

#9

MAX / TITO  
LEND ME A TENOR

CI PUO LA TUA BONTA.  
AH! DIO CHE NELL'ALMA,  
(etc.)

*(Their duet gets progressively more confident and dramatic. Meanwhile, MARIA stands, having finished her note. She scans it with tears in her eyes, folds it in half and props it on the bed, on top of the pillow. Note: The paper should be distinctive and easy to recognize – lavender, perhaps. She picks up her vanity case, heads for the door to the corridor and opens it. She stops. She forgot something – her fur stole. She goes to the closet, opens it and MAGGIE falls out, having fallen asleep inside, against the door. The following is heard over the singing, as it occurs during the quiet second verse.)*

MAGGIE. How do you do. I realize this may look a little strange, but I can explain it –

*(MARIA stifles a growl of anger, then reaches into the closet, takes the stole and turns away.)*

You see, I thought, well, why not hide in the closet.

*(Stole in one hand, vanity case in the other, MARIA stalks out.)*

Wait! You don't understand! I don't even know him!

*(MAGGIE runs out after MARIA, closing the door behind her. Meanwhile, TITO and MAX finish their duet.)*

TITO & MAX. *(singing)*

VIVREMO INSIEM, MORREMO INSIEM!

GRIDO ESTREMO SARA:

LIBERTA!

TITO. Haha!

MAX. Haha!

TITO. That's a-wonderful! That's a-beautiful! You sing a-beautiful!

MAX. *(overlapping)* I – I – I see what you mean! I felt so good! I mean, I – I felt relaxed!

TITO. Ohh! That was work, eh? Hoo!

MAX. It was great!

*(They calm down.)*

TITO. Hey. Guess what. I think I'm a-tired.

MAX. Oh. I – I'm sorry. I –

TITO. No! That's a-good. I'm gonna sleep.

MAX. Oh. Oh good! That – that's great.

TITO. *(yawning)* Yahh! Hoo. *(He stands up unsteadily.)* Max. You wake a-me, eh? Six-thirty.

MAX. Right. Sure. I promise.

*(TITO heads for the bedroom.)*

Uh...Tito, thanks, for the lesson.

TITO. Hey. You sing good. No joke. You got real promise.

MAX. Thanks.

TITO. We talk a-more, later. Okay?

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

*(TITO goes into the bedroom and closes the door. MAX, who feels wonderful, sits and daydreams. He sips his Chianti. TITO is exhausted now – drugged, in fact. He realizes that MARIA isn't there. He looks around. He calls toward the bathroom.)*

TITO. Maria! Hey. I'm gonna sleep. Okay?

*(no answer)*

Maria. I'm gonna sleep... *(he knocks)* Okay?

*(No answer. He shrugs, and with a groan, stretches out on the bed until he comes nose-to-nose with MARIA's note. He picks it up and reads it. Pause. A scream.)*

NOOOO!!!

*(MAX bounds out of his chair and runs to the bedroom.)*

No! No! No!

*(He drops the note on the bedside table.)*

MAX. *(flying into the bedroom)* What happened?!

TITO. Impossible!

START

MAX. What?!

TITO. No!!

MAX. WHAT HAPPENED?!!

TITO. She's a-gone! Maria!

MAX. Gone where?

TITO. *(shaking MAX)* Gone! Gone! She's a-gone!

MAX. Tito!!!

TITO. *(releasing him)* She's a-left me! For good!

MAX. Are you sure?

TITO. SHE'S A-GONE!

MAX. Now - now - now wait a second. Maybe she went downstairs. For - for a magazine.

TITO. Look! Look!! No case! *(He flings open the closet door)*  
No fur!

MAX. I guess she's gone.

TITO. MARIA!! NO! NO! NO!

MAX. TITO! CALM DOWN!

TITO. *(sitting)* Max...Max...

MAX. Now listen! We-we-we can look for her. We'll look in the lobby -

TITO. It's a-my fault. I give her trouble. She's not a-happy.  
*(crying)* Me! I make her unhappy!

