

The antitheft



Marco Ciaramella

CAST:

Titian: Husband of Mary

Mary: Wife of Titian

Cynthia: Sister of Mary

Ahmed: Husband of Cynthia

Letitia: The gossip of the condominium

Gina: Wife of the victim

Mimmo: The magician

Conrad: The thief

Jack: Self-styled municipal employee

Hannibal: The pain in the ass of the condominium

Hasdrubal: Ecological operator

Henry: Insurance adjuster

Ronny: Volunteer at the kennel

Freddy Thompson: Police inspector

Darius: Constable

FIRST ACT

The scene takes place in the living room.

Titian and Mary enter the house.

Mary: *(Seeing everything in disorder and the window open)* Oh my God, the thieves have entered!

Titian: Holy shit! Didn't you lock up the door?

Mary: Of course, I'm not stupid! Can't you see they went through the window? *(Titian immediately goes to a chair, raises its seat and immediately seems to cheer up)*

Titian: It is already the second time they manage to enter. Do we give the impression of being rich?

Mary: I had told you not to buy the new car. This is the result of your brags.

Titian: What brags?! You may not have noticed, but my car was falling to pieces. That old crock had already left me on foot more than once. If I continued at that rate, it was the coach repairer who bought it new, given how much the roadside assistance costs..

Mary: Was there really a need to buy a new one?

Titian: If I bought another jalopy, we would have been at the same point.

Mary: But that is too big.

Titian: It is too big? It's a Panda! What do you think I should buy, a Sulky?

Mary: Forget it, you always want to decide!

Titian: If that's the only time I've decided something on my own! You know that I always give you carte blanche for to resolve household issues and to choosing clothing.

Mary: Don't remind me! That to convince you to come with me to buy you something, I always have to beg you. Even if you have the worn and very old stuff, it is always in fashion for you.

Titian: You know I don't like going to try on clothes.

Mary: But I don't like to go back and forth to take them home to you either. And then,

in the end, you are never satisfied.

Titian: This discussion leads nowhere; rather, how do we stop these villains from entering our house again?

Mary: I'll tell you: now I'm going to buy an antitheft device and then let's see if they try again!

Titian: A colleague of mine bought one too, but the only ones to have escaped were the owners, exasperated by all that noise.

Mary: For God's sake! In this condominium people find any excuse to argue, I don't want to do it even because of an antitheft device. However, I would have thought of something effective and not too loud.

Titian: Would that be?

Mary: Didn't you say that I have carte blanche for household issues? Now I'm going to make the complaint to the Police and then I'll come back with the solution.

Titian: You could at least mention something, I wouldn't want it to be one of your crazy ideas.

Mary: Trust me!

Titian: Okay, do as you want!

Without adding a word, Mary leaves. Titian begins to tidy up. In the meantime the doorbell rings and he goes to open the door.

Letitia: Hi Titian, what are you doing?

Titian: The thieves have entered the house again. I was just starting to tidy up.

Letitia: Did they take away anything of value?

Titian: Luckily no, this time too they didn't find them.

Letitia: In this condominium you can no longer rest assured! I consider myself lucky that they never entered my house. Anyway, for safety, I put the security door. *(Helping Titian to collect the objects from the ground)*

Titian: I wouldn't want to disenchant you, but if they want, they force that open too.

Letitia: It was better if I didn't know! Anyway, where is Mary?

Titian: At the Police's. Then she went to get an antitheft device, but she didn't tell me

which one.

Letitia: She will have gone to order a security door.

Titian: What good would it do if they always pass by the window?

Letitia: Then she will have gone to order the iron bars to put on the windows.

Titian: It would be a really bad decision, because we could no longer neither appear at the window nor hang out the clothes.

Letitia: Lately, however, she often makes bad decisions. Couldn't it be because of those supposed healers who come to this house often? Since dealing with those people, sorry for telling you, but your wife has become a little strange.

Titian: She is convinced that those pranotherapists make her feel better. And how many has he tried! This is the fifth. I don't know how to get rid of those scoundrels who are just trying to get money. Or rather, I would know, but then you know very well how she would react!

Letitia: Anyway, Gina has a problem bigger than yours.

Titian: What does that on the third floor have to do with it now?

Letitia: Do you want to know a gossip? (*And without waiting for the answer*) Mario has a lover.

Titian: How do you know?

Letitia: When his wife goes for spa treatments, a beautiful woman always comes to visit him. When Gina returns, then the other disappears.

Titian: She will be a relative.

Letitia: And does he, all the relatives, make them scream like that?

Titian: What do you mean?

Letitia: My apartment is right above his and I can hear everything.

Titian: Absolutely everything?

Letitia: If I tell you everything, that's it. (*Maliciously*)

Titian: Don't you have anything else to do?

Letitia: Sure, but if they wake me up, I can't help but eavesdrop.

Titian: Don't you want to play the spy?

Letitia: No! I mind my own business.

Titian: I see it!

Letitia: What do you mean?

Titian: Absolutely nothing! Anyway now, when I meet Mario on the stairs, I'll tell him: had a good night?

Letitia: It's better not to. My grandfather used to say: whoever minds his own business lives for a hundred years.

Titian: Then you, you should be dead long ago!

Letitia: Don't be funny! I'm going away now, I have a few things to do, maybe I will be back when Mary is there.

Titian: Okay, see you later. *(And she leaves the scene leaving the door open)*

Titian: *(As soon as Letitia came out)* Surely she has to go check on someone else to find a reason to gossip again! However, I never thought Mario... Seeing the spare oxygen tanks on the stairs, I almost thought he had one foot in the pit. On the other hand, if he has something that works that well, it doesn't have to be that dying. Unless he doesn't inflate with the oxygen tanks that too!

At that moment a man arrives who, having found the door open, looks out.

Conrad: May I?

Titian: Come in!

The man enters the apartment limping.

Conrad: I am Conrad Simpson and I am an architect.

Titian: I am Titian Adams and I am a workman. *(The newcomer begins to look around)* As you can see, I 'm busy, so if it is about meetings of pots and blankets *(Pointing to magazines on the table. At that moment the other suddenly stoops to observe something)* I tell you right away that I'm not interested. *(Turning around abruptly. Conrad then stands up immediately convinced that he has not been seen)*

Conrad: Don't worry, no meetings! I would just like to propose myself as the next condo property manager. Who do you currently have?

