

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.

This sample is for perusal only and may not be used for performance purposes.

You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

Filumena

A Play in Three Acts

by Eduardo de Filippo

English Adaptation by
Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *FILUMENA* is subject to a Licensing Fee. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form the play is dedicated to the reading public only.

The amateur live stage performance rights to *FILUMENA* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur Licensing Fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing Fees are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Licensing Fee of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

Stock licensing fees quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: Alan Brodie Rep. LTD., Paddock Suite, The Courtyard, 55 Charterhouse St., London EC1M 6HA England.

Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, performance and terms for which must be secured in writing from Samuel French, Inc.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play and their licensing agent, Samuel French, Inc., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees.

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright of, or the right to copyright, this play may be impaired.
No one shall make any changes in this play for the purpose of production.
Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to Samuel French, Inc., for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.
No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The action takes place in Domenico Soriano's house

ACT ONE—Late evening in Spring

ACT TWO—The following day

ACT THREE—Ten months later

Time—1946

FILUMENA was first presented by Danny O'Donovan, Alan Cluer and Helen Montagu at the Lyric Theatre, London, on the 2nd November 1977, with the following cast of characters:

FILUMENA MARTURANO	<i>Joan Plowright</i>
DOMENICO SORIANO	<i>Colin Blakely</i>
ALFREDO AMOROSO	<i>Larry Noble</i>
ROSALIA SOLIMENE	<i>Patricia Hayes</i>
DIANA	<i>Sharon Mughan</i>
LUCIA	<i>Jane Gurnett</i>
UMBERTO	<i>Christopher Guard</i>
RICCARDO	<i>Trevor Eve</i>
MICHELE	<i>Larry Lamb</i>
NOCELLA	<i>David Graham</i>
TERESINA	<i>Linda Polan</i>
WAITERS	<i>Trevor Griffiths</i> <i>Edward Duke</i>

The play directed by Franco Zeffirelli
Setting by Raimonda Gaetani

FILUMENA opened at the St. James Theater, New York City, on February 10, 1980, with the following cast of characters:

FILUMENA MARTURANO	<i>Joan Plowright</i>
DOMENICO SORIANO	<i>Frank Finlay</i>
ALFREDO AMOROSO	<i>Ernest Sarracino</i>
ROSALIA SOLIMENE	<i>Miriam Phillips</i>
FIRST WAITER	<i>Gabor Morea</i>
SECOND WAITER	<i>Bill Karnovsky</i>
DIANA	<i>Donna Davis</i>
LUCIA	<i>Lisa Passero</i>
PASQUALE NOCELLA	<i>Pierre Epstein</i>
UMBERTO	<i>Dennis Boutsikaris</i>
RICCARDO	<i>Stephen Schnetzer</i>
MICHELE	<i>Peter Iacangelo</i>

FILUMENA, by Eduardo De Filippo; English version by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse; directed by Laurence Olivier; settings and costumes by Raimonda Gaetani; lighting by Thomas Skelton; production stage manager, Larry Forde. Presented by Danny O'Donovan and Helen Montagu, in association with Mecca Productions.

Filumena is a play by Eduardo de Filippo, translated by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse, which is for six men, five women and two male extras. *Filumena* had lived with Domenico for twenty-five years, but was to be thrown over for a younger woman. She therefore pretended to be dying, and inveigled him into a "death-bed marriage." When he proves the marriage to be null and void, she informs him that she has three grown sons which she has supported by stealing from him, and that one of them is his—she will not say which. He tries vainly to discover his true son; but even when at last he "remarries" her, she keeps the secret, otherwise he would favour the one above the others. Eventually Domenico agrees with her and as the play ends they are fully reconciled, with every promise of happiness before them. Period: 1946.

Filumena

ACT ONE

A large dining-room in the house of DOMENICO SORIANO. The last light of day is just leaving the terrace on a late Spring evening.

The room is expensively furnished, if not in the best of taste. There are paintings and pieces which have been inherited by DOMENICO from his parents and which clash with the modern furnishings. To one side in the back wall glass doors open on to a glassed-in passage way leading to the terrace and also to the kitchen. On the other side of the back wall is an opening to a small hallway: an outer door leads from this to the front door, off; and a passage to other parts of the house. There are two other doors, one to the bedroom, the other to DOMENICO's study. On an ornate side-board are displayed the cups and other trophies which have been won by his racehorses. The large dining-table has been laid, elegantly, for a meal for two. There is a bowl of red roses in the middle of the table. Standing in the doorway of the bedroom, her arms folded defiantly across her bosom, is FILUMENA MARTURANO. She is wearing a long nightdress. Her hair is untidy and she is wearing bedroom slippers. Her face is that of a woman who has known a hard life. FILUMENA is not coarse—but she is from a working-class background and is not ashamed of the fact. She is frank, demonstrative and a decisive woman. She is forty-eight, but does not look it. Though her hair may be turning silver at the temples, her eyes have an almost youthful brightness—they are gleaming now at the

prospect of the argument to come and of which she is not afraid. In the opposite corner, Downstage, stands her adversary, DOMENICO SORIANO, a well-built man of about fifty who has enjoyed life to the full. He is wearing trousers and a pyjama jacket. On the other side of the room, by the terrace, stands ROSALIA SOLIMENE, seventy-five years old, wearing a black dress. She has known FILUMENA since she was a little girl. In the fourth corner of the room stands ALFREDO AMOROSO, about sixty years of age, who has been DOMENICO's faithful servant and good friend for many years.

When the CURTAIN rises, we discover these four confronting one another from the four corners of the room as if they were engaged in playing some sort of game—but we soon discover that this is no game.

DOMENICO. (*Hitting himself hard across the face, again and again.*) Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! Crazy! A hundred times. A thousand times. Crazy.

ALFREDO. (*Genuinely concerned.*) Domenico! Don't, you will hurt yourself!

(*ROSALIA goes to the bedroom and fetches a shawl which she puts round FILUMENA's shoulders.*)

DOMENICO. (*Ignoring him.*) I am worthless. I should go now to the nearest mirror and spit in my own face. (*To FILUMENA.*) All that I was, I have given to you. I have given you myself for twenty-five years—my brain, my body, my youth. What more do you want? What more is there of Domenico Soriano that you have not already had? You have taken my sanity—I am insane! Do you want the skin too? Do you want what is left of the flesh? Would you like my dry bones? (*To all three of them.*) You've all had your own way. I thought I was Jesus Christ on earth and behind my

back you crucified me! (*Turning to each one in turn.*) You—you—you in this street, in this neighbourhood, in Naples—on this earth you have destroyed me! (*Back to FILUMENA.*) When I think of it I can't think straight. If I tried to sit down now and put my mind to what you've done I would have to get up and walk round the room! I should have known. It's in your nature. A woman like you, how else should I expect you to behave? Even after twenty-five years of living with me—of course, you'll go back to your old ways. But don't think you've won. I'll see you in your grave first, woman. You, and all those who have helped you. The doctor. The priest. (*To ROSALIA and ALFREDO.*) And you two jackals—you've had your last meal off my carcass. I'll see the pair of you in hell too, I'll put a bullet into each of you. Where's my revolver?

