

ACT III

[Ground floor of Cavaradossi's villa. Downstage right and very visible, is an interior double door. Further away, in the corner formed where the two walls meet, is a makeshift studio: easel, canvases, an antique column shaft. Most of the decor, upstage, is occupied by open arches, as is all of stage left. These arches have foundations, except downstage left where there is a grille and a walkway, and upstage toward the center, They look out on a portico that encircles the building and is formed by the columns that support a trellis. Beyond, one can see the moon-lit garden, the cypresses, and a Renaissance fountain; on stage right is the rest of the building and the door to the front hallway. On stage left is a table. To stage right of this table is an armchair, and a large table is center stage. An armchair with a high back is on stage right of this table, and a portable chair is on stage left of it. In front of the table is a settee. In the middle of the upstage arches is an antique sarcophagus up against the foundations that can serve as a seat.]

First scene

MARIO, ANGELOTTI, CECCHO

[The stage is empty as the curtain rises. Ceccho appears first, upstage, at the entrance, carrying a candle that he rests on the column. Mario follows Angelotti, carrying his female attire over his arm.]

M: Here we can relax and rejoice. You are safe.

A: Thanks to you!

M: Crossing Rome, in this disguise, without attracting attention, even at night, was no small feat!...Ceccho, the caretaker, the most faithful of servants, is also the most skillful of chefs. He is going to throw together an excellent supper for us. After that, when we are clear-headed and ready, we can calmly examine the journey ahead. [To Ceccho, while giving him his coat and hat] Is your son here?

Ce: Yes, Excellency.

M: Tell him to close all the doors carefully and to be on the look-out.

[Ceccho leaves.]

Scene II

MARIO, ANGELOTTI

M: This house, my dear guest, as you saw in the moonlight, lies between the Baths of Caracalla and the mausoleum of the Scipions. Indeed it is somewhat melancholy. Nothing around us but ruins and tombs, the debris of ancient Rome; a dusty desert, with a few small farms for oases...But the very sadness is not without charm. I love this solitude inhabited by great memories, where I hear only the barking of watchdogs, carts passing in the distance, the neighboring bells of St. Sixtus and St. John, and the muffled clamor of the living Rome that speaks to me less than the silence of the dead one.

A: This is your home?

M: Not exactly. I live right in the center of the city, on the Spanish Steps, in an old house that still bears the pretentious name, "Palazzo Cavaradossi." This place is my country-house, my villa, my "vineyard," as our Roman friends say. However, I am only a tenant here, even though this house was built by one of my ancestors, Luigi Cavaradossi, on the ruins of an ancient villa. But it had not belonged to the Cavaradossis for years, until one day, caught in a storm in the Baths of Caracalla, I came here looking for shelter. Ceccho opened the door for me: an old acquaintance, he had been in service to my father. He told me that the villa, whose caretaker he was, belonged to an Englishman driven from Rome by the war, and that it was available for sale or rent. I was curious to visit the home of my forebears. It was, as you see, perfectly inhabitable. My first thought was to buy it: but, as I told you, I didn't plan on prolonging a dangerous stay here. Buying it would have been mad. It was wise, on the other hand, to rent it on the side, as a charming house that offered me shelter from the summer heat, and an asylum from the pestering of the police. So I rented it, then and there, on the express condition that the deal be known only to Ceccho, his son and me. I come here often, but via certain detours, and taking precautions that the solitude of the place makes practically unnecessary. Only Floria accompanies me. Who would think of looking for me here, or, moreover, of suspecting your presence?... Besides, what connection could be established between us?...No one saw us at the church. We crossed the city without being either recognized or followed; you have nothing to fear. In short, let's imagine the worst: they are on your trail...they come...they surround the house...I can still save you...

A: How?

M: In this city, which has conquered the world, but on whom the entire world has taken revenge for its role, and which every nation, in turn, has sieged and sacked: in this Rome of Christians and barbarians, of Neros and Borgias, of persecutors and victims, there is not an old house, as you know, without a secret shelter to hide from the tyrant from within or the invader from without. [He gets up.] And this house has its own, which family tradition passed on to me. [He goes to the grille] Do you see, down there, clearly in the moonlight, those two white marble columns?

A: Connected by a cross-line for a pulley? A well, if I am not mistaken?

