

## ACT IV

[A room in the Castel Sant'Angelo. On stage right, a raised platform in a corner with a richly decorated alcove. Upstage is a bed on a raised step. On stage left, another raised platform with a wide window with a balcony. Upstage is an entranceway and a small piece of furniture to stage left. Downstage left is an open secretary. Downstage right, is a console table beneath a mirror. At the foot of the bed, in the alcove, a prayer stool with an ivory crucifix. Towards stage right, in profile, is a table covered with a cloth and on which a dinner has been served. On stage left, a couch placed at an angle. It is still night, and the room is lit only by two lighted candlesticks placed on the console, and a candleabra on the table. When the curtain rises, the window is shut. Scarpia is eating, sitting at the table, with his back to the console. A butler and a footman wait on him.]

### First scene

SCARPIA, SCIARRONE, A BUTLER, A FOOTMAN, COLOMETTI

S: Open the window, Colometti. The air in here is stuffy. [Colometti throws the window on stage left wide open.] What time is it?...Schiarrone.

Sch: Excellency, they have already sung Matins.

S: The city seems pretty calm to me.

Sch: Very calm, Excellency...The governor has doubled the watch and the whole garrison is armed and ready.

S: Useless precautions...This French victory has excited the Romans less than I would have thought.

Sch: More surprise than joy, Excellency...That is the general feeling, I think.

S: Is the prisoner in the chapel?

Sch: Yes, Excellency, with the Whitefriars of the Dead.<sup>1</sup> But when they plead with him to beg for Divine mercy, even with all their saintly efforts, he stubbornly replies that he has no pardon to ask of God, because he only did his duty as an honest man: to come to the aid of any victim of tyranny.

S, slicing some food and serving himself: That is a Jacobin for you!

Sch: And that if anyone is guilty in this affair, it is not he in respect to Heaven, but Heaven in respect to him...

S: Shocking blasphemy!...And then?

Sch: So, the Whitefriars, tiring of so much impiety, left him alone...He took advantage of it to go to sleep.

S: Excellent preparation for death, and worthy of a Christian!...

## Scene II

THE SAME, SPOLETTA

S, to Spoletta as he enters: So, Captain, have you seen the Governor?...

Sp: Excellency, Monseigneur has just returned home, having spent the night at the Palazzo Farnese, where he was detained by the indisposition of Her Majesty . He seemed quite satisfied with the news of Angelotti's arrest, and gave me this order written in his hand.

S, reading: *The Cavaliere Mario Cavaradossi must be executed before dawn.* [He places the order on the table.] I have been thinking: Angelotti was condemned to hang and he should do so. There is no point in letting it be known that he escaped us by drinking poison, and that we are only hanging a cadaver. These voluntary deaths set a detestable example. The criminal must not escape punishment. So, for all to see, Angelotti will die at the executioner's hand. Are the gallows ready?

Sch: They are erecting them as we speak, under this window, at the head of the bridge.

S: Leave the corpse on view until High Mass begins. After that, throw it in some trench or other; and not on holy ground. A suicide has no right to either a Christian burial or a cross on his tomb.

[He drinks.]

Sp: It shall be done as you wish, Excellency. And the other one?

S: For Cavaradossi, we shall see. Where is the woman?

Sp: In the room where Your Excellency has ordered her locked up.

S, a glass in his hand: Still furious?...

Sch: Calmer. She was quite worried about the Cavaliere at first, then about where she was being taken. We have seen no need to tell her, having no instructions in that regard.

S, to Schiarrone: Bring la Tosca in here...[Schiarrone leaves. To Spoletta] You, Spoletta, keep your eye on the hanging of the dead. Once it is done, I will call you from this window. Go on... [To the servants, getting up when he sees Tosca brought in by Schiarrone.] Leave me...

[The butler bows: the footman takes away the platter that is on the console.]

### Scene III

SCARPIA, FLORIA

[Floria enters silently, pale; she supports herself on the back of the couch and looks around her.]

S, after awhile: You want to know where you are, Tosca. You and the Cavalier Cavaradossi are in the Castel Sant'Angelo, my home...Now, I would guess that after such a night you are exhausted. Allow me to do you the honor, in this melancholy dwelling, of inviting you to dinner; it would have been a better one, if I had known that you would be a guest here tonight.[Floria, without looking at him, makes a scornful gesture of refusal. He continues, smiling.] Fine...I hope you don't think it is poison...that was the custom of another era. We no longer do it that way.

F, in a hollow voice: But you still slit throats!

S, coolly: Rarely, and murderers only...For rebels and their accomplices I rather prefer shooting or hanging, if it were my choice. [Floria moves.] This surprises you...Had you imagined that the Cavaliere would be given a trial?