ALFREDO. At the gunsmith's.

DOMENICO. What's it doing at the gunsmith's?

ALFREDO. You told me to take it—the barrel is rusty.

DOMENICO. (*Back to FILUMENA.*) We are finished, you and I. Completely. You will leave this house—this is my house and you will get out of it. And if you don't walk out, by God, I tell you they will carry you out, woman. Dead. No-one defies Domenico Soriano. No-one. Try to fight me and I will smash you to pulp. I will see you all in jail. This house belongs to me. All that I own belongs to me. I am going to keep it, Filumena. You will dance to my tune. When I tell them who you were—what you were—the whore-house I found you in—do you think they'll listen then to you? You thought you'd destroyed me—but watch. Watch me, Filumena. I am going to destroy you. Prostitute!

FILUMENA. Is that the end? Have you finished? Can I speak now?

DOMENICO. Shut up! Don't speak. I don't want to hear your voice. I don't want to have to look into your face!

FILUMENA. Don't worry. (*Pointing to her stomach.*) When I have told you what is in here, you will never hear my voice again. And you won't have to look in my face.

DOMENICO. (*With contempt.*) Whore! You were a whore when I met you and, in your heart, you are still a whore!

FILUMENA. Do we have to go into all that all over again? Everybody knows what I was. It isn't any secret. What I was, and where I lived—yes, and who came to visit me, too! How many times were you there, Domenico, knocking on the door? You got the same service as all the rest. What have you got to complain about now? I know what I was. That's for me to cry over. I don't need you to remind me, and I know what I am now. I'm your wife. This is my house too. Fetch the police; if you like—I am not moving from my house.

DOMENICO. I thought I was crazy—she is crazy. Wife? You whore! Who could marry a whore like you!

FILUMENA. You! You! Man and wife! Me and you!

DOMENICO. You *are* insane. You don't think you'll get away with that? (*He gestures at ALFREDO and ROSALIA.*) I have witnesses, woman.

ROSALIA. Don't drag me into it. She was too ill to speak. She was in agony, that's all I know. She never said one word to me.

DOMENICO. (*To ALFREDO.*) How about you? Didn't you know that with her dying breath she was living a lie?

ALFREDO. How could I? She hates me! She wouldn't tell me.

ROSALIA. (*To DOMENICO.*) What about the priest? Who was the first to say that she was dying? Who sent for the priest?

DOMENICO. Of course I sent for a priest. She was dying. She wanted a priest. I did what she told me.

FILUMENA. You couldn't wait for the priest to get here. All you wanted was to see me out of this world.

DOMENICO. If only you were out of it now! If only you'd been telling the truth. That priest believed her. I believed you. And I believed him too, when he said, "This poor woman is dying—marry her—it is her last wish on earth." Out of the goodness of my heart I agreed.

FILUMENA. You agreed, because you have not got a heart to beat in your body. "She is only clinging on to life until I marry her," you thought. "The quicker I marry her, the quicker she will be dead."

DOMENICO. Bravo!

FILUMENA. It was a shock for you, wasn't it, when the priest had gone and I jumped out of bed? "Congratulations, we are man and wife."

ROSALIA. (*Before DOMENICO can get a word in.*) It was a shock for me, too. I jumped out of my chair. I was the one who nearly died. And then I saw the funny side. (*She begins to laugh.*) I thought I'd see a wedding and a funeral in one week. You were very good. The way you took the part, you should have been an actress.

ALFREDO. What about the agony! I could almost feel the pain myself.

DOMENICO. Shut up both of you, or you really will feel the pain. We are not man and wife. We will never be man and wife. Cannot be! (*With a sudden thought.*) What about the doctor? Did you manage to fool him too or did you bribe him? Can't we even trust the medical profession any longer? Or was he as big an idiot as me?

ALFREDO. I think he was as big an idiot as you . . .

DOMENICO. Shut up! He'll suffer for this. I will make him suffer for it. He was in your clutches, wasn't he? You tell me the truth—you bought him.

FILUMENA. (*Disgustedly.*) Bought. Bought, bought. You think you can buy anything and everything and anybody.

DOMENICO. Yes! Often enough, I've bought and paid for you!

FILUMENA. Because you are Don Domenico Soriano. So you can buy whatever it is you want. You can buy the best shirts, handmade. The best suits, hand-tailored. The best racehorses with the finest pedigree and, to make them win, you can hire the best jockeys to ride them. I have been your workhorse for twenty-five years, Don Domenico Soriano—but now it's my turn in the saddle. I hold the reins in my

hand and I'm going to make you gallop. And, believe me, you have some galloping to do! Twenty-five years I have been a servant to you—a slave almost. Of course that doctor believed I was in agony. After twenty-five years of you any woman would be in agony. (*To the other two.*) You two are witnesses to my life here. When he went off and enjoyed himself—London—Paris—Rome—did I ever go with him? No, no, he'd take a racehorse, not me. I had to stay behind. Well of course. Why not? I couldn't be his wife. I was not good enough to be his wife, but I was good enough to be left here in charge of everything. The factory at Forcella; the one at Virgene. The shops at Tuledo and in Foria. Because he is so well-loved by his workers that if I were not there, they would steal every penny he possesses. (*Giving her impression of the wheedling DOMENICO.*) "What a wonderful woman you are, Filumini . . . How could I ever begin to manage without you?" Very, well, it seems, in Paris and London and Rome—it is only here that he cannot be without me. To look after his house. To look after his business. I have even got down and washed his feet for him.

DOMENICO. Not any longer.

FILUMENA. Not any longer—when I was a girl and didn't know any better. Never—not once did you show any appreciation for what I was doing. Not one word, not one sign to show thanks for it. I have never had respect in this house. What have I been here, for twenty-five years? Never anything except a maid, a servant, a slave.

DOMENICO. What about me? Never have you shown me any appreciation of what I have done for you—not a hint of understanding of the difficult situation I have found myself in, living with a woman of your reputation. No. Always scowling—a cold-blooded housekeeper walking from one room to the next with a face as long as a wet week. You have never brought anything out into the open. It's always been inside you, brooding. You have worn a mask on your

face. All the time we've lived together, I've never seen a tear in your eye. Do you realize that?

FILUMENA. Did you expect me to cry because of you?

DOMENICO. Because of anything. All women cry sometimes. Not you. There's something wrong with you. You are not human. It's normal to cry. It's as normal for a woman to cry as it is for her to eat or drink or sleep. Come to that, I've never even seen you sleep.

FILUMENA. How could you see me sleeping? You're never here to see me sleep. You've forgotten the way home.

DOMENICO. That is a lie!

