

Scene 1:

Jo & Jerry

~~JERRY. But Elena's a star, Jo. She sings all over the world.
She was on the cover of *Life* magazine!~~

~~JO. So was Joseph Stalin!~~

~~JERRY. Look, all I'm saying is she's a great artist and she
wouldn't just not show up. She's very sensitive.~~

~~JO. How do you know?~~

~~JERRY. (Caught.) Because I met her. Last year.~~

~~JO. You did? You never told me that.~~

JERRY. It was no big deal. When I was in Italy, I went to La Scala and she was in *Tosca*. Then afterwards I went backstage and well, there she was, all by herself, behind the curtain. She was wearing this sort of...negligee, and her whole body was glistening with sweat.

(His mouth is dry.)

Anyway, she looked up and saw me and do you know what she did, Jo? She took my hand, put it to her cheek and just...held it there.

JO. What for?

JERRY. It was a gesture of art. And humanity. A sort of universal show of fellowship.

JO. She wanted sex, you idiot.

JERRY. Oh stop it.

JO. She's known for it! She likes men in their twenties. All young and succulent. She's like a vampire.

JERRY. I thought she was married.

JO. She is, but you know the Italians. They try the spaghetti, they try the linguine. So what else happened?

JERRY. Nothing! ...Of any importance.

JO. Something sort of happened?

JERRY. Not really.

JO. Jerry-

JERRY. It wasn't important.

JO. What happened?!

JERRY. (*Reluctantly; embarrassed.*) Oh, I...fainted.

JO. You fainted?

JERRY. Yes! It must have been the heat and all the excitement. I remember thinking suddenly, it's like an oven back here, and she was holding my hand to her cheek, and I held *her* hand to *my* cheek, and it was all these hands and cheeks, and then I blacked out. I think I took her down with me.

JO. Oh, great. This is terrific. My fiance meets this sweaty naked Italian woman and he keels over.

JERRY. From the heat! Wait... fiance?

JO. Yes, Jerry. Don't you remember? What did you, black out during the proposal?

JERRY. What are you talking about?

JO. Our *big date*. At the lake at Christmas. All that bracing air. We talked about marriage.

JERRY. Yes, we *talked* about it, but I'm just not ready to settle down yet, Jo. I want something different. Something exotic and romantic.

JO. I'm not romantic? Are you kidding me? What do you call a rowboat at three a.m., huh? Nobody for miles.

JERRY. You lost the oars.

JO. But it was fun. It turned out fun.

JERRY. We spent ten hours in a rowboat, Jo. On Christmas. The Coast Guard came with thermal blankets with little reindeer on them.

JO. That's not the point!

JERRY. Oh come on, Jo. I'm a lawyer. Our idea of a party is wearing colorful ties. But I want more than that.

JO. Well so do I. I'm in opera! We have flings and stuff.

JERRY. Flings?

JO. Well that's what you want, isn't it? A fling, like Leo?

JERRY. Who's Leo?

JO. Our tenor. He's from Amsterdam. He's flinging his way through the whole cast. All the sopranos are getting flung out. They call him the Flying Dutchman.

JERRY. Listen, Jo, let's be honest. When we kiss each other, do you hear anything special?

JO. Like what?

JERRY. Like...fireworks.

JO. Fireworks?

JERRY. Yeah.

JO. You mean like Flaming Pinwheels or just little sparklers?

JERRY. Jo -

JO. Or Roman Candles with the big ha-boom at the end.

JERRY. Forget it.

JO. Jerry-

♦ **JERRY.** I said forget it!

(A knock at the door.)

MRS. WYLIE. *(Offstage.)* Jo!

JO. Coming!

(JO opens the door and LUCILLE WYLIE enters. She's a force of nature. She's in her

Scene 2: Pasquale & Elena

ELENA. Hey! I got it. We have a drink. You want a

JO. I-I-I? No! No, I-I-I don't think that's such a--

(She looks at the bottle of pills.)

Well. All right.

ELENA. You got a-glasses?

JO. I-I-I don't know.

ELENA. You're gonna join me.

(She heads for the bedroom.)

JO. Right. Okay. I'll have a drink.

(JO disappears into the kitchenette as ELENA enters the bedroom. PASQUALE is lying on the bed, on his stomach, reading a car magazine.)

ELENA. Ciao:

PASQUALE. Ciao.

(He ignores her. Sniffs.)

ELENA. Hey. Mia vongole. I'm a-sorry, okay?

PASQUALE. Phh. It done matter. You're the star, eh?

ELENA. Pasquale. Done be like that. You're *a-my* star, okay?

