

SCENE 2

Inn 'Il Punto Nero'
Same Day

Il Punto Nero is a riverside inn, run by Iseppo and Marco, where people can have fun and do business with 'no questions asked'. Much loved by the sailors and their girls, it has a reputation for discretion.

The Inn is open to the street with tables outside

*There are only a few customers. **BASTIANO** is sitting at a corner table.*

***ISEPPO** is in the cellar. **MARCO** is front of stage leaning on his brush.*

ISEPPO

(VOX OFF: Shouting, as from cellar)

Hey Marco.

*(**ISEPPO** enters)*

ISEPPO

You lazy animal. Have you done all your jobs?

MARCO

Of course I have Iseppo, all done.

ISEPPO

BROUGHT THE BREAD?

MARCO

YES, ISEPPO

ISEPPO

SWEPT THE STREET?

MARCO

YES, ISEPPO

ISEPPO

TIDIED THE TABLES

MARCO

YES, ISEPPO

ISEPPO

WATERED THE WI....er F-Flowers?
(Looks round surreptitiously)

MARCO

Ye... Flowers?
(Thinking)
But we don't have any flowers Iseppo...

ISEPPO

(Staring at Marco)
Yes - we - do.

MARCO

Oh!
(Nodding)
YES, ISEPPO!

#7 INN KEEPING!

Iseppo / Marco

[PLAY MUSIC](#)

(The song ends in laughter. ISEPPO and MARCO go about their duties)

(TOTTO enters and has a quiet word with Marco. MARCO points to Bastiano and TOTTO slips him some money)

(TOTTO approaches Bastiano. BASTIANO eyes him with suspicion)

TOTTO

Greetings good Sir, will you take a drink with me.

BASTIANO

And why would you be buying drink for me.

TOTTO

Why, are you not famous. Are you not Bastiano, the Grand Inquisitor! My brother said I might find you here. He speaks very highly of you.

BASTIANO

Keep your voice down! Your brother? Who might that be? And who are you?

TOTTO

My brother, sir, is Niccolò Machiavelli, and I am Totto.

BASTIANO

Machiavelli? Oh yes, I knew Niccolò Machiavelli. They say that these days there isn't a dog in Florence that dare bark without *his* say so. Though I can't imagine why he would care where I am.

TOTTO

(Sitting)

He respects your reputation Bastiano, and he said I should help you, make sure that you come to no harm. After all we are all in the same line of business aren't we? Come take a drink.

(MARCO brings the drinks)

TOTTO

So the Grand Inquisitor was thrown in jail, I heard... and banished from the city. What was your downfall? Could only be money or a woman

BASTIANO

Pah, money isn't a problem to me, and never was. They took me but didn't get my money. It was a woman alright, and I vowed that one day, she - will - pay. And that dawn draws ever closer.

TOTTO

What? She's in still in Florence? Is that why you came back? It's a big risk to take, you know. You could go back to jail.

(Pause)

So who is she?

BASTIANO

Why are you so interested?

TOTTO

Well like I said, maybe I can help.

BASTIANO

Her name is Farnese - Aragona Farnese

TOTTO

Aragona! I know Aragona Farnese. Trouble for any man, and all the more so now she has married into the Orsini family, I hear.

BASTIANO

Trouble maybe, but I have sworn revenge, and those years forgotten in that hell hole will be paid back. You know her you say?

TOTTO

Yes, I know her well... but Bastiano, a man intent on revenge is a danger - to himself and those around him. Still, I understand what misery can befall a man driven by desire. I too fell under such a spell. A certain lady by name of Gherardini, who thought she was too good for me. Me, a Machiavelli. Then she goes and marries a cloth merchant...

BASTIANO

You know Totto, perhaps I can use your help my friend. I hear that Aragona is seen rather too much in the company of the young apprentice of Leonardo Da Vinci - he goes by the name of Salai. She is supposed to be his 'patron'... but we both know what she really gives. I can't risk being seen, but you can be my eyes and ears. Follow her and get the proof I need to denounce her to her husband, and I will reward you well for your trouble.

TOTTO

Helping an old friend of my brother is reward itself Bastiano. Leonardo you say? Then they are lodging at the Friary of the Santissima Annunziata! That building has many secret passages, known only to the brothers - and Totto Machiavelli!

(puts an arm round Bastiano's shoulders)

Consider it done.

BLACKOUT