FILUMENA. Are the holidays a lie? Was Christmas a lie? Was Easter a lie? How many Christmases and how many Easters have I spent here on my own. No, you're right. I don't cry. Do you know what makes a woman cry? When she knows what happiness is, but it's beyond her reach. That's not me. Filumena Marturano has never known happiness. What she hasn't missed, she is unable to cry for. I would kill myself—cut out my heart myself—before I'd give you the pleasure of seeing me cry. You would think as he got older he might have changed. When he was younger you might have blamed it on the women who ran after him for his looks and money. But now, now. At his age. Look at him. He is fifty-two years old and he still comes back here, when he feels like it, with his handkerchiefs covered in lipstick. He throws them down for me to wash and I pick them up and I feel sick with disgust! (*To ROSALIA.*) Where are they now?

ROSALIA. Don't worry. If you ever need them they are very well hidden.

FILUMENA. You would think that he would have thought of that himself. You might think that he might think it might be right for me not to see them. No. He throws them down. On the bedroom floor, the bathroom floor. "Why shouldn't she wash them," he thinks. "What is she? Nothing." I have had no rights in this house. But him—he has every

right—even the right to carry on, in front of me, with that—that . . .

DOMENICO. That what? That what?

FILUMENA. That slut. That cow. Carrying on with that little bitch. Did you really think that I was blind? You've never been able to lie, that's your problem. You are fifty-two years old and you have no more brains than to run around with a twenty-two-year-old cow. And you have no shame that you can bring her inside this house. A nurse! Does she look like a nurse. No, she looks what she is—she looks like a cow. A nurse! Did you really think I would believe that? After I had taken one look at her? Yes—yes, you thought I would believe it, because you thought I was dying. (*Incredulously.*) And less than one hour ago just before the priest came here, and asked you to marry me because I was standing on the threshold of death—and you agreed . . .

DOMENICO. I agreed only because you lied . . .

FILUMENA. You agreed, Domenico, you agreed to marry me. Less than one hour ago. You stood next to my bed and put your hands all over that cow, and touched her—and kissed her. (*Nauseated.*) Madonna! You really make me want to vomit. And supposing I really had been dying? What then? What if I'd died today? What would you have done? (*She indicates the table laid for two.*) Look! Look at it! The table is laid. For two. You would have sat down here while I was dead in that room and you would have eaten dinner with—that blood-sucking cow!

DOMENICO. Am I not supposed to eat because you are dead? Would you like me to starve? To follow you into the grave?

FILUMENA. There are roses on the table!

DOMENICO. So there are roses on the table?

FILUMENA. Red roses.

DOMENICO. (*Exasperated.*) Red, green, blue, purple. If I want roses on the table when I'm eating, I will have roses on the table. What difference would roses on the table have

made to you? You would have been lying dead. I'd have been more than happy to have put them on your coffin.

FILUMENA. But I am not dead, Domenico— (*Viciously.*) and I have no intention of dying for a long time.

DOMENICO. So, we have this little problem. I'm baffled, you know, I really am. What was it you said I used to get? When I came to you? The same service as all the others? If you treated all men alike then—why not do it now? Find yourself one of the others and leave me alone. Why pick on me? And if I fall in love with another woman and I want to marry her—and I am going to marry Diana—what difference does it make to you if she is twenty-two years old or a hundred and twenty-two?

FILUMENA. Marry her? Mother of God, I may not be able to cry but you make me laugh! I pity you. So you really think it matters to me what she is, who she is, where you found her, what you do with her. You really think that I've done all this because of you? A woman like me? Oh no, oh no. I do all this because I need you. There is something I need from you.

DOMENICO. (*Triumphantly.*) Ah! Money. Why? Did you think I wouldn't have looked after you? Me, Domenico Soriano, son of Raimondo Soriano, one of the richest and most respected confectioners in Naples. So you really imagine that I would toss you out on to the streets without so much as a roof over your head. Have I ever argued over money?

FILUMENA. Will you please be quiet about your money. You can keep your money and pile it up in the bank and good luck to you. It is something else I want from you and you are going to give it to me. I have three sons, Dummi'.

(DOMENICO and ALFREDO are dumbfounded. ROSALIA is impassive.)

DOMENICO. What's this—three sons? How do you mean, three sons?

FILUMENA. I have three sons.

DOMENICO. You are a childless woman—how can you suddenly have three sons?

FILUMENA. I have three sons, Domenico.

DOMENICO. You have no sons. You haven't even got a daughter. Where all at once can you produce three sons? Whose sons are they?

FILUMENA. (*Coldly, aware of his foreboding.*) They are the sons of men like you.

DOMENICO. Filume', what does that mean—"the sons of men like you?"

FILUMENA. It means that all men are the same.

DOMENICO. Watch what you're saying! You're playing a very dangerous game. Did you know this, Rosalia?

ROSALIA. (*Carelessly, with a shrug.*) Yes, that I knew.

DOMENICO. (*To ALFREDO.*) How about you?

ALFREDO. How could I know it if you didn't? She hates me, you know!

DOMENICO. (*Still incredulous.*) Three—sons? All boys?

FILUMENA. All boys.

DOMENICO. How old?

FILUMENA. The eldest one is twenty-six.

DOMENICO. Twenty-six . . . ?

FILUMENA. Don't make that face. Don't be afraid. They are nothing to do with you.

DOMENICO. Are you sure?

FILUMENA. They are nothing to do with you.

DOMENICO. Do they know they have a mother? I mean do they know who their mother is?

FILUMENA. No. No, they don't know I am their mother—but I see them sometimes. I talk to them.

DOMENICO. Explain it to me. They don't know that you're their mother—how do you see them? Where are they? What do they do? How do they live? Who brought them up?

FILUMENA. You did.

DOMENICO. Me?

FILUMENA. Your money.

DOMENICO. My money? What money?

FILUMENA. It was your precious money. You've so much you didn't even know that it was going. I stole it from you. Over the years. Off your desk. Out of your pockets. Out of your wallet.

DOMENICO. Thief!

FILUMENA. Yes. Not only your money. Some of your suits. I sold them. Pairs of shoes. Things like that. Now and again a shirt. Cuff-links—tie-pins. Nothing too valuable but quite a lot, over a period of years. There was, of course, the diamond ring.

DOMENICO. Which diamond ring?

FILUMENA. Which diamond ring? The one with the big diamond. The one you thought you'd lost. You didn't lose it. I stole it. That was the only thing you ever noticed. But over twenty-five years I stole enough from you to provide for my three sons.

DOMENICO. For twenty-five years I have harboured a thief under my roof. What kind of a woman are you? Do you feel no shame?

FILUMENA. (*Ignoring him.*) One of them has his business premises just around the corner in the alley. He's a plumber.

ROSALIA. (*Proudly.*) No. He's a sanitary engineer.

DOMENICO. A what?

ROSALIA. A sanitary engineer. Don't you know what a sanitary engineer is? He fixes pipes. Mends washers. He's the same as a plumber only more expensive. Then there's Riccardo. Such a handsome boy. The girls fight over him. He's a shirt-maker. Made-to-measure, you understand, not ready-to-wear. Well he owns a shop in the Via Chiaia, number seventy-four. Only the very best people go to him . . .

DOMENICO. Really?