PASQUALE. Phh.

ELENA. Hey, listen. We take a vacation, soon.

(She sits on the bed.)

Greece, eh? We get a boat. We sail a-the islands. Sleep all day on the sand.

(She's rubbing his back, then his backside.)

PASQUALE. Oh, *belleza*.

ELENA. Just a-two, eh. Like a-the old days.

PASQUALE. Clams.

ELENA. Oysters!

PASQUALE. Big a-lobster.

ELENA. Ooo.

PASQUALE. We suck a-da claws,

ELENA. And pull a-da tail.

PASQUALE. Now close a-da door.

ELENA. Huh?

PASQUALE. Close a-door.

ELENA. Now?

PASQUALE. Close.

ELENA. Pasquale. I got a stomach. No joke.

PASQUALE. I make a-you better. Fix you up.

ELENA. No. Hey. Not now. Okay? Hey-hey, I can't do it!

(He stops, angry.)

PASQUALE. You got a man.

ELENA. I got nobody.

PASQUALE. You got a man, so done lie!

ELENA. Pasquale -

PASQUALE. There has been nothing for two days! Not once, eh?

ELENA. I'm sorry. I get a-tense. I got a stomach.

PASQUALE. I wanna be a monk, I'll join a-the church!
At least, sometimes, I have a-some fun. I pluck a-da chickens. Sing a-da hymns.

Scene 3:

Elena &

Jo

(She stands up unsteadily.)

Jo. You wake a-me, eh? Six-thirty.

JO. Right. Sure. I promise.

(ELENA heads for the bedroom.)

Uh...Elena. Thanks for the lesson.

ELENA. Hey. You sing a-beautiful. No joke. You got real promise.

JO. Thanks.

ELENA. We talk a-more, later, okay?

JO. Sure. And if you need anything, just holler.

(ELENA goes into the bedroom and closes the door. JO, who finds this wonderful, sits and daydreams.)

(ELENA is exhausted now - drugged, in fact. She realizes that Pasquale isn't there. She looks around. She calls toward the bathroom.)

ELENA. Pasquale! Hey. I'm gonna sleep. Okay?

(No answer. She shrugs, and with a groan, stretches out on the bed until she comes nose to nose with Pasquale's note. She picks it up and reads it. Beat. A scream.)

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! NO! NO! NO!

(ELENA drops the note on the bedside table as JO bounds out of her chair and runs to the bedroom.)

JO. What happened?!

ELENA. Impossible!

JO. What?!

ELENA. No!!

JO. WHAT HAPPENED?!

ELENA. He's a-gone! Pasquale!

JO. Gone where?

ELENA. *(Shaking JO.)* Gone! Gone! He's a-gone!

JO. Elena!

ELENA. *(Releasing her.)* He's a-left me for good!

JO. Are you sure?

ELENA. HE'S A-GONE!

JO. Now-now-now wait a second. Maybe he went downstairs. For-for a magazine.

ELENA. Look! Look! No suitcase!

(She flings open the closet door.)

No coat!

JO. I guess he's gone.

ELENA. PASQUALE!! NO! NO! NO!

JO. ELENA! CALM DOWN!

ELENA. *(Sitting, crying.)* Jo... Jo -

JO. Now listen! We-we-we can look for him. We'll look in the lobby-

ELENA. It's a-my fault. I'm a-never there. He's not a-happy. Me. I make him unhappy.

JO. Elena-

ELENA. He hates a-me. I wanna kill myself.

JO. He'll come back. You'll see.

ELENA. *I'm gonna kill myself!*

Scene Two

Scene 4:**Jo &
Bellhop**

(Three hours later. About six-thirty p.m. JO and ELENA are asleep in different rooms. JO is in the sitting room on the sofa. ELENA is stretched out on the bed, under the covers. As the music fades, Ring! JO wakes up, disoriented. She answers the phone.)

JO. Hello?

BELLHOP. *(Through the phone, singing.)* Laaa - lalalala
lalalalala - la - laaa

JO. Thank you -

BELLHOP. This is your bellhop. It's six-thirty! This is your
wakeup call!

JO. Thanks.

BELLHOP. Now listen. I want to meet her.

JO. What?

BELLHOP. Elena Firenzi. La Stupenda! I can come
upstairs.

JO. No. She's sleeping.

BELLHOP. But she's my idol. I have all her recordings.
Don't you get it! I've admired her since I was a little
bellhop. I need to meet her.

JO. I'm sorry.

BELLHOP. Please.

JO. No!

BELLHOP. Oh, please!

JO. *Not now! ...*

(The BELLHOP chokes back a sob. JO sighs.)