Titian: I could ask you the same question. Who has ever seen him? *(Conrad bends his*

bust sideways to the right to look at something, and Titian, who is positioned in front of him "like a mirror", follows the movement by flexing his bust to the left to continue the conversation and be able to look his interlocutor in the face) I don't even know his name. *(Conrad begins to bend his bust sideways this time to the left and Titian behaves as before: he flexes the bust on the opposite side of his interlocutor, imitating him also in this case. On both occasions the two find themselves talking with their head one meter above the ground)* Also because, until now, he has never called even a meeting.

Conrad: I, on the other hand, would be much more precise and scrupulous.

Titian: At first, they all say so, then once elected they disappear. They become entities and begin to float in the ether.

Conrad: Anyway, I will come back to propose myself.

Titian: No problem! Goodbye!

Conrad: Bye-bye!

Conrad stops at the door and starts looking over the jamb. Then he turns around for a moment, glances at Titian and turns around again; he looks up and to the side and finally leaves. As soon as the door is closed, Titian, intrigued by that strange attitude, begins to look over the jamb too, then suddenly turns around and begins to look by bending sideways and finally stoops to look at the ground. Not understanding what Conrad could observe, he starts to tidy up again, looking insistently at a chair. Then someone knocks on the door and he goes to open it.

Titian: Today there is really no way of doing anything. *(After looking through the peephole)* And who is this now? Mah! Let's open and hear what he wants. *(After opening)* What do you want?

Jack: I'm from the census office, I'd like to ask you a few questions.

The man who has just entered has a folder with forms in his hand.

Titian: Couldn't you come back another time?

Jack: It will not take long. However, if everyone welcomed me like you, it would be better for me to change job!

Titian: Excuse me, but the thieves came in again today and I'm a little nervous.

Jack: Don't worry, we'll do it soon. *(After taking a seat)* Are you married?

Titian: Yes, I am. *(Jack starts filling out a form)*

Jack: Then tell me your and your wife's name and surname.

Titian: Titian Adams and Mary Barnes.

Jack: Do you have sons?

Titian: No.

Jack: What work do you do?

Titian: Workman.

Jack: And your wife?

Titian: Housewife.

Jack: How long have you been married?

Titian: For fifteen years. (*Emphasizing the number*)

Jack: And is it the only marriage?

Titian: Why, how many do you need to do?

Jack: I just wanted to ask if you had been married or divorced previously, that's all.

Titian: No! Never, I've always kept this.

Jack: Speaking of your wife, I would like to ask her a few questions, where is she at this moment?

Titian: She'll be back in moments. I'm not as lucky as Mario, who has his wife who goes to the spa treatments and stays there for two weeks. I have to put up with my wife every day, including holidays!

Jack: Who is this Mario? (*Intrigued*)

Titian: The one of the third floor. Haven't you passed by him yet?

Jack: Not yet, but I'll definitely go there. I have to interview all the owners of this building. So, for the moment, I'm done with you. Ah! One last thing: shut yourself up indoors with your wife.

Titian: Why?

Jack: I too have recently suffered a theft and I have some experience with these things, I wouldn't want them to take away everything that is most precious from you next time, just like they did to me.

Titian: Thank you! I'll remember it. But shouldn't you have asked me something else about my wife too?

Jack: Maybe we can also avoid it, they were just questions to understand if she actually lived in this house.

Titian: Unfortunately for me, yes!

Jack: In this case, good-bye and I thank you for your availability.

Titian: *(As soon as the man is gone, Titian approaches the chair to which he was directed at the beginning)* As long as they're hidden in here, my savings are safe. It is so unthinkable as a hiding place!

The phone rings and Titian goes to answer.

Titian: Hello! Yes Mary, it's me. Who was it supposed to be? The thief? ... Who is coming? The insurance adjuster? Why? Are we insured against theft? ... Ah! Do we have condominium insurance? ... But if I've never seen the condo property manager, let alone politics! ... I understand, calm down, bye! *(Then, reflecting aloud)* If she gets angry and has a nervous breakdown, then who knows how many magicians and how much money it takes me to calm her down! *(After rearranging the house, he hears to knock and goes to open the door)* Come in, are you the insurance adjuster?

A well-dressed man enters with a fuchsia pink sequin tie like the briefcase in his hand, the shoelaces also pink and the camera hanging from his neck.

Henry: How do you know, are you a magician?

Titian: If I were I would have saved a lot of money.

Henry: What do you mean?

Titian: Forget it! It's a long story! You were a lightning! I didn't think you were coming today.

Henry: I was in the area viewing other housebreakings and, when my secretary informed me of the new assignment, I decided to visit you too. So, where did they go in from?

Titian: From the window, come and see.

Henry: *(Viewing the window)* There is no doubt that they entered right here! *(And he takes a photograph)* I see you don't have an alarm system. You should talk to the condo property manager and study something together with the other owners.

Titian: The condo property manager? Who has ever seen him? Let's not speak then

about the syntony with the rest of the troop, as I define it!

Henry: If this is the situation, you should think of a solution on a personal level. You could act as one of our policy-holders who has put a python in the house as a deterrent. In fact, when the thieves last time tried to go into his apartment, seeing the reptile, they ran away.

Titian: But keeping a python would cost me more than one theft a year!

Henry: For him it is not a problem because he is a herpetologist by profession. He also told me, that if the thieves should succeed in killing the snake somehow, the next time he would make them find a Komodo monitor.

Titian: What would it be?

Henry: A seemingly harmless big lizard that can become lethal. *(Trying to get closer to Titian, who prefers to go away. The two begin making a couple of laps around the table. Henry seems a little too seductive for Titian's tastes)* A person, after its bite, can find himself in the other world without even understanding the reason.

Titian: What if, instead of biting the thief, it bit the master? It wouldn't certainly be a great gain.

Henry: It is enough to know how to interact with the animal.

Titian: I would prefer a less risky solution.

Henry: *(Resigned)* At this point, the last advice I would like to give you is that you must never underestimate whoever arrives at your house suddenly, because that is the classic trick used by those rogues to study the movements of the inhabitants of the house and understand when is the right time to enter and act undisturbed.

Titian: This is excellent advice! Do you know, that you are right? Many people hang out in this house, including many self-styled magicians. Won't they be the spies? However, luckily, even if they entered, they didn't take anything away.

Henry: Do you see that I was right to arouse your suspicions? The insurer can always go one better than the devil. You are to be appreciated because you are a sincere person. Do you know how many lie by inflating the theft, getting insurance compensation? *(He sits down to have the insured sign a form)* If you give me a signature, then I can leave.

In order not to take any risks, Titian signs at a safe distance.