ROSALIA. Then, there is the third one, Umberto.

FILUMENA. Umberto's the clever one. He's studied, passed his exams and became an accountant. He also writes pieces for the newspapers.

DOMENICO. Ah? So we have got a writer in the family!

ROSALIA. Oh, and what a wonderful mother she has been to those boys. They never wanted for anything.

DOMENICO. Really?

ROSALIA. No, it's true. Why should I lie? I'm an old woman. Very soon I'll be called to stand before our Supreme Being who sees and knows everything. How could I look Him in the face if I'd told a lie? If those children had asked for the milk of a mouse she would have gone down on her hands and knees to get it for them. From the day each one of them came into this world—he has only had to ask, and it's been his.

DOMENICO. What used to be mine.

ROSALIA. You have always had money to throw away.

DOMENICO. Why not? Should I have asked your permission!

ROSALIA. Certainly not.

FILUMENA. Don't listen to him. Why do you even bother to answer him?

DOMENICO. Filumena, don't drive me too far! Do you realize what you have done? Now, on top of everything else, you suddenly announce that there are three men in this world that I've never even met, that I don't even know where they come from, who could be laughing at me, all this time, behind my back, and they'd be right to do so. They have been brought up by you to think whatever happens they can always go and screw old Domenico.

ROSALIA. No, no. They're not like that. You don't know them. They've never known where the money comes from. Filumena has a clever head on her shoulders. She did everything that had to be done through a solicitor—very discreetly. He arranged the money for the plumber to set himself up in business. He told the boy the money came from

a person who did not want her name to be disclosed. And the same with Riccardo. And with the monthly payments for Umberto to go on with his studies. You had nothing to do with it.

DOMENICO. No. No—I only provided the money.

ROSALIA. Exactly.

DOMENICO. So the three bastards could make me the laughing-stock of all Naples.

FILUMENA. What would you have had me do? Kill them? Eh, Dummi'? Do what all the other women in that brothel used to do? Would that have made me a respectable woman? Go on, answer me? "Get rid of it," they told me. "It's so easy—so simple, Filumena." Would you have told me the same? Would you have carried it in your conscience for the rest of your life? Not me. I would rather have died myself than take the life of one of those unborn children. And then, of course, I spoke to the Madonna. The little Madonna of the Roses.

ROSALIA. The Madonna of the Roses—she performs a fresh miracle every day of our life.

DOMENICO. Oh please. Don't drag the Madonna into this mess.

FILUMENA. Don't joke, Domenico. I'm telling you the truth. It really happened. I found myself alone in the street. It was late one night. I knew I was going to have a child. It was my first time. What am I going to do? Who can I turn to? There is no-one. I heard in my ears the buzzing voices of the other women—my friends—in that house. "Get rid of it, Filumena." "What are you waiting for?" "I know just the man that you should go to." But I wouldn't listen to them. I walked and walked and walked. All at once I found myself standing in the street in front of the shrine of the Madonna of the Roses. I stood there, looking up at her, like this. (*She stands, arms akimbo, staring up.*) You tell me: "What can I do? You know everything—you know as well as I do why I'm living this dreadful life. Tell me what to

do.” But she said nothing. “Why don’t you answer me?” Not a word. “I think I’m beginning to understand,” I said, “That is the way you people up there operate—the less you talk, the more the ones down here believe in you. Is that it? I’m talking to you—answer—answer!” And then I heard a voice: “A child is a child.”

DOMENICO. (*Puzzled.*) “A child is a child”?

(*Both ROSALIA and ALFREDO shoot him warning glances—ROSALIA angrily; ALFREDO because he is caught up in FILUMENA’s story. DOMENICO shrugs, mystified. FILUMENA has heard or seen none of this.*)

FILUMENA. “A child is a child.” I was frozen to the spot. Like stone. Perhaps if I’d turned round I would have seen or understood where the voice had come from. From an open window, perhaps, or someone standing on a balcony. But then I thought—why—at this moment—did I get this answer? I was the only one that knew that I was . . . (*She pats her stomach.*) Those words were meant for me. That’s the way she chooses to speak to us—through other people. Then I thought—when those other girls told me to get rid of it, that was her, too, tempting me through them. As I stood there, looking at her, I don’t know if it was me or her who nodded. It makes no difference. If it was me that nodded, it was her nodding through me, to let me know she understood. “A child is a child.” I swore then—I made a vow. And because of that vow I’ve put up with everything that you’ve done to me. The way you’ve treated me—all these years. For them. For the children. And when that young man fell in love with me and wanted to marry me, do you remember? When you and I had been together for five years—your wife was still alive then, and I was living in that apartment where you put me when you took me out of that house. He loved me so much, that boy, he might even have accepted my children. But no, all at

once you were jealous. "I cannot marry you. If you leave me for this boy I shall kill myself." And you started to cry. You always knew how to cry. So I said good-bye to that poor boy. Two years later, your wife died. And I went on living in the apartment. I didn't press you. "No, give him time. He knows the sacrifices you've made for him." So I waited. And I waited. One day I said to you, "Dummi", do you know who's just got married? The little girl you used to see playing in the street. Married." And all you did was laugh. That arrogant laugh of yours. The laugh I used to hear when you and your stupid friends were coming up the brothel stairs. I could have killed you when I heard that laugh. But I said nothing—and I waited. Twenty-five years I've waited and waited—for what? For him to start running around drooling over a twenty-two-year-old cow. Mother of God! But he is not putting her inside this house. (*Back to DOMENICO.*) Try! Try! I warn you, try to put that cow inside this house now that I am your wife. I will throw her out. I will throw both you and her out. We are married. A priest married us. This house is mine.

(*The doorbell rings. ALFREDO goes to answer it. DOMENICO bursts into laughter.*)

DOMENICO. Is this the laugh you were talking about? The laugh you didn't like to hear?

FILUMENA. Go on—laugh—laugh. Don't worry. I like to hear you laugh now. It does not hurt any more. I enjoy hearing that laugh now, Dummi'. It's not quite so arrogant as it was before.

(*ALFREDO returns, a little embarrassed at what he has to announce.*)

DOMENICO. What do you want?

ALFREDO. What do I want? The dinner's here.

DOMENICO. All right. The dinner's here. What are you looking at your feet for? Aren't I supposed to eat?

ALFREDO. Of course! (*Calling off.*) Bring it in!

(*Two restaurant WAITERS enter, carrying covered dishes and a large box between them.*)

FIRST WAITER. Good evening, Don Domenico. At your service, sir. (*To his colleague, indicating the table.*) Put it down here. (*The WAITERS put the food down. Demonstrating.*) I have brought you two small plump spring chickens. I am sure you will be well satisfied. Everything you ordered is just as you wanted it—top quality and extra-special service. Oh, sir, here is the dessert. I have managed to bring you the particular pudding that the young lady particularly enjoys. Here's the wine, exactly as you ordered. I am sure you will be very satisfied. (*His words are met with a stony silence, but he does not seem to have noticed.*) I have remembered everything—you haven't forgotten, have you, sir?

