

SCENE 4

Inn

Following morning (Tuesday)

Salai goes to the Inn and finds the Captain

CAPTAIN DONATI is sat at his favourite table outside with LAZZARO, his First Mate

(SALAI rushes in)

CAPTAIN

Salai! What brings you here at this time of day? I thought mornings were not on your calendar.

SALAI

Indeed not Captain, but I must speak with you on a matter most urgent.

(SALAI looks at Lazzaro. The CAPTAIN nods at Lazzaro) (LAZZARO moves away)

CAPTAIN

What is it my friend?

SALAI

We have a problem.

CAPTAIN

We do...?

SALAI

I have a problem - that is we do... me and Aragona. She says that we can trust you, and you will help us.

CAPTAIN

That you can... but what precisely is this problem?

SALAI

We need to get away - leave Florence - by the weekend.

CAPTAIN

Ahhh, I see. Before her husband gets home you mean.

SALAI

Oh.. you know do you. It's a real mess. She's being blackmailed by that evil *canaglia* Bastiano. He has sworn revenge on her for something that happened years ago.

CAPTAIN

Yes I know the story. Look, what you've been up to is none of my business - but leaving is such a desperate thing for both of you, Salai.

SALAI

I know, but Aragona insists it's the only way out - if I want to live!

CAPTAIN

Surely no one will take the word of that villain?

SALAI

No, but it seems he has proof, proof in the form of a Machiavelli, who for some reason has been helping him - by spying on us. Aragona is adamant we have to leave. In this city it's hard to ignore a Machiavelli accusation Bernardo, you know that.

CAPTAIN

That it is. That - it - is. But where will you go?

SALAI

She says we can stay with her sister Guilia in San Miniato for a while. After that...who knows? But I don't need to tell you, no-one must know, and no-one must see us leave the city. Will you help us?

CAPTAIN

Of course, of course I will. I know someone with a guzzu fishing boat who can be trusted well. It only needs two to sail her. We'll hide your faces and no questions will be asked.

SALAI

How far can they take us?

CAPTAIN

They can take you down to Empoli. My brother has stables there - you can get horses from him. But all this won't be cheap you know! And you won't be able to bring much with you.

SALAI

Yes I know that. Don't worry, I have the money, that's no problem. Do you want some now?

CAPTAIN

No there's no need yet. I'll see if I can arrange it for Friday night. Leave it with me. We'll speak tomorrow.

CURTAIN