Henry: *(He stands up and goes to the door, before going out he turns and takes the opportunity to say goodbye to Titian)* Goodbye. *(Blowing him a kiss from a distance and taking a photograph of him. As soon as Henry has gone out, Titian runs towards*

the door to make sure it is closed and passes a hand over his forehead to underline the "danger" averted)

Mary comes back home.

Mary: All done, you will soon have a nice surprise.

Titian: Which?

Mary: The solution to our problem.

Titian: From my point of view, the solution to the problem would be to stop anyone coming into the house. Do you know what the insurance adjuster said? Thieves, before entering, study the movements of the unfortunate and do so using people who sneak into the home. Do you know, in our case, what they are called? Magicians!

Mary: I work hard to find the solution and you accuse me of being responsible for the problem. Ungrateful! Besides, if you were sick like me, you wouldn't be so cynical.

Titian: To be forced to pay these pseudo healers, isn't it a half disease?

Mary: I need their help to be well because our doctor doesn't understand my problems.

Titian: For that matter, neither do I!

Mary: Do you see that you always rage against me?!

The doorbell rings and Titian goes to open the door.

Mary: *(After the husband looked through the peephole)* Who rang?

Titian: Your medicine!

As the man enters Titian goes out, not before having given him a dirty look.

Mary: Come on, take a seat! Don't mind my husband, he's a little rustic, but he's very glad you're here.

Mimmo: *(Quite bizarrely dressed and with a strong French accent)* At first sight, it wouldn't seem.

Mary: Don't be fooled by appearances, sit down and tell me what today's program is.

Mimmo: Today we will act on the brain fluid. We will strengthen it and give it a new beneficial and energetic lymph, which will expand throughout the body.

Mary: And how long will it stay there?

Mimmo: *(Embarrassed)* A lot.

Mary: Thank God! What should I do, should I sit down?

Mimmo: Sure! Sit down. *(He takes Mary's head in his hands and mutters something repeatedly. Then he remains silent for a few moments)*

Mary: Have we finished?

Mimmo: Not yet! Now give me your hands. I'll hold them tight and you'll have to tell me what you feel.

Mary: I feel pain!

Mimmo: But beyond this, don't you feel an energy?

Mary: Yes, I feel it and it is very strong.

Mimmo: Aren't you better already? *(Leaving her hands)*

Mary: *(Immediately grabbing Mimmo's hands)* Yes, I'm really much better. If you weren't here, I don't know how I'd do!

Mimmo: Don't worry. I will always be at your disposal! *(Leaving her hands again)*

Mary: *(She grabs Mimmo's hands once again as if she couldn't do without them anymore)* Then couldn't you come back also today and give me another energetic "small discharge" like the one now?

Mimmo: Certainly! Now I have to go to see other patients, but I'll come back. *(Leaving her hands definitively)* In the meantime, it's fifty pounds.

Mary gives Mimmo the requested money.

Mimmo: I recommend: stay calm and don't get angry, otherwise the fluid immediately loses its effectiveness and runs out immediately.

Mary: I'll remember that.

Mimmo: See you later! *(Taking his leave with a kiss on the hand)*

Mary: Now I feel really fit and ready to take on anything.

Letitia (out of scene): Mary are you at home?

Mary: Yes, come on.

Letitia: Where have you been? I came before and you weren't there.

Mary: I went to solve the antitheft problem.

Letitia: Titian told me about the intrusion. Then, how did you think about solving the problem?

Mary: When I went to the police to make the report, a constable suggested an effective remedy. After all, it was what I had already thought of, so I immediately went to get it.

Letitia: What would it be?

Mary: A ferocious beast.

Letitia: A ferocious beast? Are you planning to put a lion in your house?

Mary: No lion! Less bulky and more functional.

Letitia: A lynx?

Mary: Do you think I put a lynx in the house?

Letitia: So what did you buy?

Mary: A mixture of determination, half ferocity and built-in alarm. I mean I took a dog.

Letitia: What breed would you have taken? A Neapolitan mastiff?

Mary: A little smaller.

Letitia: A German shepherd?

Mary: A little smaller still.

Letitia: I get it! A Rottweiler.

Mary: No, less aggressive: a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. This little dog is nice and aggressive at the same time. The constable confirmed it to me too! *(Mary speaks with the conviction that dog is a ferocious beast)*

Letitia: Mary, if I'm not mistaken, the Queen of England also has dogs of that breed and they don't seem to me to be as ferocious and aggressive as you're saying.

Mary: I said half aggressive. And then I just need the dog be able to bark when someone sneaks into the house and maybe to give the thief a little bite.

Letitia: It will be difficult for a dog of that type to put someone to flight, the best he can do is to kill him with licks! Let's hope at least he barks loudly.

Mary: The thing is, I'm very scared by big dogs.

Letitia: In my opinion, you got yourself into trouble, for three reasons.

Mary: And what would they be?

Letitia: The first: it's how to tell the condo property manager.

Mary: The condo property manager? Who has ever seen him?

Letitia: Let's leave aside the “desaparecido”, but Hannibal, did you inform him?

Mary: Not yet. I'm coming back from the kennels right now.

Letitia: But you know he's been persecuting the people on the second floor for months for getting that poodle! Hannibal, the "beasts", as he calls them, doesn't want them in condominiums.

Mary: For me that man can go straight back to the Alps where he came from. I've now chosen my dog and woe to anyone who touches him! Let Hannibal dare to tell me something and you'll see if I don't make him toe the line too!

Letitia: There is still the third reason and perhaps the one to be the most feared.

Mary: What would it be?

Letitia: Your husband. Don't you remember having one? How do you think he will react when he finds out that instead of solving one problem for him, you created another?

Mary: I have the solution: I'll tell the magician ordered me.

Letitia: Are you crazy? Your husband can't see him regardless, let alone tell him the dog idea came from him! He would kill him for sure.

Mary: So what do I do?

Letitia: A solution must be found as soon as possible. What if we tell him that you won it or that someone gave it to you?

Mary: Who? The Queen Elizabeth?

Letitia: Maybe the first idea seems good to me. You tell him the magician ordered it for you and let's hope he takes it well.

Mary: But if you said that you think that he will kill him.

Letitia: It's better that he kills him than you!

Mary: After all, with all the money that he gets out of me, he can do me the favor of taking a little blame, don't you think?

Letitia: Well said Mary! And as the protagonist of the film "fried green tomatoes" said: Towanda! *(And she leaves the scene)*

Mary: *(Left alone)* Towanda or not, I've gotten into a real mess! *(Appearing at the window)* Damn it! My husband with Hannibal. I smell trouble, for the moment I better get away. I'll go shopping. Tonight I will cook something that Titian really likes. As my grandmother used to say: if you can't take your man with good manners, take him by the throat. Now that I think about it, didn't she mean to allude to the strict sense of the term? In any case, fried rabbit and potatoes are always a good remedy to avoid an inevitable fight! *(And she leaves the scene)*

Titian and Hannibal enter the scene.