DOMENICO. Forgotten what?

FIRST WAITER. What you said when you came to see me about the dinner, sir. I happened to enquire whether, perhaps, you might have an old pair of trousers you no longer had a use for. You said "If everything goes the right way, I'll give you a three-piece suit."

DOMENICO. Get out. (*The WAITER is upset.*)

FIRST WAITER. Everything did not go the right way?

DOMENICO. I told you to get out. (*The WAITERS leave.*)

FILUMENA. (*Sarcastically.*) Aren't you going to eat? Have you lost your appetite?

DOMENICO. It's my meal—I'll eat and drink when I'm ready.

(*DIANA enters from the front door. She is a snobbish woman about twenty-seven, trying to pass herself off*

as twenty-two. She looks down her nose at everybody. As she enters, she addresses the occupants of the room in general—as if there were certain present members of the company too much beneath her to be addressed in private. She has not noticed that FILUMENA is also there. She is carrying a basket with a number of small pharmaceutical parcels and a nurse's overall which she places on the table. She picks out the nurse's overall and slips it on.

DIANA. Excuse me, Alfredo. (*To DOMENICO.*) Oh, my dear, there was a time, at one point, when I thought I was going to have to stand in that chemist's for the entire evening. It was absolutely crowded to the doors. I'm exhausted. (*Peremptorily.*) Run my bath, Rosalia, at once, please. (*She sees the roses on the table.*) Red roses. How did you remember, Domenico? My favourite flowers. You're so sweet. You're spoiling me. The dinner smells good—I'm really famished. (*She takes out the pharmaceutical phials.*) I brought the camphor and the adrenalin—but they were completely out of oxygen. (*DOMENICO is rooted to the floor. FILUMENA has not batted an eyelid. ROSALIA and ALFREDO are amused by this turn of events.*) Do you know what crossed my mind while I was waiting in the chemist's? Domenico, I don't wish to speed a sad event, but if the poor woman "goes"—passes over—tonight, I shall leave first thing tomorrow morning. I'm not saying the wrong thing, am I? But if it's going to happen it's better it happens sooner than later. You won't want me around for a day or two. So I thought I'd keep out of the way for a while—how does that strike you? One's expected to show just a little respect. How is she? Has she finally taken a turn for the worse yet? Has the priest been sent for?

FILUMENA. (*Advancing on DIANA.*) The priest was sent for. The priest arrived. The priest stood in that room and testified to the evidence of my desperate condition. The priest said there was no hope for me. Take that thing off.

DIANA. What?

FILUMENA. Take that thing off.

(DIANA is too stunned to take in the command. ROSALIA demonstrates with her own apron.)

ROSALIA. Take off the overall that you are wearing.

DIANA. Oh! (*She takes off the nurse's overall.* FILUMENA watches her intently.)

FILUMENA. (*Pointing.*) Put it on that chair.

ROSALIA. Place the overall on the chair.

(DIANA complies, and FILUMENA returns to her original theme. During the following, DIANA, shocked beyond belief and unaware of what she is doing, picks up a rose from a vase on the table and toys with it.)

FILUMENA. As I was saying, the priest recognized the agonized state I was in, so he therefore advised Don Domenico Soriano to legalize *in extremis* our sinful relationship . . . (*Furious again.*) Put that rose back!

DIANA. What?

FILUMENA. Put that rose back.

ROSALIA. In the vase. (DIANA does as she is told.)

FILUMENA. As I was saying, Don Domenico realized at once that what the priest was saying was only right and fair. "This poor woman," he said to himself, didn't you, Dummi'? "This poor woman has stood by me and given me twenty-five years of her life—of course I must marry her—I have no choice." So the plain truth of the matter is that Don Domenico and myself were married less than an hour ago while I was lying on my deathbed. Legally. With two witnesses. By the representative of the Holy Mother Church. Would you believe it—a wonderful recovery took place! Perhaps marriage is good for the health. Within seconds I was up and about. The funeral has been

postponed. There is no illness in this house. It therefore follows that where there is no illness, there is no need for camphor and adrenalin, and no need for nurses. (FILUMENA strikes DIANA on the chin with her index finger, making her head jerk from side to side.) No filth. No cows. No farmyard animals. No filthy farmyard carrying on in front of a dying woman—because that's what you thought I was—a dying woman. So go away. Find somewhere else to bounce your tits and waggle your arse—there is no room for you in this house.

DIANA. (*With a fixed disbelieving grin on her face.*) What does she mean, Domenico? (*She walks backwards towards the door.*)

FILUMENA. And if they can't accommodate you in the farmyard, go to the brothel I came from—I'm sure they'll find a place for you there.

DIANA. (*Not comprehending.*) Where?

FILUMENA. Ask Don Domenico. He used to be a frequent visitor. He still frequents, I hear.

DIANA. (*Panic-stricken.*) Thank you.

FILUMENA. Don't mention it.

DIANA. Good night!

(DIANA flees. DOMENICO, who has remained silent and bewildered throughout the above, now turns on FILUMENA.)

DOMENICO. Did you have to treat the poor girl like that?

FILUMENA. Poor girl? Cow! She got what she deserved.

DOMENICO. Ah, forget the girl. There is something else going on in my mind. Something more important. You're a devil. You know that? It would be fatal to take one's eyes off you for a second. When you speak, every word has to be carefully noted and weighed one by one. I shall never understand you, but I admire you for what you are. You are like a spider. Some sort of poisonous spider weaving its

web around its victim. You said something, and it has been going around and around in my head while you were abusing that poor girl. You said, "There is something else I want from you—and you're going to give it to me." This something else—what is it? I know it's not money. So what is it that you want from me? What is there going on in that mind that you haven't told me? Answer me! Come on, out with it.

FILUMENA. Do you know that old song, Dummi'? (*She sings.*) "I am teaching some tricks to a monkey. He is learning to do what I say."

ROSALIA. Mother of God!

DOMENICO. Don't play the fool with me. Come on—out with it.

FILUMENA. You are the monkey.

DOMENICO. Filumena, don't talk in riddles. You drive me insane!

FILUMENA. My sons are my sons.

DOMENICO. For God's sake woman, say what you mean!

FILUMENA. They must know who their mother is. They must know how much I love them—how much I need them to love me. It is not right that they should feel shame if someone asks to see their birth certificates. They should be part of one family. There should be someone there they can turn to for help. They must have the same name as me.

DOMENICO. What name?

FILUMENA. My name. I am married to you. Soriano.

DOMENICO. (*Passionately.*) I knew it. All along I knew it, but I wanted to hear it from you, from that foul, blaspheming mouth of yours. So that I could convince myself that I would be in the right if I broke all your bones with my hands and crushed your skull into the ground with the heel of my shoe. It would be as right as crushing a snake. Here? In my home? With my name? Those—those sons of—a—those sons of a . . .

FILUMENA. Sons of a what? Say it! Say it!