M: An old Roman well, surrounded by cypress trees; the only remains of the original villa. It was completely abandoned and three-quarters filled-in when Luigi Cavaradossi, having cleaned it out, found water in the bottom that was very pure, filtering in from the Marrana; but the real find was twenty feet under the edge, in the inner wall that faces us, where a sort of hollowed-out niche was discovered. It has so narrow an opening that one can only enter it by crawling, then it gets large enough for someone to comfortably stand or lie down... There were various objects without value inside: pottery, bronzes...and some ancient coins...What escaped slave, what outlaw exiled by Marius or Scylla, what Christian destined to go to the beasts did this hide-out serve as asylum? Cavaradossi was careful to maintain it, and he did the right thing. Because, having stabbed a Medici who had called him a bastard, and trying to reach the St. Sebastian gate on horseback, the Pope's archers were closing in on him not far from here; he had just enough time to dash into the vineyard, run to the well, grab hold of the cords, slide down to the hiding place and to hole up there...the archers ransacked the house and garden in vain, and even came to draw water for their horses. The well is so narrow and so shadowed by the old cypress trees that surround it, the opening of the niche disappears so naturally behind the long, slimy grass that Cavaradossi, from his damp recess, could listen calmly to the cursing and the threats raining down on his head, along with the water overflowing from their buckets...When the archers had gone, he was able to escape and thus was saved. This old story and the tradition of the hiding place were so completely forgotten that I had to reveal the refuge's existence to Ceccho. It is always there as a last resort, and I have gotten it completely ready in case of emergency so that it can again save a Cavaradossi, or - it's all the same - one of his friends!...

A: Meaning a man whom you did not know this morning and for whom you now devote yourself to like a brother!

M: Bah! I am in an adventurous mood, and all this kind of thing amuses me...

A: Courageous man, do you think you can make light of your actions by speaking of them so?...It is your life, quite frankly, that you are playing with here on my account.

M: People do no less every day.

A: Who for example?...

M: The passerby who jumps into the water to save a drowning man.

A: He only takes a chance with his life. You risk the scaffold.

M: With that kind of reasoning, one would never do anything worthwhile. Let's forget it, my dear guest, and speak no more of my perils, but of yours.

A: They are the same right now.

M: Scarpia has set all his thugs to the hunt, and you can no longer think about leaving the city by the gates, which will be tightly guarded. Are you a good swimmer?

A: Excellent!

M: Luigi Cavaradossi escaped via the Tiber, swimming under a bundle of plants that seemed to be floating with the current. Why don't you follow his example?

A: It is feasible...

M: We will talk about it again later, while dining. In the meantime, go and take a look at the well, and familiarize yourself with how to get in and out. [They go to leave stage left. Angelotti goes first.] Ssh!...[Angelotti stops on the doorstep. Mario crosses the stage and goes to listen at the upstage door.] Someone is closing a door down there to which only Floria has the key.

A: So, it is she?

M: Yes.

A: Does that worry you?

M: A little...at this hour...Go by yourself to this side, and stay in the garden...I will find out first what brings her and call you, if there is cause.

[Angelotti disappears into the garden stage left.]

Scene III

MARIO, FLORIA

[Floria enters from upstage, taking in the whole scene at one glance brusquely.]

M, going to her and taking her hand, tenderly: You?

F, looking at him right in the eyes: Me!...Does that bother you?

M: It worries me...Who sent you?

F, likewise: Curiosity...I wanted to see her.

M: Who?

F: Your mistress.

M, laughing: Oh, my God, you gave me a scare!...This is only jealousy...But who is my mistress?

F, exclaiming: Your hussy, your marquise!...

M: Ah, the marquise again!...

F, seizing the dress: And this?...Isn't this hers? Is this yours?...Is this yours?...

M: Come now, listen to me and I will explain it to you...

F, not listening: Yes, she was posing for you again?...Oh, my God, I see it all!...She posed, the innocent...and for a saint!...in the nude!...

M, same business, taking both her hands: If you will allow me...

F, violently disengaging one hand, without listening, and running to the door on stage right: You are here!...So show yourself!...Or are you so ugly you are ashamed to come out!...

M: Floria, look...

F, throwing the fan on the ground: There, give your sweetheart her fan...so that she can cover herself with it a little!

M: But you are mad, mad, mad!...

