

CARLO-2

A COMEDY OF TENORS

21

YOUNG MAN *is holding one end of her afghan: so as she runs, she spins out of the afghan, reaches the balcony and flies off it with a cry of surprise. MARIA and the YOUNG MAN gasp in shock.*)

(Enter TITO, hitting the YOUNG MAN in the head with the door while hiding him behind it. From TITO's perspective, the room is empty.)

TITO. It feels like a-somethin' funny's goin' on. Holy cow!

MARIA. What?!

TITO. There's a naked girl running across the Stadium. Look!

(MARIA looks and is immensely relieved.)

MARIA. Whoo. Yah. She's naked okay.

TITO. *(peering)* She look familiar.

MARIA. *(Pulling him away.)* Ya, sure, it's a-Eleanor Roosevelt, now get in you bed!

(The connecting door starts swinging closed revealing the YOUNG MAN standing behind it. He's holding his head, swaying from the bang of the door. MARIA sees him and panics and slams the door against the wall to hide him again. We hear it hit his head again with another bang.)

TITO. Okay, okay!

(TITO can tell that something isn't right – but MARIA pushes TITO through the door, into the bedroom, and slams it shut.)

Start

YOUNG MAN. *(whispering)* Mrs. Merelli –

MARIA. No, stop. Mimi has told me all about you and I forgive you. How's a-you head?

YOUNG MAN. It hurts.

MARIA. Take this scarf and press.

(She hands him her new scarf and he presses it against his head.)

YOUNG MAN. *Ow!*

(At this moment, TITO opens the door a crack and listens in the doorway. MARIA and the YOUNG MAN don't see him but the audience sees him clearly.)

MARIA. Now get a-you clothes on quick before my husband see anything.

YOUNG MAN. *I'm trying!*

MARIA. *Shh!* Keep a-you voice down. If my husband knew about this, he would *kill* you!

(TITO's mouth drops open.)

TITO. *(to himself)* Maria!

YOUNG MAN. *(as he pulls his pants up)* I want you to know that I wasn't just fooling around in here. It wasn't just sex. We're in love. We're *both* in love.

TITO. *(to himself)* Oh my God.

MARIA. Of course it is love. It is what I have wished for. You are the perfect man.

TITO. *(to himself)* Maria is having an affair!

MARIA. You are young. You are vital. You have muscle like bull.

YOUNG MAN. Hey, you're not so bad yourself.

TITO. *(to himself)* Maria!

MARIA. How's a-you zipper?

YOUNG MAN. I think I've got it.

(Pulling it up with difficulty.)

Unh!

(MARIA kneels and tries to help him with the zipper. TITO looks around the door and sees his wife kneeling in front of the YOUNG MAN and thinks the worst. He recoils in shock.)

MARIA. I tell you, this thing, it make a-me happy. The way a woman is happy. From deep inside.

YOUNG MAN. But listen. We've got to tell your husband, soon. We have to be honest about this.

MARIA. Hey, let me decide, okay? I know how to break it to him.

YOUNG MAN. If you say so.

TITO. *(to himself)* Look at him! He's a-twenty years old!

(Without thinking about it, the YOUNG MAN puts MARIA's scarf into his breast pocket.)

TITO. Hey thanks for everything. You're fantastic.

MARIA. You're not so bad a-yousef, you know. Ha!

YOUNG MAN. *Ciao.*

MARIA. *Ciao.*

(The boy gives MARIA a kiss on the cheek and hurries out the front door. MARIA sighs with happiness. MIMI has found a wonderful boy.)

(Meanwhile, TITO totters back into the bedroom and we hear the first five chords of Puccini's Tosca – a passage of monumental despair.)

Stop

MARIA. *(turning to the door)* Okay, roll over. I fix a-you back.

(MARIA cracks her knuckles, enters the bedroom and closes the door; at which moment, SAUNDERS and MAX enter from the hall. SAUNDERS is on the rampage.)

SAUNDERS. *I don't believe it, how could this happen?!*

MAX. Well under the contract, sir, it's not prohibited.

SAUNDERS. Oh, please. Do you mean to say that less than *three hours* before the concert, Jussi Björling, the Swedish songbird son of a bitch, can simply walk out the door whenever he *pleases?!?*

MAX. Well that's not exactly how I'd –

SAUNDERS. *I will sue the bastard for his next herring allotment!*

MAX. Sir –

SAUNDERS. He'll sing his next *Don Carlo* in his *underwear* at the *Stockholm Light Opera and Storm Door Company!*

MAX. Sir, his mother died!