

TITO

(hangs up)

TITO. Is there a problem?

SAUNDERS. No. No, no. That was an exercise that Jacques and I do in case there ever *was* a problem, and he handled it brilliantly. But I think I should be going now to make sure that everything is running smoothly, the machine is in gear and *vroom* we're off!

*(He runs out.)**(TITO sits with his head in his hands and moans.)*

MARIA. Tito, what is a-with you?

TITO. I'm a-getting old, Maria. The stars a-fade. The lights a-go out.

MARIA. That's from *La Bohème*.

TITO. So what?! That's not the point! It used to be, the girls at the stage a-door, they were four a-deep. I sign autographs, they want to hug me. "Take a picture, Tito." "We love a-you, Tito." Now everybody want a-Carlo Nucci.

MARIA. Noo.

TITO. When I was young, maybe ten year old, I hear my own voice singing in a-church and it was so beautiful I say that's from a-God. I say thank you God, you are good man. After that, I sing everywhere, eh? Every opera house. Every concert. I'm a big a-star. But then, six month ago - I never tell you this before - I'm a-singing Donizetti and my voice a-crack on the high C. Just a-once, but everybody in the place, they look at me and go "Uh oh. He's a-getting old. It's a-good-bye Tito."

(sob)

I cannot live this way without respect and honor.

MARIA. That's from *Madame Butterfly*.

TITO. Maria!

MARIA. Tito, you've got to stop this. You're in a-you prime.

TITO. My prime. Puh. I am being tortured in dungeon.

MARIA. That's from *Tosca*.TITO. *Would you stop it!*

MARIA. But it's a-in a-you head! Your voice is just as good as ever! On the stage you got a-heart, you got a-soul! You still eat like a pig, but that's a-not new.

TITO. Pah.

MARIA. Hey. Nothing has changed! Except maybe you forget some things now and then.

TITO. I forget things? Me? Like what?

MARIA. It's a-not import. It makes no difference.

TITO. No! You tell me! I forget things. You tell me!

(She sighs.)

MARIA. It's my birthday.

TITO. Today?

MARIA. Yeah.

TITO. Today is you birthday?

MARIA. Yeah.

TITO. Uh-oh.

MARIA. Yeah.

TITO. Hmm. I guess that explain why I'm carrying this a-bag around.

MARIA. Tito?

TITO. You're right, I forget a-so much.

MARIA. Oh, Tito! Look at this! You remember! Hoo hoo! I open now, yes?

TITO. No, you're gonna wait till next Thursday. Friday.

MARIA. You're very funny. You're like a-Bingo Crosby.

(She opens the box and finds a brightly-colored scarf.)

Oh! It's a scarf! It's lovely, it's a-beautiful. Was it expensive?

TITO. Very.

MARIA. Excellent.

TITO. Hey. You want to celebrate? We got the bedroom, eh?