Titian: Come in, take a seat, please finish the speech.

Hannibal: There is little to finish! Since someone has taken an animal without a resolution of the assembly, I feel compelled to say that, without the condo property manager's consent, no one can do such a thing anymore.

Titian: The condo property manager? Who has ever seen him? How can you ask something of someone who is never there?

Hannibal: This is only an alibi and doesn't justify the deplorable attitude of certain individuals.

Titian: I assure you that there are no animals in my house and that I have no intention of taking one. However I don't see the reason for your indignation. After all, it doesn't seem to me that anyone has taken a St. Bernard!

Hannibal: What if dog should piss in the lift or shed his hair all over the place?

Titian: If that should happen, we'll ask the owner to clean up.

Hannibal: What if we got Leptospirosis because of that hoard of fleas?

Titian: For this you can put your mind at rest, because that is brought by mice and not dogs.

Hannibal: What if he was affected with rabies and plagued us?

Titian: He is a dog, not a plague-spreader! First of all he should bite, but above all he should be sick. Furthermore, nowadays, there are the necessary vaccinations.

Hannibal: In short, are you in favor of those who transgress?

Titian: Let's say that I'm objective and that dog doesn't bother me, I don't have to keep him myself.

Hannibal: So you have nothing to say even about the fact that the guy on the fifth floor has an aquatic turtle?

Titian: Of course, that doesn't even bark!

Hannibal: Do you know that he keeps it in an aquarium of two hundred liters of water? What if it broke, what would it happen? I tell you, it would do the same damage caused by the flood!

Titian: How exaggerated you are! I saw that turtle tank, it has glass four centimeters thick, to be able to break it, you would have to hit it very hard with a hammer.

Hannibal: What if a strong earthquake shock came?

Titian: In that case the turtle tank would be the last of our thoughts, since we should run away as fast as the wind!

Hannibal: I warned you, forewarned is forearmed!

Titian: Don't worry, it doesn't go through the antechamber of my brain to add another mouth to feed in this house. With all the magicians I have to keep, I certainly can't afford it! Now I take you to the roof, I noticed a crack and I wanted to show it to you.
(And they leave the scene)

Mary: *(Entering to the scene with shopping bags)* When Hannibal begins with his complaints, he never stops and I, to avoid him, had to carry these heavy bags without being able to ask Titian for help. Who knows what those two were saying to each other? Maybe they will want to call an assembly? But with whom? If the condo property manager is nowhere to be found. No, they were probably talking about the night noise problem. However, Hannibal better stay away from this house, I can't deal with him and my husband at the same time. In the meantime, I must try to appease Titian.

The doorbell rings and Mary goes to open the door.

Ronny: May I?

Mary: It depends. Who are you?

Ronny: I'm the kennel attendant and I brought the dog.

Mary: (*Worried*) Where is the dog?

Ronny: Since it didn't fit in my trouser pockets, I left it in the van.

Mary: Didn't you park in front of the building?

Ronny: Sure! Where did you want me to park, near the town hall?

Mary: It wouldn't have been a bad idea.

Ronny: I better go get your dog and bring him to you, so then I'll run away right away.

Mary: Take your time, but run to move the vehicle.

Ronny: I have to take my time, but I have to run to move the vehicle, do you know you're confusing me? Could you explain better?

Mary: There is nothing to explain, I assure you that my attention is solely due to the desire to spare you the fine.

Ronny: All right, I'll go find a parking space nearby.

Mary: It would be better not to look for it too close to here.

Ronny: Why?

Mary: Take the dog for a walk so it can acclimate to its new neighborhood.

Ronny: Should I show the dog the neighborhood?

Mary: Why not? A little exercise is good for animals, but also for humans two steps are truly a cure-all. Do you know that walking lowers blood pressure?

Ronny: I suffer from low blood pressure.

Mary: But the movement is good regardless. For those suffering from diabetes, back pain, neck pain. But are you bursting with health?

Ronny: Thanking God, yes.

Mary: But things could always change. (*Ronny crosses his fingers*) And for this reason prevention is important. In this regard, I have an address of a person who could help you.

Ronny: I don't need any help, I just want to unload the dog and go home.

Mary: For scruple of conscience, I give it to you. (*Handing him the visiting card*)

Ronny: *(After reading the visiting card)* It's all clear now! And in your opinion, is it enough to go to a magician to feel good?

Mary: More or less yes.

Ronny: Listen, either you're as mad as a hatter, or you take a percentage to provide clients for this guy.

Mary: I recommend him because I'm the first to benefit from his advice.

Ronny: Given the result, I prefer to do without it! Now I'll tell you something: you made me waste too much time, so I'm going to unload the dog, bring it to you and then run away faster than light. And do you know where I'm going?

Mary: No, where?

Ronny: *(Angry)* As far as possible from here. If it were up to me I would leave immediately without even handing over the dog, unfortunately I do not make the decisions, I only execute them, so I will come back, but I guarantee you that it will be the last time I enter this asylum! *(And he goes out slamming the door)*

Mary: How rude you are! *(Mary closes the window and then sits down at the table. While waiting for Ronny's return, she skims through a magazine)*

Titian enters the scene.

Titian: Who is it that slammed the door?

Mary: The wind, it was a gust of draught.

Titian: How is it possible? All windows are closed.

Mary: I closed them right now so they wouldn't bang again.

Titian: I thought I heard someone running down the stairs right from our floor.

Mary: It must have been our neighbor. *(Then, unable to lie anymore, she bursts into tears)* It's true, I was trying to hide the fact that, as an antitheft device, I took a dog.

Titian: What have you done? Tell me that's not true!

Mary: *(Still in tears)* You must know that it was the magician who advised me to take it.

Titian: You and your cursed magicians are ruining me! Today, when that wretch returns, he will find me waiting for him! He knew well that you would obey like a little dog. You see that it was useless to take one, you were already in the house! Maybe he

even directed you to a place where they give him a big tip.

Mary: You are wrong! I got it from a kennel and it didn't cost me anything, on the contrary they took him to me directly home without charge.

Titian: They took it to me, what does it mean?

Mary: *(Crying out)* The boy who works at the kennel is the one you heard coming down the stairs and will soon be back with the dog.

Titian: Tell me he hasn't parked in front of the front door.

Mary: Yes, yes. *(Keeping on crying)*

Titian: We have to hurry, before Hannibal sees him.

