

SCENE 3

Leonardo's Studio
Next Day

LEONARDO is pacing the floor, awaiting the arrival of his prospective patron

LEONARDO

(shouts)

Come on now Salai, you know how important this is to us.

(SALAI enters, dishevelled)

LEONARDO

And do try to smarten yourself up a bit, these are society people you know. Not the usual crowd of vagabonds that you hang around with.

SALAI

Yes, well, at least my friends don't have any 'pretentious *haffec-ta-tions*..'

LEONARDO

Yes, and they don't have any money either, which is why you'd be well advised to make -a -little-EFFORT.

(LEONARDO rubs Salai's hair playfully)

SALAI

I'll wager that she's hideous. All covered in boils - or something worse - you'll probably have your work cut out to make her look even half decent.

LEONARDO

In which case I'll turn them away - debts or no debts. I'm already having second thoughts about this whole business. Still, by all accounts she's something of a beauty and...

(SFX CUE: <DOORBELL>)

..oh, here they are, go and greet them - quickly now...

(SALAI exits)

LEONARDO

(calling after him)

And don't say a word until you're spoken to!

(SALAI returns, leading in FRANCESCO and a veiled LISA)

SALAI

Signor and Signora del Giacondo Master..

(As SALAI passes Leonardo he whispers)

SALAI

See I told you - he has to keep her hidden!

LEONARDO

Signor del Giacondo, it's such a pleasure to meet you at last. My father has spoken well of you.

(Turning)

You've met my assistant. This is Salai.

FRANCESCO

(Nods)

The pleasure is all mine, Leonardo. Your father is very proud of you. We are indeed fortunate to have such a great artist back here with us in Florence. You must be a very busy man, I hope you'll be able to find the time to 'fit us in'..

(SALAI coughs. LEONARDO frowns at him)

LEONARDO

Indeed sir. Indeed. And this must be...

FRANCESCO

Oh yes... Leonardo da Vinci, may I introduce my wife, Lisa Gherardini

(FRANCESCO bids LISA step forward.

LISA removes her veil. She is young and indeed very beautiful)

LISA

Signor Leonardo, it's an honour..

(LEONARDO takes her hands)

LEONARDO

The honour is mine Signora. My, my. Such beauty. Such... I'm almost lost for words. Only a fool would turn down the chance to capture such... radiance.

(Shakes his head)

Please, please, do forgive me for being so bold Signora. It is just the way of the artist.

(LEONARDO pauses and studies Lisa. LISA starts to become embarrassed)

LEONARDO

Those eyes Salai, such depths for one so young...

(Turning)

Salai...

(SALAI is captivated by LISA, and stands dumbly staring at her)

LEONARDO

Salai, are you listening? Do you think I can do justice to this lady's beauty. Hmm? Do you think I can capture her...

SALAI

(Still distracted)

Soul... Master?

Well, if anyone can, you can. Master

FRANCESCO

So, you'll take my commission, Leonardo?

LEONARDO

Well, it'll mean disappointing a few others - and I can't promise how long it will take, but yes, yes of course I will. Come, lets take a glass of wine and we'll agree the details.

(LEONARDO and FRANCESCO exit)

(SALAI and LISA are centre stage.)

LISA tries to appear unmoved by SALAI.

HE tries to look at her.

SHE avoids his stare and attempts to cover her face with the veil.

LISA'S annoyance eventually turns to amusement)

#8 WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES (SHORT) Salai [PLAY MUSIC](#)

(LEONARDO and FRANCESCO return laughing)

(The song is interrupted)

FRANCESCO

It is all agreed Lisa. Signor Leonardo will accept our commission, and you will come here to the studio to sit for him.

LEONARDO

Yes Lisa, and if it makes you feel happier you must bring your maidservant, though I suspect it might get a little tiresome for her in time.

LISA

Yes of course. Tell me, how long will it take? Days? Weeks? Months?

SALAI

It could be years... eh Master!

(LEONARDO looks disapprovingly at SALAI)

FRANCESCO

Oh, oh. you can't ask an artist a question like that my darling.

LISA

Of course. I'm sorry Signor Leonardo. I'm looking forward to it...

LEONARDO

Don't worry. These things take on a life of their own. True art is never finished you know, only abandoned for a while. We'll try not to make the experience too tedious for you. I'll get some musicians to come and play while we work.

LISA

We?

LEONARDO

Yes...

(Turning to Salai)

...naturally Salai will be helping me.

