

*silks and jewelry that fit her like a second skin. She speaks with a heavy Russian accent.*

RACÓN. Tito. It is I, Racón.

*(She kisses him on the mouth.)*

Do you remember?

BEPPO. It is coming back to me.

RACÓN. I am performink here in Paris this week, and am hearing that you are in city for concert. So I am askink myself, is it time to come see Tito after all these years. What do you think?

BEPPO. You made good decision.

RACÓN. I am likink your hotel. Is beink beautiful. Do you spend much time here?

BEPPO. Is like second home.

RACÓN. You look the same, Tito. You have not changed.

BEPPO. You would be surprised.

RACÓN. It is many years since we are seeink each other.

BEPPO. Yet you are even more beautiful than the day we met.

RACÓN. I am flattered.

BEPPO. I am honored.

RACÓN. I am impressed.

BEPPO. I am overwhelmed. Are you hungry?

RACÓN. I am ravenous.

BEPPO. Good because my producer have put out big spread for me. You like a-spread?

RACÓN. I am liking spread.

BEPPO. Would you like a-some tongue?

RACÓN. I am loving tongue.

BEPPO. *(Holding up the tongue and using Mr. Tongue's squeaky voice.)* "I am glad you love me. Sometime I get very lonely on the plate by myself."

RACÓN. I am understanding, my little tongue. I am lonely too. But in Russia, everyone is lonely.

BEPPO. *(as Mr. Tongue.)* "You should have been born in Venezia like me. You would be happier person."

RACÓN. You are telling me.

*(They laugh. He touches her cheek. She presses her cheek to his hand.)*

BEPPO. Wait. I put on recording for atmosphere. Don't go 'way.

*(He goes to the record player.)*

This remind me of moment in *La Bohème* when Rodolfo meet Mimì in Paris, eh? Their fingers touch, their hearts become one, so they sing together softly at the top of their lung.

*(The recording starts playing. It is the ravishing duet "O Soave Fanciulla" from La Bohème. They take it in. This is their life's blood.)*

RACÓN. Puccini.

BEPPO. Puccini.

RACÓN. My recordink with Slezak. You are thinking of me. *Ya znayu.*

*(She wanders to the balcony.)*

Is beautiful night. The people arrive down below for concert. You must be proud.

BEPPO. Poh. For me is old hat. Still, I would like to do well at this one.

*(She takes his hand.)*

Remind me: you are married now?

RACÓN. No. It is my dream. Men are beink afraid of me, I am not knowing why.

BEPPO. Because you are strong woman. You are beautiful like goddess. They are afraid you will devour them. But to me you are gentle. You are *delicata*. Like a flower.

RACÓN. Perhaps I could be joining you at end of concert for duet.