Mary: In a minute he will be here, now we can't do anything more.

Titian: We can still do one thing: force him to take the animal back to the kennel. But out of curiosity, which breed would you have chosen?

Mary: A Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

Titian: And what is it?

Mary: I don't know, but I'm sure he's very ferocious and suitable for guarding.

Titian: What's his tonnage?

Mary: More or less like this. *(Mimicking the size of the animal. Starting from about one and a half meters in height up to the real one. Titian follows his wife's arm, bending his bust up to the indicated height of the dog)*

Titian: And a dwarf of this kind, should he be ferocious and scary?

Mary: I don't know, but I liked him a lot.

Titian: You know we can't keep him. In the long run he will affect the already precarious family budget, so we must absolutely get rid of him, also because, if the condo property manager finds him out, he could cause us problems.

Mary: The condo property manager? Who has ever seen him?

Titian: Sooner or later he will materialize again and...

Ronny enters out of breath and interrupts the conversation of the two spouses.

Ronny: (*Panting*) He ran away!

Titian and Mary: (*In chorus*) Who ran away?

Ronny: The dog, who else?

Titian: Thank goodness, one less problem!

Mary: We need to find him right away, before anything happens to him!

Titian: Something will happen, but to us if we find him again!

Mary: You're really insensitive! I go looking for him and when I find him I bring him here, whether you like it or not! (*Running away nervously*)

Ronny: What a mess!

Titian: If you're worried about your firing don't worry, I'll say it wasn't your fault.

Ronny: That's not what I'm worried about. I'm not an employee, I'm a simple volunteer. At night I work as a baker and during the day I take care of the kennel.

Titian: And when do you sleep?

Ronny: Just a few hours. Love for animals is even stronger than sleep. And I can tell you that if you don't take care of the dog, when we find him, I'll have to take him back to that cage where he can stay for the rest of his short life. If that puppy never finds anyone willing to give him a chance, he'll spend his life in prison without being guilty of anything.

Titian: (*Firm in his decision*) What you just did to me is a yearning portrait, but I also have to look at the family budget, I'm truly sorry but I can't afford him.

Ronny: All right! Now I'm going to look for him and take him back to the cage, but I have to tell you one thing.

Titian: Offend me as well and tell me that I'm heartless, I will not retrace my steps anyway.

Ronny: It is certainly not my intention to offend you, but I want to warn you that this episode will create a shadow between you and your wife. The family budget is important but not as much as the sentimental one. You can live by eating little and badly and perhaps with some debt in the bank, but you can't live without love.

Titian: I'll convince my wife that she had taken a wrong decision.

Ronny: You will be able to appeal to reason but not to his heart. Now sorry, I really

have to go, there is a hairy love that I have to find again.

Titian: *(Stopping him)* Do you think I'm a monster?

Ronny: I can't judge anyone, but God will do it. As a man though, I can tell you one thing, you really make me sick!

SECOND ACT

Same scenography as the first act.

Titian, sitting at the table, is doing the math with the calculator. After writing the result, he puts down the pen and stands up with the sheet of paper in his hand.

Titian: What an account! The beautician, the hairdresser, the magician. *(Emphasizing in particular just this last)* This is that squanders my wallet. *(Indignant he throws the sheet in the wastebasket. In the meantime someone knocks on the door and he goes to open)*

Mimmo: May I come in?

Titian: Just you! Come in that I have to talk to you.

Mimmo: I'm always willing to help my best clients.

Titian: I don't think so! How dare you give advice on my antitheft?!

Mimmo: *(Who has no idea of what Titian is talking about)* The antitheft?

Titian: Yes, the antitheft and don't pretend you don't understand! Tell me why you recommended just that.

Mimmo: I recommended... to your wife...

Titian: She told me, so don't deny it.

Mimmo: Your wife told you that I suggested it to her. And tell me how is it... too big? *(In order not to lose a good client like Mary, he confirms the version provided by the woman, trying, in the meantime, to understand the problem)*

Titian: On the contrary, at least if it was different, I could make another use of him.

Mimmo: So he is too small. And can't we replace him?

Titian: She wants that and she is irremovable.

Mimmo: She wants that and it's impossible to change her mind.

Titian: That's right! I suggested that she got rid of him, but she wants him at any cost.

Mimmo: Speaking of cost, is he worth a lot?

Titian: You know very well that he costs nothing, that's not the problem.

Mimmo: *(Even more nonplussed)* But... if we want, can we also *(Mimicking a reduction with his hands)* reduce him?

Titian: If he was born like this, what can we do?

Mimmo: This is true!

Titian: So, what solution do you suggest? Should I keep him or do my own way?

Mimmo: Excuse me for the impertinence, where would you put him?

Titian: This is also a question I cannot answer. In case I changed my mind, even if I don't think it's possible, I wouldn't even know what the right place might be.

Mimmo: Before making a final decision, you need to establish it.

Titian: I don't want to establish anything, I want to get rid of him! But Mary doesn't want to listen reasons. That woman is as stubborn as a mule. Why don't you try to dissuade her from this idea?

Mimmo: I will try, but you provide me as much information as possible, in order to allow me to find the right words to convince her.

Titian: You could point out that it would not be allowed to keep him in this condominium.

Mimmo: *(Annoyed because he can't understand)* But does this thing have a name or not?

Titian: We would give him one, in case we kept him, not before.

Mimmo: And not even who should deliver him to you gave him a name?

Titian: I don't know this.

Mimmo: After he is built, how is he identified?

Titian: He is not built, he is bred.

Mimmo: And when they breed him, what do they call him?

Titian: It's such a difficult name to remember.

Mimmo: I get it! Let's do the tarots, otherwise we don't conclude anything. *(Titian makes a gesture to Mimmo to tell him to sit down at the table. The magician out of kindness beckons the landlord to sit down first. Titian out of patience points to the chair to him again and the other then obeys. After shuffling the cards, Mimmo makes Titian raise the pack and makes him choose five cards. As he lays them on the table, his expression becomes more and more amazed. Titian observes him carefully)* It's really weird!

Titian: You must excuse my skepticism, but I'm not my wife and I don't believe neither in cards nor in miraculous healings.

Mimmo: And you do wrong, I assure you that cards don't lie, on the contrary I will tell you that if you second your wife's decision, you'll be sorry for it!

Titian: Why?

Mimmo: *(Having finally figured out how things stand)* Wow, but he's a dog!

Titian: What else was he supposed to be, a horse? Weren't you who suggested him to her?

Mimmo: It's a long story! However, I can tell you that this animal has special capacities.