DOMENICO. Yours! Yours! Sons of yours. If you ask me sons of what, I can only answer—yours. If you ask me sons of whom, I cannot answer. Because I don't know. I don't know who their father is, and I'd be surprised if you could put a father's face to any of them. Bring three bastards into my house? I swear to you, Filumena, not one of them will put one foot inside this house, on my father's soul I swear it.

FILUMENA. (*Quietly, in earnest.*) Don't swear, Domenico. I swore a vow once, and because of that vow, for twenty-five years I have been begging at your feet. Don't swear a vow you may not be able to keep. If you do you will die damned. One day you will have to break that vow and come begging at my feet.

DOMENICO. What are you thinking now? You witch! But I am not afraid of you. You are not going to frighten me.

FILUMENA. Why are you shouting then?

DOMENICO. Shut up! (*He takes off his pyjama jacket.*) Get me my jacket. (*ALFREDO goes into the study.*) Tomorrow you will be out of this house—for good. I'll put everything in the hands of my lawyer. First thing tomorrow. I'll take you to court. You tried to trap me but you failed. I've got witnesses.

FILUMENA. They were witnesses to a wedding. The law is on my side.

DOMENICO. Pray that it isn't, Filumena. Pray. Because if the law finds for you—I will take the law in my own hands—I'll kill you with my hands, and that I do swear. I could pick you up, now—pick you up and throw you—throw you out of this world.

FILUMENA. And where shall you put me?

DOMENICO. (*Switching on the lights.*) Back in the whore-house—where you belong! (*ALFREDO returns with DOMENICO's jacket. DOMENICO snatches the jacket from*

him and puts it on.) Tomorrow morning you're to get my solicitor, do you understand? (ALFREDO *nods.*) Then we'll talk, Filume'.

FILUMENA. All right. We'll talk then.

DOMENICO. You'll find out that Don Domenico Soriano is not the fool you thought he was! (DOMENICO *moves Up-stage, on his way out.*)

FILUMENA. (*Indicating the dinner on the table.*) Rosalia, it's such a pity to waste this food. Sit down. You must be hungry too. (ROSALIA *sits down at the table.*)

DOMENICO. Enjoy yourself, Filumena de Napolitana.

FILUMENA. (*Singing.*) I am teaching some tricks to a monkey: he is learning to do what I say. (*As FILUMENA starts to sing, DOMENICO laughs at her, insultingly.*)

DOMENICO. Remember this laugh, Filumena Marturano? Remember it well. (DOMENICO *storms out, followed by ALFREDO, as—*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

The same. The following day, a bright, sunny morning.

LUCIA, *the maid, has cleared away the chairs in order to wash the floor. Some of the chairs are out on the terrace, others are upside-down on the table. LUCIA is a healthy, good-natured girl in her early twenties. She has just finished washing the floor and is wringing out the floor-cloth in a bucket of water. Having done this, she puts her cleaning things away out on the terrace. As she returns to the livingroom and begins to put back the furniture, ALFREDO enters from the outer door, looking tired.*

ALFREDO. Good morning, Lucia.

LUCIA. Stand still! (ALFREDO *stops dead in his tracks.*) Don't move. Don't you walk across the floor with your big feet!

ALFREDO. What shall I do? Walk on my hands? (*He sits on the settee.*)

LUCIA. Can't you see I've just finished washing that floor. It's still wet. And you walk in with those great, big clumping feet of yours! (*She replaces the chairs, paying him scant attention.*)

ALFREDO. It's not just my feet that are clumping. My head is clumping too. I've been out all night with Don Domenico. Wandering around. I haven't laid my head down for a second. Half the night was spent sitting on a bench on the seafront at Caracciolo. Mother of God, I thought I was going to freeze to death! I'm not complaining, don't think that. Don Domenico has been very good to me. I hope he lives a thousand years—but please God let him lead a quiet, ordered life. I'm too old for these carryings-on. Lucia, please, do me a favor, bring me some coffee.

LUCIA. There isn't any coffee.

ALFREDO. Didn't Rosalia make some this morning?

LUCIA. No.

ALFREDO. Why?

LUCIA. She went out at the crack of dawn.

ALFREDO. Where to?

LUCIA. I don't know. All she said was that she had three important letters to be written on behalf of Donna Filumena and delivered by hand.

ALFREDO. *Three* letters? Three!

LUCIA. *Three* letters—after two and before four, you know? Three.

ALFREDO. (*Overwhelmed by fatigue.*) If I don't get a cup of coffee soon I'm a dead man. Please, Lucia, some coffee.

LUCIA. All right. I'll make you some and bring it to you. (*LUCIA exits to the kitchen as ROSALIA enters through the outer door.*)

ALFREDO. Don't you even say "good morning," Rosalia?

ROSALIA. I didn't see you sitting there.

ALFREDO. You didn't see me? What did you think I was? Part of the furniture? Where've you been?

ROSALIA. To Mass, of course. Where do you think?

ALFREDO. Oh! To Mass! You wouldn't have had time to deliver Donna Filumena's letters, then?

ROSALIA. If you knew where I'd been, why did you ask me?

ALFREDO. Because I wanted to see if you would tell me. I thought it might be a secret.

ROSALIA. I don't keep secrets.

ALFREDO. Who were the letters for?

ROSALIA. Mind your own business.

ALFREDO. "I don't keep secrets." "Mind your own business."

ROSALIA. It's true I don't keep secrets. On the other hand, I don't tell everything to people with loose tongues.

ALFREDO. You don't mean me?

ROSALIA. Yes. You. One of these days your tongue will drop off. What's more, it won't be long before you lose your nose too—it spends far too much time in other people's business.

ALFREDO. What! Oh! When? (*He rises.*) When have I ever poked my nose in your affairs?

ROSALIA. I didn't say mine—I said "other people's." I haven't got any affairs. My life is an open book. It's common knowledge. (*She launches into a monologue.*) I was born into a poor family, seventy-five years ago. Everybody knows that. My mother was a washerwoman. My father was a blacksmith. My husband and I were joined together in holy matrimony on the second day of November, nineteen hundred. It rained all the day we got married. But that was a good sign.

ALFREDO. A good sign?

ROSALIA. My husband used to repair umbrellas. Our union was blessed with three children—all at once. Triplets. The midwife rushed round to my husband's workshop with the happy news. He had a little shop just around the corner. She found him with his head in the sink . . .

ALFREDO. He was washing his face?

ROSALIA. No. It's not funny. At the very moment that his three children came into the world, their father had had a heart attack and left it. Imagine this poor orphan child . . .

ALFREDO. *Three* poor orphan children?

ROSALIA. *One* poor orphan child.

ALFREDO. *One*?

ROSALIA. Me. One. Both my parents were gone. How could they be orphans? Their mother was still alive, wasn't I? Idiot. Sit down. (*ALFREDO sits.*) I was alone in the world with three hungry mouths crying out for bread. So I took a couple of rooms in the Via San Liborio and set up in business for myself. I sold fly-swatters, remembrance candles for the dead, and party hats for festive occasions. We got

by—only just—but I managed to feed and clothe my three children. It was in those days I first met Donna Filumena—when she was a little girl. She used to play in the street with my three boys. When the boys grew up they all emigrated. There was no work here, so off they went. One to Australia, one to the United States, and one to . . .