JO. Look. All right. If you bring up some coffee, you can meet her for a second.

♦ **BELLHOP.** Yipppeeeeeee!

(Click. 'There's a knock at the front door.)

JO. Coming!

(JO goes to the door and opens it. It's LEO. LEO is the company's principal tenor. He's Dutch, from Amsterdam, and has a heavy Dutch accent. He's about twenty-eight, extremely handsome, sexy and self-confident with a beautiful smile and great waist. His body is gorgeous, even with his clothes on. One can only imagine what it's like with his clothes off. Imagine a young Chris Hemsworth, or Brad Pitt in his early days.)

Leo.

LEO. Hello, Jo.

(He strolls in. Looks around.)

Oooh, dis iss nice place, dis room. I could get used to all dis.

JO. Yeah. Well, you know. Elena Firenze.

LEO. Of course I know. She is big-big opera star. Und I t'ink she ••• adore me silly.

(LEO wanders around the room, in no hurry.)

JO. How was rehearsal?

LEO. Not zo good. Imagine me, the Flying Dutchman, playing Don Jose in *Carmen*. Und there was no Elena! Und believe me, it was not zo romantic singing der duets mitt der stagehand.

Are you surprised to see me zo soon?

ELENA. You could a-say that, ya.

LEO. Ha ha ha! I like der surprises. Zo perhap ve relax
now and have der champagne. Vhat do you think?

ELENA. That sounds a-lovely.

LEO. May I use der phone?

*(LEO talks to the telephone. ELENA watches
him, irritated. He picks up the phone and
clicks for the operator.)*

Room zervice, please.

*(As he waits, ELENA watches him. She smiles
back. Into the phone.)*

Yes, I'd like to order der bottle of champagne.

(To ELENA:) Is Mumm all right?

ELENA. She's a-fine, thank you.

LEO. Mumm is fine. *(Hangs up phone.)* Elena. Can I ask
you der very important question?

ELENA. Of course. Hey.

LEO. I vany to be totally honest mitt e. Okay, you
promise?

ELENA. I cross a-my heart.

LEO. Brutal, if necessary.

ELENA. Noo...

LEO. Please!

ELENA. Okay.

(Pause.)

→ **LEO.** Vas I good tonight?

Scene 5:

Leo & Elena

ELENAGood?

LEO. Was I amazing? Was I out of der park? I'm sure is not zo easy to judge my performance, having done it mitt me only vonce. But vould you say I vas...impressive tonight?

ELENA. (*Trying to work it out.*) We spent a-some time together, eh?

LEO. Ho, ho, ve sure did!

ELENA. Yeah?

LEO. Now I vant der truth. Take der big climax at de end. Ba-boom! Would you say I vas somet'ing special tonight?

ELENA. Special?

LEO. You don't think so?

ELENA. No, I do! I do! I am trying to remember.

LEO. I know I'm only in Cleveland, Elena, but I can take it, believe me. I am very experienced.

ELENA. So I have heard.

LEO. Now you of course vere incredible. You sounded like der screaming goose in der forest, a thing of beauty. How do you do it?!

ELENA. I have no idea.

LEO. But der qvestion I am asking is vas *I* good too. Did I live up to my reputation, did I *dazzle* you?! Did I make you feel somet'ing down in your basement?

ELENA. Basement?

LEO. Did I *move* you?

ELENA. Sure, sure...

LEO. Do you mean dat?

ELENA. Yes.

LEO. And you thought I vas good?

ELENA. Great.

LEO. Really?

ELENA. Like the goose in the forest.

LEO. Oh Elena! Elena! This means zo much to me! Me, Leo "der tulip" Hoffmeier, pleasing Elena Firenzi, it is like der dream of der Vikings in der Valhalla!

ELENA. Hooray.

LEO. Now Elena, tell me. If I vas dat good and I moved you mitt my voice, is it possible, Elena, dat I could meet your agent?

ELENA. My agent?

LEO. Ja. Und I would not stint, I would spend hours mitt her. Der screaming goose would live again! So vhat do you say?!

ELENA. If that's what you want.

LEO. Oh, it is, it is.

ELENA. Then she is all yours.

LEO. Oh, Elena! You make me so happy. How can I thank you?

ELENA. Hey, it's a-my pleasure, eh?

—,;: **LEO.** It is gonna be, I promise you!

(He pulls off his shirt in a single movement and he is tremendously ripped. Then he takes her in his arms and kisses her, passionately. She kisses him back with equal passion. Almost at once we hear a knock at the front door.)

Now who is dat? I vas joost gettin' good.