Titian: Does he read fortune in cards too? Because, if so, it might be a good idea to keep him and get rid of you once and for all.

Mimmo: Spare your sarcasm! Indeed, if I were you, I would be very careful because something bad will happen.

Titian: Like another theft? You know something about it, don't you?

Mimmo: The fact that he makes premonitions doesn't mean that I'm responsible for what must happen. *(Gathering the cards)*

Titian: Since you have frequented this house, the thieves have already tried to ransack it twice. It may be a coincidence, but I don't believe it much and I'll tell you more: you will never find my money.

Mimmo: *(Standing up)* You're really a cheeky one, how dare you?

Titian: *(Standing up in turn)* How dare you tap fifty pounds each time from my wife. I'm not Onassis! However, for this time, you will be able to say that you have guessed a premonition, because it is true that something bad is about to happen. I assure you, *(Taking him by the collar)* that if you don't run away immediately, I will deal you so many of those blows, that all the money you've taken from me so far will serve you to pay the plastic surgeon. Because I beat you black and blue. Did you understand me? *(Releasing the grip)*

Mimmo: *(Defiantly)* Don't you dare threaten me! And, for your information, there have been hundreds of premonitions that I've made that have come true, so you mustn't allow yourself to hint at the contrary, otherwise...

Titian: *(Grabbing him again)* Otherwise do you point your magic wand at me like Merlin the Magician and cast a spell on me?

Mimmo: *(Freeing himself)* That's enough! I'm leaving. But it doesn't end here and when I report everything to your wife, we'll see which of us will get the most blows. *(Running away)*

Titian: Don't run so fast, I haven't had the chance to give you the fee yet! *(Raising a fist even though Mimmo has already left the scene)*

Titian: At least one debt I took off! But now I have to find a way to discredit that magician and prove to Mary that he is only one who is aiming at her wallet. I also have an idea of who could help me. It won't be a problem for that gossip to go snoop around and ask questions around.

Letitia enters the scene without knocking.

Letitia: Hi Titian!

Titian: You couldn't have come at a better time! I need a favor. You should do one thing, which shouldn't be a big problem for you.

Letitia: Do you mean that I should have a predisposition to do this?

Titian: I've never been more sure of this!

Letitia: *(Anxious)* So tell me!

Titian: You have to find out everything about a person.

Letitia: It almost seems like I never think about my business.

Titian: I would never allow myself to insinuate it! Let's say you are very good at

thinking about other people's ones.

Letitia: I'll take it as a compliment, even if I'm not very convinced, anyway speak up!

Titian: Do you know Mimmo the magician whom Mary trusts blindly?

Letitia: Of course, she often talks to me about him.

Titian: Do you know what the insurance adjuster said? That the thieves, before making a theft, send a spy on an advance, or they are they themselves who snake into families to discover their habits. So I want to see if this person gives information to some rascal in exchange for bribes, or if he acts on his own.

Letitia: I will gladly help you. But tell me one thing: they entered this house twice and never found anything. You must have a nice hiding place.

Titian: Don't you want to steal my savings?

Letitia: Absolutely not, mine is just a little curiosity.

Titian: So I'll tell you this in confidence: you must know that I have a small reserve of money that I keep hidden in the house but, with all these intrusions, sooner or later someone will steal it.

Letitia: Really? And where do you keep it?

Titian: Aren't you in league with the magician?

Letitia: Don't be silly, you know I'm meddlesome, but I'm also very loyal.

Titian: I know, that's why I'm showing you where the money is, at least, if something happens to me, someone can get it back.

Letitia: Why, doesn't Mary know where you hid it?

Titian: I'm not crazy, if she knew she would spend it in a day.

Letitia: But why should something happen to you, do you feel bad?

Titian: I'm very fine, it's just that Mimmo said something bad will happen soon.

Letitia: So do you believe the magician too?

Titian: Absolutely not! But it is better not to risk. Anyway, in the meantime, get as much information as possible about that shady fellow. Come and see inside the cavity of the seat of this chair. *(Showing the point to Letitia who is astounded at the sight of all that money)*

Letitia: It's a small fortune! But now I have to go, I want to see if the one on the sixth floor has returned, this morning he went out early with a large suitcase. I have to monitor his movements to understand if there is something suspicious underneath. *(And she leaves the scene leaving the door ajar)*

Titian: Sherlock Holmes doesn't even polish shoes to her! *(Titian approaches the table and starts leafing through the newspaper. Turning his back he doesn't notice that someone is entering at a brisk pace)*

Cynthia: *(Screaming)* My sister married a monster.

Titian: *(After turning round)* Only you were missing today! *(Turning round again to continue reading)*

Cynthia: *(Grabbing his arm, she forces him to pay attention to her)* I had warned her not to marry you, I knew she wouldn't have an easy life with you!

Titian: You are the last person who can speak since you have married a Muslim and you do not agree with him even to pray.

Cynthia: What do you mean?

Titian: I don't understand that man, or maybe I understand him too much. Generally, those of his religion always keep their wives at home, but he always lets you go out and I always find you in my way. Besides, you didn't find any other apartments, did you have to come and live in this building?

Cynthia: If there hadn't been my house, where could your wife have taken the dog? She told me you don't want him.

Titian: Why, did you find him?

Cynthia: Sure! But Mary hasn't the courage to bring him here, because she fears that you take him back to the kennel.

Titian: I am obliged to do it, my finances do not allow it, we already have so many magicians to pay.

Cynthia: Would you have the courage to make him go back to where he was?

Titian: If it's been there so far, it might stay a little longer. If you are so sorry to see him go back to the kennel, take him to your home.

Cynthia: We are out all day, we can't leave him alone from morning to night.

Titian: Mary, on the other hand, has a lot of free time. You forget a little detail: she doesn't work and doesn't earn so she can't even spend.

Cynthia: But Mary now already considers him her own and can't wait to pet him all day.

Titian: She wants to pet him, but I would bet that it would be up to me to take him to pee. I already seem to hear her: *(imitating his wife's voice)* Titian, I feel bad, could you take the dog out tonight? Titian, I should do the housework but we would have to take the dog to the vet. *(Returning to his tone of voice)* Then it would end up becoming my task and I tell you openly: I don't feel like it. Did we understand each other?

Cynthia: As you want! But if my sister gets another nervous breakdown because of you, you'll have to deal with me and I assure you I won't be very tender. Now I'm going to call her and tell her you haven't made up your mind yet, so don't face the subject and think about it a little longer! In the meantime we leave the dog parked at my house. *(Further raising the tone of voice)* Did we understand each other? *(And she leaves the scene)*

Titian: Stop threatening me, you don't scare me!

