

ANNA

Mostly.

LUDWIG fingers through folio and hands
ANNA sheet music.

LUDWIG

Sing this canzonetta for me.

ANNA

A sight-reading exam? Good God, it's in English.

LUDWIG

Corraggio!

7. - LA TIRANNA

AH GRIEF TO THINK! AH WOE TO NAME,
 THE DOOM THAT FATE HAS DESTINED MINE!
 FORBID TO FAN MY WAYWARD FLAME,
 AND SLAVE TO SILENCE HOPELESS PINE!

IMPERIOUS FAIR! IN FATAL HOUR.
 I MARKED THE VIVID LIGHTNING, ROLL.
 THAT GAVE TO KNOW THY RUTHLESS POWER,
 AND GLEAMED DESTRUCTION ON MY SOUL.

AH GRIEF TO THINK! AH WOE TO NAME,
 THE DOOM THAT FATE HAS DESTINED MINE!
 FORBID TO FAN MY WAYWARD FLAME,
 AND SLAVE TO SILENCE HOPELESS PINE!

LUDWIG

Brava!

ANNA

What's this one called?

LUDWIG

Anna, I'm naming it after you; *La Tiranna*; The Tyrant.

ANNA

You love to tease.

LUDWIG

Yes, but I apologize for this piano.

ANNA

Slave to silence: Is it true?

LUDWIG

Is what true?

ANNA

That you're losing your hearing.

LUDWIG

No, I'm just refusing to listen.

ANNA is about to speak then realizes it's a joke.

ANNA

Herr Direktor takes great pride in this instrument.

LUDWIG

Mr. Papageno is the only alchemist who turns gold to lead.

ANNA

How is Vestal Flame coming along?

LUDWIG

Not well. I've had to divide my time between it and my new symphony. I can't make anything out of his vacuous libretto. He should have called it Vestal Flaming Pile of Garbage.

ANNA

It pretty much could have been written by apple women.

LUDWIG

Apple women?

ANNA

You know, those street vendors. Have you asked for changes?

LUDWIG

He won't change a word.

ANNA

Writers.

LUDWIG

Mr. Papageno keeps saying it will be the greatest opera yet written..

ANNA

He needs a ghostwriter. It's very common. Herr Mozart frequently wrote for wealthy patrons. Oh, by the way, I met your brother.

LUDWIG

Some brother. He's been embezzling my money.

ANNA

What?

LUDWIG

My friend from Bonn, Stephan von Breuning, discovered the irregularities while here on a visit. Caspar finally confessed and said he needed money to buy his lady-friend a dog.

ANNA

Perhaps she possesses some hidden talent known only to him.

LUDWIG

I should never have agreed to this project. You know the critics will blame me.

ANNA

Find another libretto for next time.

LUDWIG

I have.

ANNA

What's the story?

LUDWIG

A young wife changes her identity to become a man named Fidelio in order to save her husband from incarceration.

ANNA

A female protagonist!

LUDWIG

Just when all hope is lost the king's minister arrives to set everything right.

ANNA

(nodding)

The French rescue style. What's the title?

LUDWIG

Eleonore, or rather; just Leonore. It will be my *immortal* opera.

ANNA

You should audition me for the part.

LUDWIG

I just did.

ANNA

And?

LUDWIG

Let me get through this opera first.

ANNA

Just so you are aware, I possess the most exquisite ankles for the part of a man. Care to see?

LUDWIG

(laughs)

We wouldn't want other sopranos suggesting you acquired the role nefariously.

From off-stage.

EMANUEL

Jakob, hold the door for me.