F, disengaging both her hands: Yes, I am mad, yes, to love someone so base, deceitful, cowardly, egotistical, ungrateful...a ruffian who runs from that creature to me, from her arms to mine, comes to her hot from my caresses and returns to me with dirty kisses that taste of another!

M: Two words, please...

F, desolate and finally weeping: Oh, miserable wretch!...And I adore him!...I live for him alone...I am no longer myself, I am him!...I have him in my soul, in my heart, in my flesh, in my blood!... Some slut takes him from me and I am so faint-hearted that I still

love him; and I think I would hate him in vain...I will love him always...I will be so miserable!...

M, gently: Come now, are you done?...

F: Ah! scoundrel!

M: Will you let me say one word...Just one...

[He takes one of her hands, which she surrenders, wiping her eyes with the other.]

F, lovingly, without lifting her head: Ah! scoundrel!...

M: So, yes, this dress belongs to the marquise.

F, starting, in tears: Ah! you see!...

M, calmly, sitting her down again: But it was not she who left it here. It was an unfortunate who used it as a disguise...a fugitive.

F: Her brother?

M: Who is here.

F: Ah, it was not her!...It was Angelotti...her brother...her brother...Ah! I love you so much!

M: It's about time!

F, covering him with kisses: Oh, my love, my treasure, my life!...[She stops short.] If you are lying...

M: Oh!

F, quickly, closing his mouth: No, I believe you...

M: You can see him...

F: No, no, no, I don't want to!...

M, still seated: He is down there...Here, look...

F: But I just told you that I don't want to see him!...I want to believe you only on your word...without proof...so that you will forget my foolish ideas and know that I have nothing, nothing, nothing but more love for you...[Walking around him, and without seeming to, she looks at the garden, embracing him] Yes, it's true...I see him!...

M, laughing: Ah! there's a woman for you!...And will you pardon me, too?

F, with conviction: Oh! Yes!

M, likewise: All of your insults...Thank you!

F, tenderly, standing, holding him in her arms from behind: No, no! It is I who should ask your pardon...To risk your life for the welfare of another, is so generous of you, and so good...Ah, you deserve better than me. You must be indulgent with me...Besides, you cannot resent me for being jealous and for loving you...Because I love you too much...Ah, if you loved me as much as I love you!...

M: Fine!...scold me again!

F, likewise: Oh, no, I am too happy!...[Silence.] Will that man be staying here?...

M: Angelotti?...For tonight, at least. We will try to leave the city before dawn.

F: Then, I am staying too.

M, standing: Oh, no!...This adventure has nothing to do with you.

F: Even so!...

M: No, no, you should go back to the party.

F: Ah!...the party...I will not sing!...Bonaparte was victorious...

M, enraptured: Victorious?...

F: At Marengo.

M: Bravo!...So then what happened?...

F: Then, everything fell apart, as you can imagine...

M: You should go home then...

F: Like this...sadly?

M: Yes, yes, I want you to...is your carriage here?

F: A little ways away. I wanted to surprise you.

M: You should be more careful...At night on a deserted road...

F: Ambroise is armed...

M: Ceccho's son will go with you.

F: And when will I see you again?

M: Tomorrow, after Angelotti leaves.

F: My God, what if you are arrested with him...

M, helping her straighten her clothes: No, don't worry...I won't do anything rash...Expect me in the morning, early.

F: Oh, yes, I will worry!...

M, taking the fan: So it was this fan then that put such foolishness into your head?...

F: It was nothing, right?

M: It was for her brother, like the dress.

F: How could I have known that?...Can I speak to him?

M: To Angelotti?...If you wish...[He points toward the garden, while speaking] He is down there looking at the well in case we are surprised...

F: Ah! Yes.

M: Then, you went back to the church after I left?

F: No.

M, stopping: No? So then how did this fan come into your hands?

F: Ah, it was...[She stops, struck by a sudden thought.] Oh!...

M: What is it?

F: Oh, my God!...Are the police looking for him?...

M: Naturally!

F: Scarpia?

M: Yes!

F: Ah, I understand: it was a trap!

M: A trap?...

F: Those suspicious innuendos about you...It was him!...

M: Scarpia?

F: He put me on your trail, the wretch!

M, alarmed: He saw you leave?

F: He must have followed me!

M: Oh, wretch!...What have you done!

F: Be quiet!...Listen...