Mary enters the scene.

Mary: I had an appointment with the magician, did he come?

Titian: Yes a little... he came.

Mary: What does a little mean? Did he come or not?

Titian: Yes, he came, but he didn't find you and left.

Mary: Did he tell you when he would be back?

Titian: That's the point, he said he has so many clients that he's not sure he can come back.

Mary: He's been coming to our house twice a day for months. Why doesn't he know when he can do it?

Titian: I told you that magicians are unreliable!

Mary: Won't he have taken offence at something I did?

Titian: For something you did, certainly not.

Mary: Then I don't understand why.

Titian: Probably, some other client will have paid for the exclusivity.

Mary: Nobody can be trusted anymore! However somehow I will find out something.

Titian: That's what I'm trying to do too.

Mary: What do you have to do with it now?

Titian: I just wanted to say that if he doesn't come back, we'll look for another one, but I have the foreboding that sooner or later we'll see him reappear.

Mary: I hope so! That man is truly a treasure!

Titian: *(In a low voice)* The one that he got out of me.

Mary: I didn't understand, what did you say?

Titian: Nothing, I was just saying that I also fully agree with you.

Mary: Now I have to go to my sister's house, I promised her to help her turn the mattress.

Titian: Can't her husband do it?

Mary: We are in the time of Ramadan and he is a bit weak, as he doesn't eat and drink until sunset. After all, it's just a small favour.

Titian: This small favour, as you say, forces me to cook instead of sprawling reading the paper.

Mary: How many stories to prepare a plate of soup!

Mary goes into the kitchen, meanwhile Titian continues to grumble.

Titian: But what soup, if you haven't even peeled a carrot! We hope at least that there is something else in the fridge, otherwise we will fast too! *(Then he sits down at the table to finally read the newspaper)*

Mary comes back with a piece of meat. Titian, following with his eyes the dish that his wife is taking away, stands up to ask for explanations.

Titian: Where are you taking that? To your sister?

Mary: I have to pay off a debt. One day I was left with the fridge empty and she gave me a piece of meat like this, it is time to return it to her.

Titian: She is rich, she does not need your flesh and then it is normal for sisters to do each other favors.

Mary: A debt is always a debt! *(And she leaves the scene)*

Titian: It starts well, it is more important that the dog eats than the husband!

Letitia, finding the door ajar, enters without knocking.

Letitia: Titian, I have a bombshell piece of news.

Titian: Let's hope it doesn't explode right now!

Letitia: I have a lot of information about the magician.

Titian: How many people has he killed and robbed?

Letitia: No one, in fact, is the head of a charity and ninety percent of his profit go to Africa.

Titian: In my opinion, the image of the philanthropist is just a facade.

Letitia: You are wrong! He donates fifty thousand pounds a year to charity.

Titian: He's not the one doing charity, it's us poor plucked chickens.

Letitia: However it is demonstrated that he has particular abilities.

Titian: Sure! Those of tapping for money.

Letitia: It seems that everything he foresees, then comes true.

Titian: So we are in front of a half crook, not a complete one?!

Letitia: Does this change anything?

Titian: Certainly not the price! But do you know if no one has ever caught him gambling or with some prostitute?

Letitia: Nobody has ever seen him.

Titian: I get it, he's like the condo property manager.

Letitia: Maybe he is really a good person and he really helps Mary.

Titian: The problem is that the more he helps her, the more he destroys me.

Letitia: No expense is to be spared for health!

Titian: But isn't running out of money already half a disease?

Letitia: This is true, but now I have to go.

Titian: Always the one on the sixth floor?

Letitia: No, that one has already returned, now it is the second floor that interests me.

Titian: So run, I wouldn't want you to miss something!

Letitia: Okay, as soon as I have other news, I come and tell you.

Titian: I don't know why, but I'm sure you won't be long in doing it.

As Letitia leaves the scene, Cynthia enters with a tray of meat-balls.

Cynthia: Dear brother-in-law, how are you? I brought you lunch, I thought to let you taste these delicious meat-balls.

Titian: *(Scowling at her)* One, you had to give it to the dog!

Cynthia: Don't be so grumpy! I was just trying to be nice and you react like this!

Titian: *(Suspicious)* This is new! In fifteen years of living in the same building, he has never done me such a courtesy. Spit out the truth and tell me your fiendish plan.

Cynthia: You're right, I didn't have the courage to tell you about the blow I gave your car, trying to park mine.

Titian: *(Furious)* What have you done? Did you strike me in the new car? You had said you parked the dog, not the car! Now only God knows how much bodywork money it will cost me!

Cynthia: *(Dejected)* I fear much, the clutch escaped and I violently bumped against the rear bonnet and bumper, then the heated rear window also exploded from the blow.

Titian: Damn it! I read the weather forecast and rainstorms are also forecast for today. How do I do now? If water gets in, the upholstery will also be damaged.

Cynthia: Forgive me! But I was in a hurry to take the dog to the vet and I was late.

Titian: It wasn't a promissory note that was expiring! Now, for your carelessness, I'll have to give up even the holidays, unless you...

Cynthia: *(Interrupting him)* Don't think about reporting to the insurance. I remind you that it is not my fault that you bought a car with an onion peel distance between the bumper and the rear bonnet.

Titian: If you don't go away from here immediately, I'll let you experience the same effect that onion causes on eye, but with a substantial difference... *(Screaming)* that I give you a black eye!!!

Scared Cynthia runs away, Titian chases her and they both leave the scene.

After a few moments Mary and Cynthia enter the scene.

Mary: *(Trying to cheer up her sister)* Don't worry! It will already be at the coach repairer who will put a cellophane to prevent water from entering the car. Everything will settle down, the coach repairer will order the spare parts and, in a few days, everything will be finished.

Cynthia: My life for sure, when they will deliver the car to him and present the bill.

Mary: After all, you were taking my dog to the vet, so you were doing me a favour.

Cynthia: *(Crying)* And a spite to him.

Mary: Don't cry, I'll talk to him and fix everything.

Cynthia: Think about it? I need to talk to him about the dog and you need to talk to him about the damage to the car. In my opinion, in the end, he will kill both of them. Speaking of the dog, since he doesn't have a dog's bed and likes to sleep on chairs, wouldn't you lend me one? Mine are new and I wouldn't want him to nibble them.

Mary: Take this "old chair" if you like. I still don't know why my husband insists on keeping it at home. And after buying the dog's bed, throw this away *(And she hands her the chair)*

Cynthia: All right! Now, though, I better go make dinner for tonight. My husband, after sunset, is terribly hungry and if he doesn't find ready he becomes very susceptible.