MAX. Tito...

TITO. She hates a-me. I wanna kill myself.

MAX. She'll come back. You'll see.

TITO. I'm gonna kill myself!

*(He jumps up and runs into the sitting room.)*

MAX. Stop!

*(MAX runs after him. TITO looks wildly around the room for his instrument of destruction. He picks up the Chianti bottle and tries to stab himself with it. No good. He tosses it away and MAX catches it, still chasing him.)*

TITO. I'm gonna kill myself! I live a-no more!!

MAX. Calm down!

TITO. No more!

MAX. Hey, please!

TITO. She hates a-me! I hate a-myself!

*(TITO rushes into the kitchenette.)*

MAX. No, Tito!

*(MAX follows him. Noise of a struggle.)*

MAX. *(offstage)* Tito, stop it!

TITO. *(offstage)* Get away!

MAX. *(offstage)* Don't! Hey!

*(A crash - a drawer of cutlery hitting the floor. A second later TITO rushes out, followed by MAX. TITO is holding a fork.)*

MAX. Tito!

TITO. I'm gonna kill myself!!!

MAX. *Put down that fork!!!*

TITO. She hates a-me! It's all over!

MAX. Tito! This is not an opera! Please! *Put it down!*  
*(TITO drops the fork and collapses onto the sofa, exhausted.)*

TITO. Oh, Max! Max!

MAX. It's all right. You'll be fine.

TITO. She's a-gone.

MAX. It's not your fault.

TITO. Oh, Maria. Maria...

MAX. She'll come back. You'll see.

*(TITO picks up the Chianti bottle and starts to drink.)*

Hey! Hey, no! Stop! *(He takes bottle.)* Come on. Get up.  
Let's get you to bed.

TITO. I can't.

MAX. LET'S GO!

*(MAX pulls TITO to his feet, and, holding him up, leads him to the bedroom.)*

TITO. Max, she hates a-me.

MAX. Nooo. She loves you. She'll come back.

TITO. I wanna kill myself.

MAX. Into bed. Come on.

*(He lays TITO down on the bed. Throughout the following, TITO becomes increasingly limp and dizzy. His speech slurs with exhaustion.)*

TITO. Bed...

MAX. You'll get a good sleep. You'll feel a lot better. I promise.

TITO. Sleep...

MAX. We'll take off your shoes.

*(He pulls TITO's shoes off. It's a struggle.)*

TITO. Shoes...

MAX. Uuuh! There. I'll bet that feels good. Huh? Now close your eyes...I'll be right inside...

TITO. Max!

MAX. Huh?

TITO. Max. Done leave me! Stay! Please!

MAX. Okay. Right. I'm here.

TITO. *(faintly)* Stay...

MAX. I - I - I'm right here. Here I am. See? Okay?

TITO. *(fainter)* Sleep...

MAX. Shhh. That's right. A good sleep...off you go...

*(Pause. All is quiet. MAX sits on the edge of the bed.)*

TITO. Max!

MAX. *(falling off the bed)* I'm right here!

TITO. Max...sing...

MAX. *(getting back on the bed)* Huh?

TITO. Maria. She sings a-me. I sleep...

MAX. Oh. I see.

TITO. *(faint)* Sing...

MAX. Right. *(He clears his throat.)* Is there, uh...anything special?

TITO. Sing!

MAX. Sing.

*STOP*

*(MAX tries feebly to get the pitch, as before. Then he remembers the lessons and shuts his eyes to conjure up the orchestra. A French horn sounds the pitch in MAX's head. He looks up and smiles. Then softly he begins to sing the tenor line from the Don Carlo duet.)*

*(singing)*

DIO, CHE NELL'ALMA INFONDERE

AMOR VOLESTI E SPEME,

DESIO NEL COR ACCENDERE

*(etc.)*

*(As TITO falls asleep, he reaches for MAX's hand and holds it. MAX pats TITO's hand and continues singing. The lights fade as the sound of the orchestra takes over the musical theme.)*