M: The sound of voices...

F, terrified: Here they are!

Scene IV

THE SAME, CECCHO, ANGELOTTI

Ce, running: Excellency!...There are men knocking at the gate!

M: Talk to them to gain some time. [He runs to the window.] Angelotti! [Angelotti appears on the garden bench while Tosca listens upstage.] We are discovered!... They are here!...

A: I will cross the fields and throw myself in the ruins.

M: Too late, the house is surrounded... To the refuge, quick... quick!

A: Ah! I swear to God that they will not take me alive!

[He disappears.]

M, to Floria: They are coming... Be cool-headed if you don't want to lose me along with him!

F: Oh, my God, and to think that I did this!

[One sees and hears the policemen upstage, who appear from all sides in the garden, blocking all means of escape.]

Scene V

FLORIA, MARIO, CECCHO, SCARPIA, THE MARQUIS ATTVANTI,
SCHIARRONE, SPOLETTA, ALBERTI, CLERK, POLICEMEN.

[Scarpia enters upstage, with the Marquis, Schiarrone, Alberti and his aides, and they come forward slowly.]

M, going to him: Permit me to ask the baron to what reason I owe the honor of his company at such an hour?

S, coldly: Madame must have informed you?

M: Madame, after it had pleased her to reveal these intimate details to you, has realized the falseness of these accusations. But, these are domestic problems that do not threaten the security of the State and that, I think, do not warrant your vigilant involvement.

S: You are mistaken. I am here in the exercise of my duty. [Pointing to the marquis.] His Excellency requested that I bear witness to the insult to his honor occasioned by the presence in your home, at this time, of the Marquise Attavanti, his wife.

M: Ah, is that the reason?... The gentleman is mistaken... Madame the marquise is not here, and has no reason to be... And Madame can verify her absence.

F, quickly: Yes!...

At, with satisfaction: Does Madame acknowledge this?...

F: I swear to it!...

At: What was I telling you, Baron?...The gentleman is incapable of doing such a thing...We must offer him our apologies...

S: Pardon, Marquis...But permit me to be reticent about the gentleman's self-serving assertions, and the lady's obliging ones.

M: But I repeat, sir...

S, picking the fan up from the table: In short, sir, how did this fan come into your hands?...Explain that, I beg you.

M: Nothing simpler. The Marquise Attavanti deigned to do me the honor of posing for one of the characters in the tableau that I am painting at St. Andrew: she forgot her fan when she left, that is all.

At: Eh, without a doubt...that is the explanation...

S: And the proof of what you are saying?

M: Her portrait, which anyone can go see at St. Andrew, and also the absence of the marquise, who could not have gotten out with your men guarding all the exits...Search the house, which is not large...If you find the person for whom you are looking here, I will not ask the marquis to be reasonable, I will invite him to run me through with his sword without further ado...Open all the doors, Ceccho, enlighten these gentlemen.

At: Let's hope I am the only person who ever threatens your life, young man... [To Scarpia.] This examination is useless, Baron, perfectly useless!

S: Indeed...the gentleman would not throw open his double-doors if the person for whom we are looking was hidden behind them.

At: By heavens!...Then I have nothing more to do here, correct?

S, calmly: Nothing. Your Excellency can return home. No doubt he will find the marquise there, who was wise enough not to come here with her brother.

[Everyone is startled.]

At: Her brother...Here?

S, pointing to Mario: Look at the gentleman, and you will not doubt what I say!

M, recovering himself: Me!...Sir...I don't understand what you are trying to say.

S: Excuse me...We understand each other very well...But this must be the subject of a special conversation that would painfully prolong the gentleman's long evening. His role is over, mine begins.

At: Yes, I confess...My brother-in-law...I prefer to excuse myself...

S: Was the marquis, on his way home, going to see how Her Majesty is faring?...

At: Certainly.

S: Then Your Excellency can tell her that the fugitive has been found and that he is taken...[Everyone starts. He looks at his watch. Coldly.] Now, it is only a matter of minutes.

At: My word, Baron, that is an errand you must run for yourself. It is already too much to have forced me to play a role that, for a married man, is in bad taste.[To Mario] Cavaliere, my apologies. [To Tosca] Diva, I remain your humble servant.

S, to Schiarrone, quietly: Be polite and accompany this master idiot to his carriage!...

