table, where the cards circulate.]

T: Yes, indeed!...I see here, for example, a card game that couldn't be more enticing.

Cp: This group?

T: Young ladies so skimpily clad and the young gentlemen such dandies. What do you call this amusing game, sir, in which gentlemen pick cards from the ladies' laps?

Cp: The minchiate, invented they say by Michelangelo.

T: I never would have thought him to have been so much fun.

Cp, getting up as he sees the princess coming down surrounded by her ladies, greeted by the players who get up when she passes and bow: Would Your Excellency desire to be presented to the Princess Orlonia,¹ the queen's lady?

T, standing: Yes, of course, please do.

Cp, to the princess, after having bowed to her: Monsieur the Viscount of Trévilhac, French emigré.

The Princesse: We welcome you to Rome, Sir. Has His Excellency been presented to the queen?

T: This morning, Princess, and Her Majesty deigned to invite me to this celebration, in which I am compelled to take part as a royalist, but without any patriotic pleasure, as I am sure you can understand.

The P, looking at the white satin program that Capréola has given her: Ah, Paisiello has promised us a cantata.

Cp: Sung by la Tosca.

[He gives a program to Trévilhac.]

The P: Has your Excellency heard la Tosca?

T: Not yet, Madame. I have just arrived.

The P: You will have, sir, a treat fit for a connoisseur. La Tosca is an incomparable artist.

[Capréola chatting with the ladies goes upstage to the middle table.]

T, indicating the Marquis Attavanti who is standing, talking and laughing noisily at a table stage left, behind a player: Pardon me, Princess, excuse my curiosity. Who is that person, please, with such an imposing belly?

The P: Sir, that is the husband of the most beautiful woman in Rome.

T: He has that look about him. And the good-looking gentleman with whom he is speaking?

The P: The Viscount Trivulce: he is the gentleman serving his wife, or to put it another way, her cicisbeo.

T: Her lover?

The P: Oh, pardon me, but that is quite different. [To Attavanti who is coming down to them.] Isn't that so, Marquis?

At: Princess?

The P: I am explaining to Monsieur de Trévilhac, who is French, [salutations] that there is a difference between a cicisbeo and a lover...

At, good-naturedly to Trévilhac, while the princess goes back up: Oh, a considerable difference! The lover is a thief of one's honor, fraudulently introduced into the household. The cicisbeo is an official suitor, duly authorized to court the woman, with moderation and discretion.

T: Please excuse, Marquis, a new arrival, very ignorant of Italian customs.

At, sitting in the armchair: And here is their superiority, sir. We have ascertained that, in any household, the woman is not happy without a suitor to give her assiduous attention.

T, sitting on the chair: My small experience has already brought me to the same conclusion.

At: So then, why fight facts? Isn't it better to accept them, and render them harmless, and even to gain some advantage from them?

T: Ah! yes, indeed...!

At: To leave the choice of suitor up to the woman is to run the risk that she will prefer some fop without connections or influence. Choosing him ourselves, rich and from a good family, there is nothing but pleasure and profit for all concerned.

T: Admirably logical.

At: It is thus, sir, that the custom was established among us that, when we marry a woman of social standing, we choose from her entourage a gentleman servant who gives honor to the family by his influence, pleasure to Madame by his manner... The parents of the new couple meet for this occasion. They review the candidates. They weigh the respective merits. The young bride has her little ideas!... "Cousin so-and-so who is so pleasing to her!" Let us look at the cousin!... He is discussed, chosen. The husband welcomes him with open arms; the whole family gives him accolades and, from that day, sir, he is in the service of Madame, whom he accompanies to church, to the opera, to salons... And no one would dream of being shocked. What would really be shocking would be if she appeared on the arm of her husband.

T: That is charming, sir, really charming!

The P, coming back to the marquis: Won't we see the marquise tonight? I have been looking for her in vain.

At: Ah, without doubt. I was surprised myself. She is not in Rome, it seems!

The P: Ah! Bah!

At: Yes... Trivulce just told me. [Calling Trivulce who has given up his place at the gaming table] Trivulce!

Tri, coming down between the marquis and the princess: Marquis...

At: Tell Madame, please, what you know about the marquise.

Tri: The marquise, Princesss, is in Frascati.