(LISA looks at Salai and frowns)

(SALAI raises his eyebrows and gives Lisa a 'so there' look)

FRANCESCO

I'm sure it will all work out splendidly. Let us know when you are ready start Signor, and I will sort things out.

LEONARDO

Of course. I just need to re-arrange a few things. Shouldn't be more than two or three weeks.

FRANCESCO

Splendid. Come Lisa let's leave these good people in peace.

LEONARDO

May God go with you

(SALAI shows them out)

(LEONARDO rubs his hands together in satisfaction)

(SALAI returns)

LEONARDO

Well Salai, what do you think? Is she not exquisite? She has an honest simplicity - and a spiritual quality, so unlike the usual society ladies.

SALAI

I think she is... simply beautiful. Leonardo, I'd like to paint her as well.

LEONARDO

Of course! You'll work on the piece as you always do.

SALAI

Yes but Master, am I not your apprentice.

LEONARDO

Yes, you are.

SALAI

Then surely I can also paint her, at the same time. You can advise me as we go along. *Please* Master.

LEONARDO

(Reluctantly)

Well... I don't see why not - providing Lisa has no objections.

SALAI

This calls for a celebration! Come I'll treat you to a drink.

LEONARDO

With my money no doubt. No, I have much work to do or there will be no more treats for either of us.

SALAI

Oh, come on...

LEONARDO

No - I'll stay here. Thanks all the same.

SALAI

You know Leonardo you really should get out more. Make some new friends - maybe find a little romance... there's still time!

(SALAI exits. LEONARDO shakes his head)

LEONARDO

My dear Salai...

#9 A LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK IT'S NAME Leonardo [PLAY MUSIC](#)

(SALAI returns)

LEONARDO

Oh I thought you'd already gone...

SALAI

I'm just leaving. Are you sure you won't come?

LEONARDO

No. No... You go, enjoy yourself.

SALAI

Are you alright, Master?

LEONARDO

(Smiling wistfully)

I'm fine, Salai. Run along now.

(SALAI happily leaves)

(LEONARDO sits reflectively)

CURTAIN

SCENE 3A

Street 1 - Outside the Studio
Continuous

Aragona is in love with Salai and believes that Salai loves her, but he pretends, in order to enjoy and keep her patronage.

It is dusk and the street is dimly lit. There is a hooded figure lurking in the shadows.

(SFX CUE: <STREET DOOR CLOSING-EXTERIOR>)

(SALAI enters)

(ARAGONA enters and calls after him)

ARAGONA

Salai!! Salai... where are you going in such a rush?

SALAI

(Surprised)

Aragona.. how wonderful to see you...

Oh, I have important business for Leonardo. Very important!

ARAGONA

Yes, my sweet boy, I'm sure it is, but where have you been? It's three days since you last came to see me. Three - whole - days. You know how lonely I get when my husband is away... If I didn't know better I'd think you were avoiding me!

SALAI

Avoiding you?

(SALAI looks round to check they are alone and takes her in his arms)

SALAI

Why, you know I can hardly breathe when we're apart. No no, it's just that my master has been making such demands on me lately.

(sighs)

Aah.. it is so difficult to get away...

ARAGONA

Oh my poor Salai... but *I* need you too. I can make demands...

SALAI

As I know only too well.

ARAGONA

(turning away teasingly)

Perhaps you care more for Leonardo than for me. Perhaps I should find another protégé .. I hear that Michelangelo Buonarroti has a new young apprentice who's in need of some... guidance.

SALAI

Oh how could you even think of such a thing. Have I not declared my undying love? Do I not please you? You are so cruel to a poor boy.

ARAGONA

Yes but Salai, is it not more cruel to neglect a poor, lonely, *passionate* woman, whose only desire is to be.. wanted. I can get such treatment from my husband!

SALAI

Of course, of course. I am so sorry. Look, I'll think of a story for Leonardo, and make sure I'm free tomorrow - that's a solemn promise. We'll meet at the Inn at three, and..

ARAGONA

...I'll give my maid the day off...

SALAI

(SALAI takes hold of Aragona)

...and no more talk of Michelangelo's boy!

ARAGONA

I won't sleep.

SALAI

Nor will I.

(They kiss goodbye. ARAGONA leaves)

(SALAI shrugs his shoulders and exits opposite direction)

(TOTTO, hooded, emerges from the shadows having overheard the conversation. He removes his hood)

TOTTO

So! The lovers meet tomorrow at three... I think my new friend Bastiano will be interested to hear of this.

(Walking off)

Very interested!

BLACKOUT