[Schiarrone leaves with the marquis.]

Scene VI

THE SAME WITHOUT THE MARQUIS

M, quickly and quietly to Tosca while Scarpia bows to the marquis: Watch what you say!

F, likewise: He will get nothing from me!...

S, to Schiarrone who has searched the house during the previous scene: Have you searched the whole house?

Sch: Yes, Excellency. No one.

S: And in the garden?

Sch: No one.

S: He could not have escaped. Everything is surrounded...Therefore he is here, hidden somewhere.

Sch: We could search more thoroughly...and tap the walls.

S: Ridiculous and too time-consuming...It is late...We shall learn what we wish to know sooner by asking this gentleman to tell us.

M: Me?

S: Immediately.

M: I will tell you just one thing: that Angelotti is not in my home.

S: You will see nevertheless that he will be. But it is useless to prolong this discussion. Go into that room where you will answer questions posed to you by the fiscal prosecutor.

M: And why not here?

S: That it is my wish would be reason enough...But I will give you another reason: that is that Madame cannot be present at your interrogation, having to undergo her own.

M, quickly: Madame knows nothing more than I.

S: We shall see...Let's go, let's finish up...escort the gentleman into that room.

[The policemen move.]

M: Force will not be necessary. If the gentlemen will follow me...

[He enters the room followed by the policemen.]

Scene VII

THE SAME WITHOUT MARIO

The Fiscal Prosecutor: Your Excellency wishes me to interrogate?...

S: In the usual manner. You will suspend or recommence the interrogation according to the orders that I will give you from here, and that will depend on the lady's answers. Go!

[The prosecutor leaves with the clerk of the court.]

Scene VIII

FLORIA, SCARPIA, SCHIARRONE, POLICEMEN

[Two policemen are upstage. Schiarrone is in front of the door to the room, which he has closed.]

F, seated near the table on stage left: On my answers, mine?...

S, coming to her: By God, yes!...

F: And how can I answer questions about events about which I know nothing?...

S, smiling and very polite: Let us speak as friends, all right?...[He pulls up a seat.] And let us pick up the conversation where we left off at the Palazzo Farnese...So, this fan misled us, and the jealous suspicions were baseless?...

F: You knew that well enough!...

S: I was mistaken about the person, that is all...The Cavaliere was not here with the marquise, but with her brother.

F: With neither one nor the other. He was alone.

S, joking: Seriously?

F: Yes.

S, likewise: Do you swear it?...

F, nervously: Of course, I swear it!...Yes, I swear it...Yes!

S, coldly: Oh! calm yourself, signora, I take your word for it [turning around in the chair and, without getting up, Calmly] Schiarrone?

Sch: Excellency?

S: What does the Cavaliere say?

Sch, on the sill of the door that he holds half-open: Nothing, Excellency.

S: He persists in denying the presence of the gentleman Angelotti?

Sch: Absolutely.

S, raising his voice in order to be heard inside: Then, insist, Roberti, insist.

F, quickly: Your insistence will not make him say what is not so.

S, likewise: My God, I can judge men at a glance: I foresaw the Cavaliere's obstinacy. But I had hoped to find you more reasonable.

F: Must I lie to make you happy?

S, smiling: No!...But in speaking the truth, you will spare the Cavaliere a difficult quarter of an hour.

F, struck: What?...What are you trying to say?...[standing] What is going on in that room?...

S, likewise: Oh, nothing very complicated: your friend is being interrogated in the manner required.

F, worried: I want to see what is happening in there!...

S, taking her arm and stopping her: I can tell you: the Cavaliere is stretched out in an armchair with his arms and his hands tied, his head ringed by a steel clamp with three points: one for the nape of his neck, two for his temples...

F, terrified: Oh!...

S, standing: And, each time he refuses to speak, the screw turns...and the clamp bites!...

F, twisting her arm free: Ah, they shall be damned!...Stop it!...Stop!...

S, holding her tight: So you will talk?

F: Oh, if only they would stop!...Tell them to stop!...Shout it!...

S: Stop, Roberti, and loosen it!...

F: Oh, more!...more!...more!...

S: More, Roberti...Completely.

Sch, on the door-step: It is done, Excellency.

S: It is done.

F: Oh, cowards! cowards!...I want to see him! [Schiarrone bars her way] Open up!...

S: Close it.