ALFREDO. Argentina.

ROSALIA. No, no. Yes, you're right—Argentina. Have I told you this story before? I never saw them again. There I was, a middle-aged woman, nothing left only memories. If it hadn't been for the good heart of Donna Filumena, who brought me with her when she moved in with Don Domenico, I would have been starving in the street: a beggar sitting on the steps of a church. That's the end of the story. Thank you for your kind attention. (ROSALIA exits to the bedroom.)

ALFREDO. (*Rising and calling.*) Lucia!

LUCIA. (*Off.*) All right, I'm coming.

(LUCIA enters with a cup of coffee, but as she is about to hand it to ALFREDO, DOMENICO enters from the outer door.)

DOMENICO. Is that coffee?

LUCIA. (*Looking at ALFREDO, helplessly.*) Good morning, Don Domenico.

(DOMENICO takes the cup from LUCIA and drains it at a gulp. He hands her back the empty cup.)

DOMENICO. Thanks. I needed that!

ALFREDO. So did I.

DOMENICO. Was it for you? I'm sorry. (LUCIA goes out to the kitchen.) Did you go to the solicitor's?

ALFREDO. Yes, straight away. As soon as I left you.

DOMENICO. Did he say when he could get here?

ALFREDO. As quickly as he can get away.

DOMENICO. When's that?

ALFREDO. Whenever he's dealt with his appointments.

DOMENICO. So when is that going to be?

ALFREDO. Today, at any rate.

DOMENICO. (*Voicing his thoughts.*) Can anything be done about this awful mess? What if the solicitor says that she is right, that the law's the law, that I don't stand a cat in hell's chance. What about the church. We were married in front of a priest, weren't we, Alfredo? (*ALFREDO's thoughts are elsewhere. He drags them back to the present.*)

ALFREDO. Yes, a priest.

DOMENICO. What can I do, then? Why do I bother to confide in you? I'm wasting my time. I must be crazy. (*Looking at him, suddenly, with new eyes—kindly.*) What happened to you, Alfredo Amoroso?

ALFREDO. What happened to me?

DOMENICO. You're an old man. Your hair's turned white, you're a bag of bones, your face is creased, your eyesight's going—now you're going soft in the head!

ALFREDO. (*Never one to contradict his master.*) By God, you're right!

DOMENICO. (*Realizing that he, himself, is no longer young.*) The years rush past. Alfredo, for all of us. Do you remember Don Domenico Soriano?

ALFREDO. (*Not understanding—but pretending to.*) Of course, of course! What happened to him? Is he dead?

DOMENICO. (*Sadly.*) Yes. He's dead. Stone dead. Don Domenico Soriano is well and truly dead—he is not in his grave, that's all.

ALFREDO. Ah, you mean this Domenico Soriano.

DOMENICO. The black moustache I used to have. The hard, flat belly. I slept with so many women, eh, I don't believe that I ever slept at all!

ALFREDO. (*Yawning.*) Good times!

DOMENICO. Do you remember that girl, the one at the

Café Monte, the body on her? Christ! What I gave to her! I really roasted that one! And what about the vet's wife?

ALFREDO. The vet's wife! That's right. I *do* remember her! She was the one that had the sister-in-law that I was chasing—I never got anywhere. We never found anything to say to each other.

DOMENICO. And the horses we rode? Do you remember riding down to the Villa together?

ALFREDO. You looked like a God in the saddle!

DOMENICO. I had that grey suit. A hard hat and a silk scarf. And the horses—all the best horses belonged to me. Silver Eyes, do you remember her?

ALFREDO. Remember her? She was my favourite. A backside like a full moon. Do I remember her? I was in love with that horse. She was more to me than any woman.

DOMENICO. (*Lost in memories.*) Paris. London. How we travelled. Travel and horses. I *was* a God, Alfredo. I owned the world. No man ever gave me an order. I was Don Domenico Soriano then—and the mountains were mine and the sea was mine and I belonged only to myself. What has happened to that man, Alfredo? What has become of that Don Domenico Soriano? It's as if I'm finished—no urge—no drive—no love of life. But I'm still that same man, aren't I, that I used to be? I feel that I have to prove it to myself—and I will prove it—I still have that strength. Don Domenico will face death before defeat.

(FILUMENA *enters from her bedroom. She is wearing a housecoat and her hair is in disarray. ROSALIA is with her and is carrying some bed-linen. FILUMENA ignores DOMENICO and ALFREDO.*)

FILUMENA. (*Calling.*) Lucia! (*To ROSALIA.*) Give me the keys.

ROSALIA. Here they are.

(FILUMENA *puts the bunch of keys in the pocket of her housecoat and waits impatiently for LUCIA.*)

FILUMENA. Where is that girl! (*Louder.*) Lucia! (LUCIA *enters.*)

LUCIA. Here, signora!

FILUMENA. Take these sheets. (ROSALIA *hands the linen to LUCIA.*) The sofa in the little sitting-room next to the study, I want you to make it up into a bed.

LUCIA. (*Amazed.*) Into a *bed*, signora? (LUCIA *moves to leave but FILUMENA stops her.*)

FILUMENA. Wait a moment. I need your bed as well.

LUCIA. (*More amazed.*) My bed as well?

FILUMENA. There are enough sheets there for two beds—make yourself up somewhere to sleep in the kitchen.

LUCIA. (*Even more amazed.*) In the kitchen, signora?

FILUMENA. I need your room.

LUCIA. What about all my things, signora? Can I leave them in the chest of drawers?

FILUMENA. Take them out—I need your chest of drawers as well.

(LUCIA *goes out through the hall, aggrieved.* FILUMENA *pretends that she has just seen DOMENICO.*)

DOMENICO. Excuse me. Am I allowed to know what's happening in my own house?

FILUMENA. Certainly. There should not be any secrets between husband and wife. I need two more bedrooms.

DOMENICO. Am I allowed to know who for?

FILUMENA. For my sons.

DOMENICO. Only two?

FILUMENA. That's all. It would have been three, but one of them is married with four children. He has his own family to look after.

DOMENICO. Good! Grandchildren as well! It's good to

know they're legitimate! And what's the name of this tribe dropping in on us?

FILUMENA. It's not important—they'll be changing it to yours as soon as you give them your permission.

DOMENICO. Never!

FILUMENA. Oh, you'll give it!

DOMENICO. I'll see the bastards in hell first!

FILUMENA. No, Dummi'—you'll agree to it. Before I have finished you'll say "yes." (FILUMENA goes off to the bedroom.)

ROSALIA. (*With mocking servility.*) Excuse me, please, Don Domenico. (ROSALIA follows FILUMENA. DOMENICO calls to FILUMENA through the open door.)

DOMENICO. They will not set foot in this house! Do you understand that? I will slam the door in their faces . . . (*At which point, the door through which FILUMENA has just gone through is slammed in DOMENICO's face. LUCIA enters.*)

LUCIA. Don Dummi', Signorina Diana is outside. She has brought a gentleman with her.