The P: On a feast day?

Tri: Your Excellency is not unaware of her brother's escape?

The P: Of course not.

Tri: The marquise thought that, in such circumstances, it would not be appropriate for her to appear here tonight, and asked me to make her excuses to the queen, which Her Majesty was kind enough to accept.

At: Her Majesty is too good. It is precisely by her presence that the marquise should protest the impudent escape of her brother, in order to assert that she had nothing to do with it...nor did I, especially not me.

The P: No one would suspect you of that, Marquis!...

Tri: They know you too well.

At: I hope so...But if Trivulce were doing his duty, he would go this instant to Frascati, and bring the marquise back tonight, so that she could at least appear for dinner.

Tri: My word, Marquis, try it yourself, because I would not succeed.

At: In that case, my dear, you have no power over my wife, and that would be truly ridiculous, you must admit!...

[He turns his back and Trivulce withdraws, a little abashed. The princess sits down on the couch, surrounded by courtesans.]

T, mezzo-voce, to Capréola who came down stage right: As family feuds go, you could not find a better one!

A Monsignor, who is playing at the middle table, to Attavanti: So Marquis, we have had some glorious news.

At, going to him, addressing everyone present, who listen to him: Admirable Monsignor...and from all sides!...For example, I have received letters from Naples... Things could not be better. The terrain has been absolutely subdued by Colonel Pezza.

T: Pardon...The Colonel?...

Cp: Pezza.

At, with complacency: Otherwise known as Fra Diavolo.

[The players in the middle disperse]

T: The bandit?

At: Ah, yes!...Formerly, he had had some little mix-ups. But that is now forgotten!...And, with his honest brigands, he has rendered such service to the Royal cause that His Majesty made him a colonel, baron, and awarded him the ribbon of St. George.

T, to himself: I would have put it around his neck.

At, going over to stage left: Very good news about His Majesty also; he has caught a sturgeon of fabulous proportions.

All, with satisfaction: Ah!

At: ...Lady Hamilton is more beautiful than ever...and Admiral Nelson is now in Malta, which the English are occupying provisionally.

T: Don't hold your breath for them to give it back to you!...

At, sitting at the middle table, vacated by the players: In sum, the war is over!...Joubert has been killed.² Macdonald has disappeared,³ Massena beaten, Bonaparte in pieces. Moreau⁴ in a terrible position!...[He indicates a battlefield on the table, surrounded by the players.] Melas will attack from the side, de Kray⁵ from the front, de Reuss⁶ from behind. In two weeks we shall have tossed the French into the Rhine.

T, on edge, through his teeth: Tossed, tossed!...You cannot toss the French overboard like that!

[movement of surprise]

At: Excuse me?

T, outloud: Why not say that Monsieur has only to push his stomach out for the French to scamper like rabbits.

At: Permit me!

T: But no, monsieur, to be precise...I do not permit you!

[He turns his back to him and goes upstage right.]

At, And, I thought it would please him!

All: That's right!

At: The French are all crazy!

Scene II

THE SAME, SCARPIA, then SCHIARRONE

The P: Here is the Regent.

[The orchestra, in the wings, plays a gavotte. Scarpia enters downstage right, comes forward, is greeted and bows in return.]

The P, standing, to Scarpia, who is going to kiss his hand: Nothing yet about Angelotti?...

S: Nothing

At: Too bad!

Tri, to the princess: Princess, would you like to play faro with us?

The P: With pleasure!

[They go back up to the gaming table in the midst of other players, and Scarpia stays alone all the way downstage. The other characters are grouped upstage, talking, some seated and some standing with the ladies. Others go out to the balcony.]

Sch, who entered sometime before, elegantly dressed, quietly, for the Baron's ears only, while bowing to him: Baron...

S, *mezza voce*: Ah! It's you, Schiarrone! [He sits stage right in the armchair. Schiarrone does the same on the chair.] So...

Sch, quietly: So, Baron, an empty nest.

S: Ah!...

Sch: Our men have surrounded the Palazzo Cavaradossi... The Cavaliere has not shown a sign of life. I was impatient, so I gave the order to Tibaldi to climb the garden wall and go into the house, whose doors and windows were open. He searched everywhere, from the basement to the attic: nothing.