F, anxiously: He won't have a trial?...

S, still smiling: What foolishness!...An interrogator, witnesses and defense attorneys!...As though we had the time to amuse ourselves with these frivolities!...Her Catholic Majesty has simplified the procedure... Come here; in the light of the lanterns you can see people working at the head of the bridge. They are erecting a gibbet with two arms. From one they will hang a dead man: Angelotti...from the other, a living one!...

F, frightened: Mario?

S: That is correct!... and I could choose to embellish the group by adding you to it. But it would not please God for me to deprive the Romans of their idol, who is mine as well. Your carriage is waiting for you below. All the doors of the Castel are open to you. You

can leave, you are free! [Floria rushes towards the door with a cry of joy.] Wait!...[She stops.] I can guess the true meaning of your cry. It is not joy over your own salvation!...But this thought, "I will run to the Palazzo Farnese, I will force my way in to see the queen, and I will make her pardon my lover!" Isn't that so?

F: Yes, that's right.

S, picking up the orders from the table: Unfortunately, the order is explicit. The Cavaliere must be executed before dawn. By the time his pardon reaches me, he will have been dead for an hour.

F: You would do that?

S: Ah, in good faith, my dear...You have suffered enough, but not he!

F: But then...then...wretch!...You are no longer an executioner, but an assassin!...

S: Perhaps...That depends...But we shall see...please sit down and at least accept a glass of Spanish wine. [He pours.] This way we can discuss the Cavaliere Cavaradossi in a more relaxed manner, and find the best way to help him out of this unfortunate situation.

F: I am thirsty and hungry for his freedom only !...Come on, let's get to it!...[She sits down resolutely at the table, facing him, and setting aside the glass.] How much?

S, pouring a drink: How much?

F: Yes!...It is a question of money, I suppose!

S: Really, Tosca. You don't know me very well...You have seen me be ferocious and implacable in the execution of my duties: my honor and even my own salvation were at stake. Angelotti's flight would inevitably have brought my disgrace... But, duty accomplished, I am like a soldier who lays down his fury along with his arms: and you have before you now only Baron Scarpia, your devoté, whose admiration for you is almost to the point of fanaticism...and that took on a new facet tonight... Yes, until now, I never saw you as anything but an exquisite interpreter of Cimarosa or Paisiello...This struggle revealed you to me as a woman...A woman more tragic, more passionate than the actress herself, and one hundred times more wonderful in reality than in fiction! Ah! Tosca, you found just the right stresses, cries, gestures, poses!...No, it was stupendous, and I was dazzled to the point of forgetting my own role in this tragedy, becoming just a spectator, and declaring myself conquered!...

F, still worried, at mezza-voce: God help me!

S: But do you know what kept me from doing it? With this enthusiasm over a woman as bewitching and intoxicating as you, and so different from all of the other women I have had...a jealousy... a sudden jealousy that is eating at my heart...What! All these tears and anger for this Cavaliere who, just between us, hardly deserves such passion? Really! The more you begged for him, the more it strengthened my tenacious desire to keep him in my power, to make him atone for so much love and to punish him. Yes, I swear, to punish him! I want him to suffer for his unmerited happiness. I so envy him the possession of such a creature as you...that I can only pardon him on one condition...and that is having my share.

F, jumping to her feet: You!...

S, sitting, restraining her by the arm: and I will have it!...

F, she pulls away violently, bursting into laughter: Imbecile!...I would rather throw myself out this window!...

S, coolly, without budging: Do it... Your lover will follow you!...Say "yes" - I save him..."no" - I kill him!...

F, looking at him, terrified: Ah, you vile cynic!...What a horrible bargain!...Using terror and force!...

S: Fine, my dear, but where is the violence? If you don't like the bargain, go, the door is open...But I dare you to do it...You can scream, insult me, invoke the Virgin and all the saints!...That will only waste time with useless words!...In the end, with nothing left to do, you will say "yes."

F: Never!... I will wake the whole city with my cries of your infamy.

S, likewise, coolly, taking a sip: That won't awaken the dead!...[Floria stops short, making a gesture of despair. He goes on, smiling.] You really hate me, don't you?

F: Oh, God!

S, likewise: Fine!...That is just how I love you!...[He places his cup on the table.] A woman who gives herself is an easy conquest...I am tired of that!...[He advances towards her] But humiliating you and your scorn and anger...twisting and breaking your resistance in my arms...By God, there is the sport, and your submission would only spoil my fun!...

F, leaning on the back of the secretary: Oh, demon!