[Schiarrone closes the door.]

F, to Schiarrone who is barring her way, as is another policeman: Let me in, you...Let me in!...[She hurls herself at the closed door and knocks on it. Calling] Mario!...Answer me!...Can you hear me?...One word!...Just one...so I know you are alive! [Silence] Demons!... They have killed him!...

S, seated on stage left, calmly: No...give him time to recover...

F: Mario!...My Mario!...

M, with effort: Floria!...

F: Ah!...

M: Do not be afraid!...I am strong!...

F: They aren't hurting you anymore, are they?...I want to know!...Tell me!...

M: No, not right now...Courage, my dear...Be brave!...

F: Ah, such a voice!...How he is suffering!...[She withdraws from the door.] Ah, my God! my God!...Is it possible?...To torture him like this, sweet and good as a child!...There are ten of them in there looking for what would most hurt one poor, defenseless man!...And they found this!...this atrocity!...steel clamps in his temples!...How horrible!...And this one smiles...and smacks his lips thinking of human blood!...He admires himself, this tiger!...

S, smiling: No, my dear, it is you I admire!...By my faith, you play a tragic role in real life as well as you do on the stage... My compliments...But let us get back to serious matters...Did you hear him?... "I am strong." That means: "they will not extract one word."

F: Ah, you would sooner extract his soul!

S: Without a doubt.

F: So then, release him...Give him back to me!...Since he will say nothing, it is over, isn't it?...

S: Over?...We have just begun.

F, choking: To...?

S: To question him.

F: You would torture him again?...To learn nothing?...

S: Wrong...I will know everything: he will be interrogated, but it is you who will respond.

F: Me?

S: Yes, you!...And remember that each time you refuse to talk you are turning the screw once more.

F: Oh, murderer!...

S: I am no longer the murderer, you are, if you refuse to answer me...[Very loud.] Let's go, Roberti, get ready...We'll begin again...

[Schiarrone half-opens the door and stays ready to transmit orders.]

F: Assassin!...[Scarpia moves. She steadies herself.] No!...Pardon, mercy, pity, Excellency, not this!...It is horrible...not this!

S: So, where is Angelotti?...

F: But I don't know!...I know nothing!...How would I know?...[Scarpia lifts his hand. Schiarrone moves. She leaps up and brings his hand down.] No!!...Wait!...Ah, my God!...Just wait!... Losing one to save the other, this is terrifying!...Give me time...They are not doing anything to him, right?...You are sure?

S: No; I am waiting...but hurry...answer.

F: But what?...What should I say?...I don't know!...Tell me what I should say...Ah, Lord, as long as they do nothing to him, I will say whatever you want!...

S: So be it!... Was there a man here when you arrived?

F: No!...[Scarpia moves.] Yes, yes!... Wait!... Let me think, at least!... A man?... I don't know anymore!...[Same business.] Yes, Yes!! I think so!... I think so!...[To Schiarrone.] But, since I am answering for him, close the door, damn you!

S: And this man was Angelotti?

F: Oh, as far as that goes, no!

S, mockingly: That means "yes."

F: No!... I tell you, no!

S, likewise: With such emphasis that it means "yes."

F: Ah, when you settle your account with God, have no fear, I will be there!... And besides, what do I know?... Do I know your Angelotti?...

S: So, where is this man, whoever he may be?

F: Ah, just try to catch him... he must be far away!...

S: No... everything is surrounded...

F: Look, if you are going to contradict everything I say!...[Terrified.] A scream... They are starting up again!...

S: No!

F: Yes! Yes!... I heard it!...

[She listens.]

S: Nothing, I tell you... So, Schiarrone?...

Sch: Fainted.

S: See?... Let's continue... This man is hidden somewhere, then, right here perhaps?...

F, worried, her attention on the door: If only God had let him be here!... He would not let you grind his savior up alive!...

S: Then he is his savior?

F, struck: No!

S: You just said it!

F: Ah, what I say, what I say! You force me to speak, so of course I speak nonsense...whatever comes into my head!...

S: In a word, he is hidden!...[Floria begins to protest. Threatening.] Hidden where?...Come on, let's finish up!...

F: I don't know!...

S, towards the door: Proceed, Roberti!...

F, frightened: No!...I know!...He is...

S: He is...?