S: He is with the other...that is obvious. But where? The valet did not know of any other dwelling?

Sch: None. The Cavaliere is often gone, for days, for entire nights, but never saying where he goes. He is a sly one who knows he is suspected and trusts no one.

S: Yes, like the fox, he has many lairs....And la Tosca?

Sch: Nothing more on that. La Tosca went home after her rehearsal, ate alone, dressed and went to the palace. In all of that, no trace of Cavaradossi.

S: And l'Attavanti?

Sch: The surveillance of her house has not turned up anything more. The marquise is in Frascati.

S: I know that, but I hoped that, because things are not going well for us here, some secret message would bring her back to Rome, that she would make an appearance tonight at the palace, in order to ward off suspicion, and that, through intimidation, threats, and, as a last resort, we could arrest her ...

Sch, surprised: The marquise?

S: And why not? Her complicity has been proven by the fan.

Sch: Her husband the marquis is so close to the court...

S: ...That he would not care to compromise himself by intervening for his wife: but all this talk is useless because the marquise is absent.

Sch: Does the baron really believe that la Tosca is uninvolved in all this?

S: What do I know?...This man is too cunning to take a woman into his confidence, especially one who is one of us...We shall soon see, moreover, because here she is...[He gets up.] Our men are downstairs?

Sch, standing: Yes, Excellency.

S: Let them stay there!...And always nearby.

[The music stops. Schiarrone leaves stage right.]

Scene III

THE SAME, FLORIA

[She enters in formal dress by the second door stage left, surrounded by suitors and extending her hand to be kissed by Capréola, Trivulce, Attavanti and all of the lesser gentlemen who fight for this honor.]

At: Here is the charming, the exquisite, the divine woman!

Cp: One cannot say, Diva, which pleasure is greater: seeing you or hearing you.

F, gaily, descending: So now, you can decide, having both at the same time...[Without taking notice, giving a hand to be kissed first the right hand, then the left, extending one automatically to Trévilhac who holds it and kisses it so long that she is shocked and turns and looks at him, surprised to not know him.] Pardon me, here is a stranger, who has not dealt his cards properly.

T: Then, Signora, the game is nullified...We must start over!...
[He repeats the action.]

F, laughing: French, right? That is obvious!

T: From the accent?...

F, likewise: Of the kisses, yes.

Cp: The Cavaliere de Trévilhac, whom I have the honor of presenting to you.

F, laughing: It is about time. [Descending, she arrives at Scarpia who, silently, kisses her hand.]
Good day, Baron...So? Your fugitive?

S: His fate interests you?

F: Oh, yes, the poor fellow!

S: A state criminal! You would take the wretch's side?

F: My word, Baron, a man who flees the gallows is no longer a wretch...He is an unfortunate!

S: And if he knocked on your door, would you open it?

F: Oh, right away.

S, still laughing: Do you know that you would be gambling with your pretty head?...

F: Even more reason. [She turns away.] Ah, good evening, Princess.

[She continues to speak softly, to laugh, with other people pressing around her. The domestics carry back the chairs that are to stage right of the big table, to prepare for the entrance of the queen.]

S, alone downstage, his eyes following her: Is this naiveté...or bravado?

An usher, in the back stage left, in a very loud voice: Gentlemen, the queen!

Scene IV

THE SAME, MARIE-CAROLINE, DIEGO NASELLI (Prince of Aragon); GENERAL FROELICH,⁷ ENGLISH, NEAPOLITAN and AUSTRIAN OFFICERS, THE DUKE of ASCOLI, PAISIELLO, CARDINALS, MONSIGNORS, MUSICIANS, CHORISTERS, ETC.

[While the domestics remove the table and the chairs from the front of the platform and carry them into the wings in the back, all the players get up and draw aside to make way for the queen who enters by the second door on stage right, and who comes downstage, followed at two steps distance by the Prince of Aragon and General Froelich. The queen comes forward, greeted by all and stops in front of Floria who bows deeply to her, while the Prince of Aragon gives the queen a program.]

Marie-Caroline: Good day, my dear. Are you in good voice tonight?

F: I will make sure Your Majesty is not displeased with Her humble servant.

MC: Will this cantata be successful at least?

