

Tenor 1

worked together. *Insieme. Tutto insieme.* Art is collaboration, too. Domination. Collaboration. *Ecco.*

If you have feelings like Sharon, hide them. It's that simple. That's what I did. Excuse me. (*She drinks as Tenor comes out onto the stage.*)

Avanti, avanti. You all lack presence. Look at me. I'm drinking water and I have presence. Stand straight. Let us see who you are. *Bravo!* You're a good looking man. You have what the Italians call *bella figura.*

TENOR. Thank you

MARIA. That wasn't a compliment. It was a statement. We're talking turkey here.

A singer has to know his assets. This is a business too, after all, let's never forget that. Domination. Collaboration.

~~Assets.~~ What are you?

TENOR. You mean, my name?

MARIA. No, I mean your voice.

TENOR. I'm a tenor. Couldn't you tell?

MARIA. A tenor. *Gran dio.* God save us sopranos from you tenors. And that is the only tenor joke you're going to hear from me.

TENOR. People think we're stupid.

MARIA. I wonder why that is.

TENOR. I don't know.

MARIA. Actually, I love tenors. When they sing, it's our chance to go to our dressing rooms and catch our breath. But no such luck today. I'll be right over here. Are you nervous?

TENOR. No.

MARIA. Good. What's your name?

TENOR. Tony.

MARIA. Tony? Just Tony?

TENOR. You mean, when I sing! Anthony Candolino.

MARIA. I always mean, when you sing. I only mean, when you sing. This is a master class, not a psychiatrist's office. Are any of you out there undergoing psychiatry? I hope not. Tell us about yourself. Your training, your professional experience, if any. Your hopes, your dreams.

TENOR. I have a BA in music from USC and an MFA in

START

END

Tenor 2

TENOR. Work.

MARIA. Now what were you doing?

TENOR. Nothing. I was singing.

MARIA. You were right the first time. You were *just* singing, which equals nothing. Again. (*Accompanist begins again.*)

TENOR. (*He sings.*) "*Dammi i colori.*"

MARIA. Where are you?

TENOR. You mean, right now? Or in the opera?

MARIA. No games, Tony.

TENOR. I'm in Rome, I'm in a church, I'm painting a picture. I just asked the old Sacristan for my paints. That's what "*Dammi i colori*" means: "Give me the paints."

MARIA. What church? Whose picture? Quick, quick. I don't have all day.

TENOR. I don't know. St. Patrick's! No, that's in St. Peter's? St. Somebody's! Whose portrait? Some woman's obviously. Tosca's? No. The Mona Lisa, I don't know!

MARIA. So, let me get this straight. You don't know where you are, you are about to paint a portrait but you don't know of whom, and yet you are about to sing an aria. No wonder people don't like opera.

TENOR. I don't think you have to know all those things. I have a voice, I have a technique, I even have a b-flat.

MARIA. So do I. It's not enough.

TENOR. It was for Mario Lanza. I'm sorry. I love Mario Lanza. He's my hero. So kill me.

MARIA. You haven't done your homework, Tony.

TENOR. I just came out here to sing for you.

MARIA. I'm not interested in just singing.

TENOR. Sing and get your feedback.

MARIA. My what? My feedback? What an ugly word. What is feedback? He wants my feedback. I don't give feedback.

TENOR. Your response.

MARIA. I respond to what I feel. I feel nothing but anger for someone who so little treasures his art. You're not prepared, Mr. Tony Tight Pants. Go home. You're wasting our time. Next student.

START

TENOR. No.

MARIA. No?

TENOR. No.

MARIA. That's the first interesting thing you've said since you came out here.

TENOR. I came here to sing.

MARIA. You weren't ready.

TENOR. I'm going to sing.

MARIA. And I can't stop you?

TENOR. I need your help. I want to sing. I want to sing well. I know I have a voice and I know it's not enough. I want to be an artist. *(He sings.)*

"Dammi i colori." (To Maria.)

Please. (Maria nods to the Accompanist who begins again.)

MARIA. You're in the church of Sant'Andrea Della Valle, just off the Corso. Do you know Rome?

TENOR. No.

MARIA. It doesn't matter. It's 10 a.m. on a beautiful Spring morning. You made love all night to Floria Tosca, the most beautiful woman in Rome. And now you're painting another woman, unobserved, as she prays to the Blessed Mother. They're both beautiful but it's Tosca's body against yours you feel. Now sing.

TENOR. It doesn't say anything about 10 A.M. or Spring or Tosca's body in the score.

MARIA. It should say it in your imagination. Otherwise you have notes, nothing but notes. Sing!

TENOR. *"Recondita armonia"*

MARIA. On the breath, on the breath!

TENOR. *"di bellezze diverse!"*

MARIA. Don't force.

TENOR. *"E bruna Floria,"*

MARIA. Much better.

TENOR. *"l'ardente amante mia."*

MARIA. You're singing about your mistress! Look happy.

ACCOMPANIST. *"Scherza coi fanti e lascia stare i santi!"*

TENOR. Bravo!

MARIA. Concentrate.

END