S, one knee on the couch: A demon, so be it!...As such, that which charms me, proud creature, is that you will be mine...in rage and suffering,...that I will feel your haughty soul struggling,...your resisting body trembling in forced abandon to my detestable caresses, your whole flesh slave to mine! ...What revenge for your scorn, what vengeance for your insults, what refinement in lust that my gratification will also be your torture...Oh, you hate me!...Me, I want you, and I intend to get a diabolical joy from the coupling of my desire and your hatred!...

F, going towards the table: You must have been conceived in such a coupling, you wild beast, no woman's breast could have nourished you with her milk!

S, advancing towards Floria: More! More!...Go on...Insult me...You can't do it enough...spit your scorn in my face, bite and claw...That will only whip up my desire and make me want you more!...

F, terrified, running away: Don't come near me!...Help, save me!...

S: No one will come!...You are wasting time on useless screaming...Look, it's getting light, and your Mario has less than fifteen minutes to live!

F: Ah! my God, my great good God, my savior!...How could there be such a man and you do nothing! Don't you see him?...Don't you hear me?...

S, scoffing: Don't count on Him!...Angelotti is already on the gallows. [She recoils in alarm.] And it is the other one's turn!...[Calling.] Spoletta.

F, rushing towards the window: No!...No!...Save him!...

S, advancing and taking her left hand, ready to clasp it: You consent?...

F, disengaging herself and slipping back into his arms, falling at his feet: Have pity!...Mercy!...Oh, my God!...You have had your revenge!...I have been punished and humiliated enough...I am at your feet...I beg you...I ask your pardon...I humbly ask your pardon...for all that I have said...humbly!...Mercy!...Mercy!...

S: Come, it is agreed, isn't it?...[He raises her up and presses her to him.]

F, disengaging herself with a cry of disgust: No!...No!...I don't want to!...I couldn't!...I don't want to!...

#### Scene IV

THE SAME, SPOLETTA

[Spoletta stops on the sill. Soldiers are behind him in the anteroom.]

Sp: Shall I go get Cavaradossi?

F: Oh! No!... no!...

S: Wait!...[He goes to Floria, clinging to the back of the couch.] You have one minute to decide!

F, exhausted and desperate: It's over!...Everything is against me!...It's over!...

[She collapses on the couch.]

S, in her ear: Come on!...

[Silence]

F, after some time, with effort, shamefully, in a whisper, more with gesture than with words: Yes!...

[She bursts into tears, her face on the back of the couch.]

S, going back upstage: Captain...I have changed my mind...The executioner can go back to sleep. We shall not hang the Cavaliere, leave him in the chapel.

[Spoletta turns towards his men who, after a words from him, retreat. He alone remains visible.]

F, in a low voice to Scarpia: I want him freed, freed instantly.

S, likewise: Calm down, Tosca!...The situation requires more secrecy!... Here are the prince's orders, which I must obey. [He presents the paper.] The only thing that is up to me is the method; we will take advantage of it...But everyone, except this man who is devoted to me, must think that the Cavaliere is dead!...

F: And how do I know that afterwards...you will save him?

S: I will give the order here, in your presence!...[to Spoletta.] Spoletta, close the door...[Spoletta obeys.] Listen well...We are no longer hanging the Cavaliere, we are shooting him...[Floria moves, but he stops her with a gesture.] on the platform of the Castel, like we shot Count Palmieri...

Sp: Then, Excellency, it is to be a...

S: Simulated execution...Exactly as you did for Palmieri.

Sp: Perfectly understood, Excellency.

S: Take a dozen of your men and load their rifles yourself...with powder only, and take the greatest care.

Sp: Yes, Excellency.

S: The Cavaliere, who will know the part he is to play, will be led to the platform without any witnesses other than you and your men. When they fire, he will fall as if shot...You will make a show of checking that he is dead, that the coup de grâce would be pointless, and then you will send your men away. After that, with a cloak over his shoulders and a hat pulled down over his eyes, you will lead him out of the Castel into Madame's carriage, which will be waiting there. You will take your place with the Cavaliere, direct the carriage to the Porta Angelica, which you will have them open, on my orders, and when the carriage has made it outside the city walls without incident, then, and only then, will you let it go its way and return home...Leave the rest to me. Have I made myself clear?

Sp: Perfectly, Excellency!

S: The rifles?...

Sp: I will load them myself. Should I proceed immediately?...

S: Not yet!...Leave the Cavaliere in the chapel and wait.

F, *mezza-voce*: I want to see him, and tell him myself what has been agreed upon.

S: Fine!...[To Spoletta.] Madame is free. She can move about the Castel or leave it as she wishes. Post a guard at the foot of the stairs. He will lead Madame to the chapel. Only after her meeting with Cavaradosi, while she is returning to her carriage should you proceed with the execution as I have explained it...