F: I believe that Your Majesty will be satisfied with it.

MC: Paisiello has to make up for some very foolish mistakes .

[Paisiello, stage left, aside, stands humbly while the others turn to look at him.]

F: I can assure Your Majesty that he is even more repentant than guilty.

MC: Good, my dear, do not speak for him, but sing for him; perhaps that will be enough.
[She turns away. Paisiello goes back upstage, enchanted. The queen, to Attavanti:] Good evening, Marquis!...[Seeing Scarpia] Ah, is it you, Scarpia? [She descends a little and stands apart with him downstage; the others draw back to be discreet.] And so, what news of Angelotti?

[The Prince of Aragon and Trivulce stage left with Tosca]

S: Nothing positive yet, Madame, except that he could not have left Rome.

MC: Take care that this business is not the death of you. You have many enemies.

S: The same ones as Your Majesty.

MC: And these people are circulating nasty rumors about you.

S: Everyday I arrest those who spread rumors about the queen.

MC: They point out that Angelotti, locked up for a year, managed to escape just eight days after you came.

S: They would accuse me?...

MC: His sister is rich and beautiful.

S: Does Your Majesty think me guilty?...

MC: The answer is easy...Find Angelotti.

S: This very night...

MC: So much the better for you, because it would not be good to put the king in a bad mood.

[She turns away. Much shouting arises from the piazza.]

The Prince of Aragon: Will Your Majesty not give these good people the joy of letting them show Her their adoration?

MC: Yes, certainly, these good people!

[A choir and an orchestra on the piazza play a saltarella. The acclamations increase. The queen goes upstage towards the window in the middle, at stage left of the large table, followed by her entourage, and goes out on the balcony. The other characters on the stage go toward the other two windows. When they see the queen, the cheers are continuous, as is the singing. The balcony is filled with onlookers.]

The crowd: Long live the queen! [Then] Angelotti!... Angelotti!... To death!...

T, to Capréola: What are they saying?

MC, on the threshold of the window in the middle, turning to Scarpia, alone in the middle of the stage: Do you hear, Scarpia. They demand the head of Angelotti.

S, coldly: Yes, Majesty.

The crowd: Scarpia! To death, Scarpia!

MC, in the same manner: And yours.

[The assistants laugh.]

S, likewise, looking arrogantly at the group formed on stage right by Capréola, Trivulce and the others who are sneering: Naturally, Roman hoodlums would be the worst, if it were not for Neapolitan hoodlums. [Little by little, the shouts quiet down, the music continues. Scarpia returns alone in front of the table. All the others, standing or seated, have their heads turned to the piazza, listening to the rear.] So, if Angelotti disappears, I would soon be disgraced; these courtesans' mouths are already watering at my expense. It is not this woman whom I fear, but the other, that Hamilton, who wants Angelotti hanged and who will never forgive me for letting her prize escape. One word from this Englishwoman who is behind it all, and I am done for. [He goes to the armchair where he sits down.] Let's think, calmly. What to do? Arrest Cavaradossi tomorrow as soon as he shows himself? And then? Angelotti will already be far away...I must get these two men before the gates open...But how? ...I have searched thoroughly...The only possibility is this woman who either knows nothing or who will not talk. [He looks at Tosca who is at this moment on the balustrade of the musicians, where she is talking with Paisiello, and sight-reading a piece of music in her hand.] At least I had a weapon against the other, l'Attavanti: This fan, but here...here? [He stops struck with a sudden idea.] Why not use the same thing? Let's see...A woman who is very much in love, very passionate...With a handkerchief, Iago went far...Either she knows and I will get her to tell everything, or she knows nothing...and by God it will be she who will find him, she will find him for us. A jealous woman is worth more than the best policeman. [He gets up.] This time I've got it...and before long, I will come out of this alright!

[During this time, Floria has been sitting on the couch, her piece of music in her hand; Scarpia approaches her. The orchestra, in the salons, plays the Andante from the *Symphony in D Major* by Haydn.]

Scene V

FLORIA, SCARPIA, other characters upstage

S, leaning on the couch behind Floria, taking her hand on the arm of the couch and pressing it gently in his own, smiling: Do you know, Signora, that I could put handcuffs on this pretty hand and take you to the Castel Sant'Angelo?