DOMENICO. Don't leave her on the doorstep. Ask her to come in.

LUCIA. I did ask her to come in. She says she doesn't want to. She says, will you go out to her? I think she's frightened of Donna Filumena.

DOMENICO. Does she think I am not master in my own house? Will you tell them to come in. In here.

LUCIA. Very good, signor. (LUCIA goes out.)

ALFREDO. If Donna Filumena sets eyes on her— (*He draws his finger across his throat.*) she'll really finish her this time.

DOMENICO. (*Raising his voice so that FILUMENA can hear him.*) Whatever is to be finished, will be finished by me! I say who comes and goes. Only me! (*Alluding to FILUMENA.*) She is nothing here! What I say goes! (LUCIA returns.)

LUCIA. Don Dummi', she says, if it's all the same to you, she'd still rather stay outside. She says, if she did come in, she couldn't be responsible for her temper.

DOMENICO. Her what?

LUCIA. Her temper.

DOMENICO. Who is it she's brought with her?

LUCIA. Her solicitor.

DOMENICO. Her solicitor?

LUCIA. I think he's frightened as well.

DOMENICO. Frightened of what? With us two, that would make three men in here.

ALFREDO. No. Don't count on me for anything this morning—last night nearly finished me. I'd be no use at all. You won't want me around anyway—you'll want to talk. I'm going to have a wash—see if I can wake myself up. If you want me, I'll be in the kitchen.

DOMENICO. What sort of a friend are you? (ALFREDO goes out to the kitchen without waiting for an answer.)

LUCIA. What do you want me to do, Don Dummi'?

DOMENICO. Nothing. I'll go myself. (LUCIA goes off to the kitchen. DOMENICO goes off to the outer door. He returns a moment or two later, ushering in DIANA and the solicitor, NOCELLA.) You've got nothing to worry about—this is my house.

DIANA. (*Hovering in the doorway, nervously.*) I'm extremely sorry, Domenico. I do not want to see that—that woman again, face to face—it wouldn't be fair to you—I couldn't count myself responsible for my actions.

DOMENICO. Diana, come on! Don't make a fool of me. There's nothing to be afraid of, I promise you.

DIANA. Afraid? Me? Afraid of—her? Let me assure you Domenico, that I know very well how to handle women of her kind. But I'd rather not, if it's all the same to you. I don't want to lose my temper.

DOMENICO. You won't have to lose your temper. I'm here to deal with the situation.

DIANA. You were here last night.

DOMENICO. Last night I wasn't ready for it. Today, I am prepared for anything. Signor—er . . .

NOCELLA. Nocella. Pasquale Nocella.

DOMENICO. Please, Signor Nocella, make yourself at home.

DIANA. Where is she?

DOMENICO. It's not important. Somewhere in the house. It doesn't matter. Please, sit down. (*The three of them sit down around the dining-table. NOCELLA sits in the middle. DIANA's eyes are glued fearfully, on the door of the bedroom. Encouragingly.*) Signor Nocella, you are a solicitor. This is very good.

(*NOCELLA is an ordinary, insignificant man of about forty. He is wearing a dark suit and neat collar and tie. He has been talked into the Soriano affair by DIANA, and seems reluctant to be involved.*)

NOCELLA. Signorina Diana and I share the same lodgings—it's a small private hotel, she's probably told you.

DOMENICO. No.

DIANA. Signor Nocella can tell you what kind of woman I am and what kind of life I lead.

NOCELLA. We see each other across the dinner table in the evenings though I am not there for dinner very often. You know my work, courts, clients. And besides I'm not the kind of man who looks to get involved with people. I prefer to keep myself to myself.

(*DIANA's fears about the possibility of the sudden appearance of FILUMENA are growing, visibly.*)

DIANA. Excuse me, Domenico—would you mind if you sat here and I sat there?

DOMENICO. No. By all means. (*DOMENICO and DIANA change seats. DIANA continues what NOCELLA was saying.*)

DIANA. So! It was at dinner last night that I was telling Signor Nocella about your trouble with Filumena.

NOCELLA. Yes, yes—we fell about laughing! (DOMENICO frowns at DIANA.)

DIANA. No. Not me. I didn't think it at all funny. (NOCELLA glances at her, knowingly.)

DOMENICO. You see, Signor Nocella, Diana has often been here recently and because of certain circumstances. I asked her to pretend to be a nurse.

DIANA. But I am a nurse.

DOMENICO. You are a nurse?

DIANA. I have a certificate to prove it. Didn't I tell you that, Domenico?

DOMENICO. No. You never mentioned it to me.

DIANA. Strange? I thought I had. (*Returning to the matter in hand.*) I was telling Signor Nocella last night about your problems. How worried you were. He was explaining the law to me—he went into it very fully . . . (*The doorbell rings. DOMENICO starts.*)

DOMENICO. What's that? (LUCIA enters and goes to answer the door.)

LUCIA. (*As she crosses the room.*) The front door, signor.

DOMENICO. Shall we move into the study? We will be less likely to be disturbed there.

DIANA. (*Rising.*) Perhaps we should. (DOMENICO shows DIANA and NOCELLA into the study.)

DOMENICO. This way.

NOCELLA. (*Going first.*) Thank you. (NOCELLA exits.)

DOMENICO. How do we stand? What does he say?

DIANA. Better he tells you. (*She strokes his cheek.*) Poor Domenico—you're as white as a ghost! (DIANA goes into the study, followed by DOMENICO. LUCIA ushers in UMBERTO.)

LUCIA. In here—please, sit down.

(UMBERTO is a tall, well-built but studious young man. His straightforward manner, coupled with his habit of

closely observing people, is inclined to embarrass them.)

UMBERTO. Thank you.

LUCIA. Over there, please. I don't know when Donna Filumena will see you.

UMBERTO. That's quite all right. I'll be fine here.

(He sits down on the settee and starts scribbling in a notebook he has brought with him. LUCIA starts to go to the bedroom but the doorbell rings again. LUCIA exits to answer the bell, and a moment later ushers in RICCARDO.)

LUCIA. In here—please, sit down.

(RICCARDO is a charming young man, elegantly dressed. He enters looking at his wrist watch.)

RICCARDO. This isn't going to take all day, is it? I run a business. If the boss isn't there, the staff stand around and twiddle their thumbs.

LUCIA. *(Impressed.)* You have your own business? *(RICCARDO shrugs, over-modestly.)* How many people work there?

RICCARDO. Me and another fellow. Hey! Where are you going?

LUCIA. I am the staff. My boss is in the other room. I've got to scrub the kitchen floor.

RICCARDO. You shouldn't be scrubbing floors with a face like yours!

LUCIA. I don't, signor, I use a scrubbing-brush.

RICCARDO. Don't joke. I mean it. You should be a model or an actress.

LUCIA. Go away.

RICCARDO. Really—the next time you're passing, call in and see me at my shop.

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.