F, who, in her first gesture, which all watch, almost pointed out the garden, stops short, desolate: It is too ghastly!...Even so I cannot deliver this unfortunate into your hands to be killed!...

[She falls into the chair, her arms on the small table, her head on her arms.]

S: in her ear, gently, after a pause: Come now, be courageous...and your lover will be free!

F, sobbing: Oh, God!...He will never forgive me for this...never!

S: Speak softly...and he will never know anything...Shall we proceed?

F, voiceless: I want to speak to him first...

S: To what end?

F: I will do anything you want afterwards, but I want to see him, to speak with him!...Please!...I beg you!...

S: Stop for an instant, Roberti. [To Schiarrone] Open the door!...Is the Cavaliere still in a faint?

Sch: No.

[Schiarrone opens the door. Floria wipes her face, gets up and, crossing the stage, starts to enter the room.]

S, stopping her: Oh, pardon!...From here only.

F, falling into the armchair near the door: Mario, ...my Mario! You can hear me, can't you?...

M, laboriously: Yes!...

F: You see, my beloved Mario!...Your strength is used up...Mine, too, I assure you!...You want me to, don't you?...Tell me that you want me to talk...

M: And what could you say, you unfortunate?...You know nothing!...

F, begging: My Mario!...

M, with force: You know nothing!

F, her hands outstretched towards him: But I cannot let you be torn apart like this! My flesh cries out along with yours!...[She falls to her knees.] My love, I am begging you on my knees!...My Mario, beloved, say...say that it is all right!...

M, with energy: No! No!...You have nothing to say!...And I forbid you, do you hear me?...I forbid you!...

F, desperate: But, they will kill you!...

M: I forbid you!...

S, with a vengeance: Proceed! And do not stop any more!

F, turning towards Scarpia: No!...I will speak!...

M: Be quiet...or I will curse you!...

F: Oh, God!...

S: Keep going!...

F, clinging to him on her knees: No!...Stop!...

S, to Floria: Where is the man?...[A cry of pain from Mario.]

F: Ah!...Too bad for the other one!...I will tell everything!...

S, to Schiarrone: Stop!

F, pointing to the garden: There!...

S: The garden?

F: The well!...

S: The well!...

[The policemen rush into the garden, from stage left. The soldiers, upstage, also rush out, into the trees.]

F, standing: My Mario, now!...Bandits, give him back to me!...

[She runs towards the room whose door Schiarrone is still blocking.]

S: It is done!...untie the other. [He goes towards the garden.]

Scene IX

THE SAME, MARIO, THEN COLOMETTI

[Mario appears on the doorstep, livid, bewildered, leaning on the doorpost. He has two bloodstains at the temples. Floria runs to him, supporting him and helping him get to the armchair where he collapses mute and haggard.]

F, wiping his face and covering him with kisses: Oh, my love, my life!...My angel, my hero!...

M, opening his eyes after a while, and, laboriously, like a drunken man: Ah! this is terrible!...You didn't say anything, did you?...I didn't either?...

F: No! No!...you said nothing!...Nothing!

[He collapses again, exhausted. Silence. She is crying as she kisses his hands. Colometti reappears on the doorstep.]

S: So?

Colometti: We have him.

S: Finally!

Col: Dead.

S: Dead?...Poisoned?...

Col: Without doubt.

[The policemen lay Angelotti's body down in the garden, near the doorstep, in view and lit by the moon. Mario opens his eyes. Floria places herself so that she is blocking Angelotti from him.]

M: Dead?...[To Floria.] Who is dead?...I want to see!...[Same business to Floria. He sits up.]
Let me go!...[He pushes her aside to see the body.] Him? [Standing.] Ah, you miserable wretch!

F: Mario!...

M: Don't touch me!...Go away!...I loathe you!...It was you!...You killed him!...

[He falls exhausted on the sarcophagus, his eyes fixed on the corpse.]

F, falling at Mario's knees: In order to save you!...

S, to the policemen: Come, Schiarrone, let's finish up...Take everyone!...The dead man, to the compost heap, and the living one, his accomplice...

F, terrified: Him?

[They surround Mario and lead him away.]

S: To the gallows!...

[Floria wants to speak, she looks at him, bewildered, unable to either speak or cry out, and she collapses thunderstruck.]

Sch: And the woman?...

S: The woman, too!...

-CURTAIN-