F, tranquilly, occupied with her music sheet, without pulling back her hand: Arrest me?

S: Yes, indeed.

F: Why?

S: For wearing seditious colors.

F: My dress?

S: This bracelet!...Rubies, diamonds and sapphires: the tricolor, quite simply.

F, quickly, pulling back her arm: Oh, that's right...If the queen sees it...

S: Just kidding! No one but I will notice. You are too well-known for your devotion to the Church and to the king... [He sits near her.] Unfortunately!

F: Why "unfortunately"?

S, gallantly: Oh yes! It would be such a pleasure to have you for a prisoner.

F, gaily: In a dungeon?

S, likewise: And under triple lock, to prevent your escape.

F: And torture also, perhaps?

S: Until you love me.

F, picking up her music again: If those are the only means you have!

S: Well, women don't mind a little violence.

F: It is true that people say terrible things about what happens there, to women.

[She looks at her music sheet again.]

S, smiling: Bah! What don't they say? That old castle is paying today for its games of long ago. It is the memory of the Borgias that gives it such a bad reputation...Is it really good, this cantata of Paisiello?

F, in the same manner: He would have done well to have given it to la Romanelli.

S: And not trouble you so during your prayers at St. Andrew Church.

F, turning the pages: Ah, you know about that?...

S: Oh, it's my profession to know everything.

F, likewise: There is no great skill in that; I don't bother to hide.

S: That is true. Is he really so charming, this Frenchman?

F: French?...He is Roman.

S: Oh, barely...I meant his opinions...how could you, who think so rightly, exchange three words with this Voltairian without scratching his eyes out?

F: Because those three words are, "I love you."

S: At first...but one cannot love all the time?

F: Oh yes one can.

S: Still you must talk a little, in between. And, with his revolutionary ideas...

F: Bah! As though love cared about that. You know the response of la Venotti to the king, who reproached her for loving a sans-culotte. "Ah, my faith, sire, naturally, it was love!"

S: Yes, but you know what followed. Three days later, her republican left her. The moral: do not believe in someone who himself believes in nothing. Athiest in religion, athiest in love: that holds true.

F: Oh, well, you are on the wrong track. He is devoted to me!...

S: Are you really sure of that?

F, looking at him, vaguely disturbed: Yes, I am sure...Why do you say that?

S: Oh, my God!

F, likewise: You know something. What! What do you know?...But tell me, let me know!...

S: But no...nothing, nothing! Damnation! What a lively reaction! A doubt, nothing more; professional scepticism. But, on my honor, I know nothing. Come on, we know that the

Cavaliere adores you, he is faithful, and I believe that without difficulty. It must be easy for him.

F, half-reassured: In the beginning.

S, pulling out the fan: I am so convinced of it that I will not hesitate any longer in giving this object to you.

F: This fan?

S: Yes, I found it when I chanced to stop at St. Andrew a little while ago; the Cavaliere had just left.

F, quickly: At what time?

S: Around compline.

F, shocked: He was supposed to work until nightfall!...

S: In short, he was gone and, when, out of curiosity, I was examining his work, I saw this fan forgotten on his stepladder, and, since I was afraid that it might be stolen, I took it to give back to you.

F: On his stepladder?

S: Yes!.....I hesitated to give it back to you; because after all...But you are so sure of him...Ah, my God, Signora, what is wrong?

F, who has opened the fan : But this fan is not mine!

S: Is that possible?

F, looking at the fan: But no, no, no!...

S: Ah, I am so clumsy!...What have I done!...

F: Whose could it be...Whose...The crown of a marquise!...

S: Indeed!...How did this detail escape me!...

F: Marquise!... Marquise?... L'Attavanti!

S, feigning surprise: What?

F, getting up: It is l'Attavanti!

S: Why she?

F: Oh, why...It is she, oh, it is she!...I just know it!...I feel it, there, in my bones! She must have come after I left!...like yesterday!

S: Ah! Yesterday?...

F: Or no!...she was there when I came...she hid...And the delays in opening the door for me, those whisperings!...His nervousness...his haste to see me go! Ah, the wretch!...She was there watching me, listening to me!...And, when I left, she threw herself into his arms, laughing at me!...

S: Oh!