Sp: Understood, Excellency.

S: Go now... don't forget anything, and have them leave me alone until I call.

[Spoletta bows and leaves, closing the door whose bolts Scarpia pulls closed.]

Scene V

SCARPIA, FLORIA

[When she hears the door close and the bolts slide, Floria shudders and staggers to her feet.]

S, coming downstage: Is that good enough?

F: feebly and trembling all over: No!...

S: What else?...

F, likewise, with effort: I want a pass that, after we leave Rome, will assure us of safe conduct out of the Roman States...

S: That is fair. [He goes to the secretary where he writes standing up. Floria, slowly, goes to the table where, with trembling hands, she takes the glass of Spanish wine that Scarpia had poured. While doing this, and after she has already brought the glass to her lips, she sees the carving knife, with its pointed blade, on the table. She stops, throws a glance towards Scarpia who has his back turned to her while writing. Carefully, so as not to attract his attention, she puts her glass down slowly, and draws the knife towards her. Meanwhile, Scarpia reads out loud what he is writing.] *General order to allow free passage from the city of Rome and the Roman States for the Signora Tosca and the Cavaliere who accompanies her - Vitellio Scarpia, Regent of the Roman Police.* [He comes back to her. She has picked up the glass again and drains it in one gulp.] Are you satisfied?

[He gives her the paper, which she reads standing up, with him very close behind her.]

F, after pretending to read it, replacing the glass on the table, thus bringing her hand closer to the knife: Yes...It is fine.

S: Then...now for what is due me!...

[He grasps her arm and ardently kisses her bare shoulder.]

F, striking Scarpia right in the chest with the knife: And here it is!...

S: Ah! Accursed wretch!

[He falls at the foot of the couch.]

F, with ferocious joy and laughter: Finally!...It is done!...At last!...At last!...Ah, it is done!...

S, holding fast to the arm of the couch: Help me!...I'm dying!...

F: I am counting on it!...Ah, executioner! You would have tortured me all night; shouldn't I have my turn?...[She leans over him, looking into his eyes.] See me well, bandit!...I delight in your agony; killed by a woman's hand...coward! Die, you ferocious beast, die, desperate and enraged!...Die!...Die!...Die!...

S, striving to get up: Help!...Save me!...

F, going upstage towards the door where she listens: Cry out! The blood is choking you! No one will hear you!...[With these words, she goes back to the door where she listens without losing sight of Scarpia, and places the knife on the small piece of furniture with her left hand. Scarpia, in a last effort, straightens up, almost standing, and stumbles a few steps, his back to the audience. He arrives in front of Floria. She takes the knife again and raises back her arm, ready to strike again. They look at each other for a second, he suffocating and she threatening. Finally, after a useless movement, he backs up and falls back on the couch from behind. In so doing, he gives a muffled groan, and slides to the floor with his head towards the audience, between the couch and the table. She replaces the knife on the furniture, and says coolly] Well done!...[She approaches the table and slides the candelabra over in order to illuminate Scarpia's face as he dies.] Now, I consider us even!...[Calmly, without taking her eyes off him, she takes a carafe and wets a napkin with which she wipes her hands and a spot of blood on her dress; she wrings the napkin and throws it to the side where the alcove is. She goes around the table to the mirror above the console and fixes her hair. Then she returns to Scarpia's body.] And to think that before that a whole city trembled! [Drumrolls in the distance. Trumpets sound reveille. Startled.] Reveille!...It is day!...already?...[She goes back upstage between the table and the corpse, and blows out the candles of the candelabra on the table.] And the safe-conduct pass!...What did I do with it?...

[She looks for it on the table, glances around her, then sees it in Scarpia's stiffened hand. She leans over him, pulls it away, letting his arm fall down again, and tucks the safe-conduct pass in her breast. Drumrolls again, this time nearer. She begins to leave, then, seeing the lighted candlesticks, goes to extinguish them; but she changes her mind and, taking a candlestick in each hand, she slowly places the one she holds in her left hand to Scarpia's left, and, passing in front of the cadaver, turning her back to the audience, places the other to his right. She looks around her while going towards the door, and sees the crucifix on the prayer stool. She takes it down slowly, by the foot, pointing Christ's head towards the audience, kneels in front of Scarpia, and places the crucifix on his chest. At the same instant, the drums roll a third time in the citadel. Floria gets up again and reaches the upstage door, pulls the bolts open and half-opens one side. The anteroom is black. She sticks her head out to listen, then, quietly slipping out, disappears.]

-CURTAIN-

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<sup>1</sup>These monks were Carmelites, a religious order which attracted attention in Revolutionary Paris when 116 of its priests were brutally killed by a mob. [Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "La Tosca," 109.]