F: At me!...With him!...In his arms!...Ah, you ruffian, I will rip out your heart!

S, getting up: Are you really sure?...And if you are mistaken?

F: Am I mistaken? You will see if I am mistaken!...[Turning toward Attavanti] Marquis!...

At: Signora.

F: Two words, please.

At: Four, Diva, and make it an order so that I shall have the pleasure of obeying you.

F: A bit of information only...Do you recognize this fan?

At, looking with his binocles: This fan? Not at all.

F: It was lost in a church and, since it has the crown of a marquise, I thought, perhaps, that it belonged...

At: To my wife?

F: Precisely.

At: Oh, but then, excuse me...it is not me whom you should ask about that. [Calling.]
Trivulce.

Tri, coming downstage: Marquis.

At: Tell me, my dear, do you recognize this fan as belonging to my wife?

Tri: Perfectly.

F: Ah!

At: You see...Oh, he cannot be mistaken.

S: Are you sure?

Tri: Very sure. I ordered the crown of pearls myself from Costa.

At: Oh, well then...

Tri: Is that all?

At: That is all for you, dear friend, thank you. [Trivulce goes up again.] As for me,
Signora...

F: You, Marquis, will ask your wife for me how her fan came to be found with my
lover's things.

At: Impossible...Trivulce is very careful with her!

F: I will not have it out with him, but with her.

At: The marquise?

F: Yes. Where is she, that wife of yours, so I can throw her fan in her face?

[She goes upstage right to look for the marquise amongst the women who are in the back.]

At, barring her passage: Oh!

S, likewise: You will not do this!

F: In the middle of the ball!

At: In front of the queen?

F: Oh, the queen!...She has lovers, she will understand me!⁸...

S: Stop!

At, tranquilly: There is nothing to fear, anyway, because the marquise is not here.

[He withdraws and goes towards stage left.]

F, quickly: She is not here?

At: No, she left for Frascati.

F, downstage right: Ah, Frascati!...She let you think that!...Oh, I see...She is with him, the wretch!...

At and S: With him?

F: Yes, yes, they are over there dining and spending the night together.

S: quickly, going to her: Over there?

F: Yes.

S: And where is...over there?

F, passing in front of him: Ah, I am supposed to tell you so that you can warn them, right?

S: Of course not!...I swear to you...

F: Come on! The police have no business here...The police!...I am the police and I am on my way there right now.

[She tries to go upstage left.]

S, quickly barring her way: What about the concert?

At, in the same manner, near Scarpia: The cantata?

F: Ah, I do not care about the cantata!

S: But that is impossible!

At: What a scandal!

F, coming back downstage to get to the first door on stage left: I couldn't care less about a scandal!

At: But, Diva!...

S: The queen!...

F: Tell the queen that I am sick...hoarse...that I cannot sing...Tell her whatever you want! Good evening!...

[She passes in front of the couch to get to the exit stage left.]

S, intercepting her quickly on that side by passing behind the couch: But this is insane!

At: She will not believe a word!

F: Then tell her that my lover has deceived me!...She will understand...

S: Tosca!...In Heaven's name!...

F, ready to leave by stage left: Let me go!...

S, barring her passage to the door: Then, excuse me! I am no longer speaking as a friend, but as the regent of the police...I arrest you.

F: You?

S: For God's sake, yes!...

F: And you will stop me?...You will do this?...You, an accomplice to the wife of that imbecile!

At: What?

S: I will do my duty in obliging you to do yours, which is to sing...

F: But I can't! As though I felt like it now...I am in a wonderful state to sing!...Can I sing?

S: Badly or well makes no difference...but the cantata, if you please, the cantata.

F: Oh! God!

S: And afterwards, on my honor, I will permit you to leave...I will even help you!

F, quickly: Is that a promise?

S: I swear it.

F, picking up her music folder on the couch: So, quick...Right now...Let's start...

S: Calm down.

F: Ah! The hussy!...And what about him!...God!...to be deceived like this!...Is it possible?...My God, is it possible!...[She falls onto the couch and weeps.]

S, behind the back of the couch: Come, come, Diva, courage!...Pull yourself together.

F, likewise, sitting, wiping her eyes: Where are they now? God knows!...They are dining!...

S: Perhaps.

F: They have finished...Do you think they have finished supper?

S: Probably...

F: And here I am ...here...while...

S, noticing the queen who has reappeared in the back on the balcony: The queen...Come now, patience,...it will take less than fifteen minutes.

F: But that is a long time, fifteen minutes! It's very long!...

[She gets up when she sees the queen. The musicians settle down at their desks.]

Paisiello, to Floria, who is still in front of the couch: Are you ready?...Diva.

F: Yes, yes, I am ready...Let's hurry!

[The musicians tune up.]

Pai: B natural, right?

F: No, B flat!...

Pai: Oh!

F, violently: B Flat!

Pai, turning back to his musicians: Flat! B Flat!

[The singing and the fanfares begin again on the piazza. Quickly the domestics pick up the seats, which have been carried upstage a few at a time, by the players themselves, and line them up in two rows facing the public, in front of the windows in the middle and stage left, so that the women can sit there. A gap is left between the back wall and the chairs for the officers and the courtesans. Center stage is empty. Nothing is left there except the couch on stage left, the queen's throne, a footstool in front of the throne against the wall, reserved for the Prince of Aragon, and another footstool on the other side for Froelich. The queen re-enters the scene by the window on stage right, followed by all the players, who get into place, the women in two rows standing in front of the chairs at back, the men behind the women. The choristers near Tosca and Paisiello form groups. The queen, after exchanging a few words with the Prince of Aragon and Froelich, climbs up on the platform near her; Attavanti, Trivulce, Trévilhac, Capréola, are on the first level on stage right. The windows are closed.]

F, mezza-voce: Let's go, will she never sit down, this queen?...

S: Keep your voice down, please!...

[The queen sits. All the women do as she does. The Prince of Aragon and Froelich take their places on the footstools. Capréola reclines in front of the queen, who nods her approval.]

F, likewise: Finally!...

Cp, turning to Paisiello: Monsieur, you may begin.

Pai: Yes, Excellency!...[To the orchestra] Shall we, gentlemen...[To Floria] Maestoso...

F: Yes.

Pai: Largo...Largo...

F: You annoy me!

Pai: Yes, my dear. [To Scarpia] She is nervous.

S: A little.

Pai: Ready, gentlemen!

[He taps on the music-stand and begins the introduction. Floria climbs up and, facing the queen, gives her a deep bow and readies herself to sing. At the same instant, and during the first chords, an aide-de-camp enters by stage right. Capréola goes to him and, having listened to him, says something to the Prince of

Aragon who speaks quietly to the queen, while Capréola returns in front of the throne awaiting orders. At a signal from the queen, he goes toward Paisiello and in full voice:]

Cp: Quiet, gentlemen, stop, if you please.

Pai: Basta!...

[The music stops short. Scarpia goes quickly to Capréola and speaks quietly with him.]

F: What is going on now?

S, to Floria: A courier...a letter from General Melas.

[During this time, the aide-de-camp gives the letter to the Prince of Aragon who gets up and, bending over, gives it to the queen.]

F, to herself: Ah, my God! Another delay!...Can't she read her letter later?

S, calming her: From a victorious general!...

[The queen rises as does the rest of the company.]

MC: This, gentlemen, comes just in time to crown the fête. This is a letter from General Melas that relates new details about his triumph. [Murmurs of satisfaction. Marie-Caroline breaking the seal.] I do not wish to give anyone else the pleasure of letting you hear this victorious news bulletin. I will read it to you myself.

[Cheers and acclamations on the piazza.]

At: Do you hear that?

S, mezza-voce: They saw the courier, and are applauding.

MC, who, in the meantime, has unfolded the letter, reads it: *From Alexandria, midnight from the 14th to the 15th of June. Madame. at sunset, the enemy, reinforced by a new army, after a battle in the same plains of Marengo, during most of the night, has defeated our troops...* [Exclamations of disappointment, the queen falls into her seat, and her voice impaired and enfeebled as she proceeds in her reading.] *...victorious during the day. At this moment, encamped under the walls of Alexandria, we are rallying the unfortunate debris of our army...and we shall deliberate about...* [Her voice dies out, letting the letter fall, she faints. The women crowd around her on all sides and hold her up.]

S, advancing: Gentlemen, the queen has fainted!...Quick...a doctor.

[The crowd gives shouts of joy and sings]

At: Those imbeciles who are applauding!...

Tri: ...and crying, "Victory!"

At: Make them stop!

[Trivulce and Capréola go to the balcony and make large gestures to be silent to the crowd whose shouts double in volume.]

Cp: Ah, yes! They have started now!

[Everyone disperses. The musicians pick up their instruments.]

F, coming out of her thoughts, to Trivulce: What is going on?...What?...What is everyone doing?

Tri: You didn't hear?

F: No, I don't know...I was elsewhere! A victory?

Cp: Ah no, Bonaparte has beaten us!...

F: Ah! So then, we are no longer singing?

Tri: Heavens, no!

[The musicians disappear with the choristers.]

F, throwing her music in the air: Ah, what luck!...I am saved!...[to Luciana] Quick, my coat!...

[Luciana quickly puts her fur-lined coat on her shoulders.]

Cp, going up with Trivulce: What kind of beast is this who loses the battle in the morning and wins it in the evening!

F: Indeed...I will do the same thing!

[She exits stage left.]

S, quickly to Schiarrone: Get your men into the carriage...mine, quickly, and follow her at a distance. [To Attavanti, who talks with Trivulce while Schiarrone leaves.] Come, Marquis, I will take you...

At, surprised: For what?...

S, taking his arm: The chase...You will understand later...Hurry...

[He drags him through the same door as Floria.]

T: No! This famous victory is now a defeat. It is too funny!

Cp: Not for you.

T: Ah, my word, it is too bad!...I am beaten...but we are the victors!...Vive la France!

[The music and the cries, which have not stopped, increase twofold on the piazza, in spite of the gestures of Trivulce, Capréola and others who rush back out to the balcony to silence the crowd.]

-CURTAIN-

¹This character is clearly based upon the real-life Princess Torlonia, wife of Alessandro Torlonia (originally Turlonia), silk-merchant and banker, who was one of the first Romans to welcome Napoleon. Although he was liberal, he remained faithful to the Pope, and was quite pleased to acquire the title of marquis, which he later traded for prince. His wife was noted for having played the part of Juno in a Carnevale parade on the via del Corso in 1805. [Fernand Hayward, *Le Dernier Siècle de la Rome Pontificale*. (Paris: Payot, 1927), 99 - 130]

²Barthélemy-Catherine Joubert (1769-1799) was a French officer who was killed at Novi on August 15 1799 when he was shot through the heart. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 132.]

³Jacques-Etienne Macdonald (1765-1840) became governor of Rome in 1798, and then succeeded Championnet in Naples. He later helped negotiate Napoleon's abdication and received honors during the Restoration. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 133.]

⁴Jean-Victor Moreau (1763-1813), later an adversary of Napoleon, was one of the foremost generals of the French Republic. After taking part in a royalist conspiracy, he went to Spain and then to Morrisville, Pennsylvania. He was killed in 1813 at the battle of Dresden. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 133.]

⁵General Paul Baron Kray von Krajowa (1735-1804) was given temporary command of the army in Italy, but soon headed the Austrian army in Germany. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 132.]

⁶General Heinrich Prince von Reuss-Plauen (1751-1825) was part of every major campaign in the Napoleonic period after the second Italian campaign, and in 1814, became Governor-General of Venice. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 134.]

⁷Major-General Michael von Frölich was commander of the 28th Bohemian Regiment from 1790 to 1814, when he died. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "*La Tosca*," 73.]

⁸Queen Marie-Caroline's rumored unfaithfulness was the subject of this popular Neapolitan song:

Caruli, si m'amave n' at'anno,	Carolina, if you had loved me for another year,
Quanta cose ch'avive da me!	how many things would I have given you!
Nu vurzone de doppie di Spagna,	A large bag of Spanish doubloons
Lu tenevo i'apposta pe te!	I had especially for you!
Caramaneca chiù de sett'anne	For more than seven years
Cuffiato fuie buono da te.	you really pulled a fast one on Caramanico.
Cu larzeneca tu n' 'o sciusciaste,	With arsenic you had him poisoned,
E munzù Atton accossi cuntentaste!	And Monsieur Acton thus satisfied you.