Mary: Don't worry! Go ahead and kiss my little one.

On the threshold Cynthia meets the magician and goes back to warn her sister.

Cynthia: A guest has just arrived, do I tell him to come in?

Mary: Of course.

Mimmo is wearing a raincoat and dark glasses. His intent is to disguise his appearance so that Titian is not aware of his visit.

Mimmo: Good evening Mrs. Mary!

Mary: Do you know you scared me?

Mimmo: Not as much as your husband me! *(Taking a peek at the window to check that Titian isn't coming)*

Mary: I know that he always behaves badly with you, but, deep down, he's a good person.

Mimmo: But really deep down! *(Moving the window curtain again to have a look outside)*

Mary: So, what do you think about starting right away with your energy fluid?

Mimmo: I would like to talk about another topic.

Mary: Come on, tell me!

Mimmo: Using a small dog as a antitheft device is not a decision that I would define very wise.

Mary: How do you know I got one?

Mimmo: Am I a magician or not? I also know that you've taken a puppy of a breed that I would describe as quite harmless. However, fortunately for you, even if small, that animal is endowed with special capacities. *(Glancing at the door to make sure Titian isn't coming)*

Mary: *(Angry at her husband, she raises a fist)* A blow to the head deserves my idiot husband who doesn't want the dog!

Mimmo: I completely agree!

Mary: Come on, tell me: what capacities has my dog?

Mimmo: He can understand if the person in front of him is a good person or a delinquent.

Mary: And how does he communicate his opinion?

Mimmo: If he barks, it means that the person is evil, vice versa he starts licking. Now it's late, I better go.

Mary: Wait a moment! Titian should arrive soon, so you can also talk to him about the dog's capacities, maybe this could convince him to adopt him.

Mimmo: *(Agitated at the news of Titian's imminent return home)* I don't think he would appreciate my opinion too much!

Mary: What a pity! I was convinced that at least you would succeed in making him reason.

Mimmo: I'm sure that you will surely have more chances.

Mary: As you want! How much do I owe you?

Mimmo: For this time nothing. See you later. *(Mary holds out her hand to Mimmo for the usual hand kissing, but he, for fear that Titian comes back home, hurries out leaving her with her hand in the air)*

In fact, after a few moments, Titian arrives.

Titian: What a damage!

Mary: I don't care about the car. Rather, how could you have treated my sister so badly?

Titian: You're right! I didn't have to treat her badly, I had to kill her! And you, don't dare to let her come to our house if you don't want to be an only daughter! I assure you that as soon as I see her I strangle her.

Mary: It is not stupid. It will be a long time before he shows up in this house again.

Titian: You don't know how much the coach repairer charged me, it'll take me the whole chair. *(Not seeing it anymore, he starts screaming)* Damn! The magician has come, confess!

Mary: How do you know?

Titian: Unlike you, I can recognize thieves.

Mary: *(Thinking aloud)* But this is an epidemic! He also has the same capacities as the dog!

Titian: What are you babbling about? Tell me when he came instead. Anyway, I told you not to trust that rascal.

Mary: But if he didn't take anything!

Titian: This is what you say! As you turned around, you know he's a magician, *(raising his voice)* he made our chair disappear.

Mary: Now what does the chair have to do with it?

Titian: *(Sobbing)* It was the secret hiding place where I kept our economic reserves, now I will not even be able to pay the coach repairer, wretched me, poor me, what a disaster has befallen this family.

Mary: Was the chair our money-box?

Titian: *(More and more desperate)* Money-box to say the least! It was our very existence and now we don't have it anymore because of that spy.

Mary: *(Thinking aloud)* Above all, if I don't run, it's the dog's bed fault.

Titian: *(Still in tears)* We're ruined and she thinks of the dog!

Mary: *(Not knowing if her sister is at home at the moment to go and get the chair back, she tries to gain time)* I'm sure the magician has nothing to do with it. In my opinion someone entered the house again and it was the latter who stole the chair.

Titian: You and that damned magician! To defend him, you would say anything.

Mary: You're wrong! However, if I had seen the thieves go away with that chair, I would have even thanked them, not knowing what it contained.

Titian: The person who entered, in my opinion, knew it well and must also have gone out through the main door, even going down the stairs.

Mary: I think, on the other hand, the thief got out of the window.

Titian: I don't think he would have run the unnecessary risk of falling! Now I'm going to ask the other tenants if anyone has seen anything.

Mary: For Heaven's sake! Come here, I take care of asking the questions, it's better.

Titian: Absolutely not! The hiding place was mine and I will be the one to unmask the thief. If he has passed down the stairs, I already know who might have seen something.

Mary: *(She stops him by holding him by the arm)* Before going I have to tell you an important thing.

Titian: What?

Mary: *(Not having the courage to tell him the truth)* If you go out through that door you'll never see me again.

Titian: *(After looking her straight in the eye)* Goodbye!

Mary: If so, I'm leaving! *(She leaves the scene, leaving Titian badly disappointed)*

Titian: This is too much: very poor and divorced.

Letitia enters the scene.

Letitia: Who is divorcing?

Titian: The undersigned.

Letitia: Could it be the fault of a witchcraft done by the magician?

Titian: Then we just need to call Harry Potter.

Letitia: Don't joke about these things, don't underestimate the evil eye, it's a serious thing and if so, you should find the way to take it off.

Titian: Don't you think they've taken me out enough? (*Mimicking the gesture of money*)

Letitia: (*As a good observer*) am I wrong or is a chair missing here?

Titian: Unfortunately you're not wrong! (*Crying*) And what's more, the one with the money. It disappeared after the magician came to do his usual theft. Evidently the money he took from Mary was not enough.

Letitia: But if Mary was present, how did he take it away?

Titian: You know, that's a magician!

Letitia: So do you also think this Mimmo is a magician?

Titian: I'm not sure if he's actually a magician, but, given how he makes things disappear, I almost begin to convince myself otherwise. Did you rather see anything?

Letitia: (*Embarrassed*) And why should I have seen anything?

Titian: Don't tell me this was the only day you didn't have time to observe what was going on?

Letitia: Today I went out to investigate as you asked me.

Titian: You're lying. Aren't you responsible for the theft? After all, you have free access to this house and you were the only one who knew where I kept the money. Come on, confess!

Letitia: It's true, I know something, but I can't tell you.

Titian: (*Approaching threatening*) Do you know something and don't want to talk?

Letitia: (*Stepping backwards*) It is better for everyone that I don't speak.

Titian: (*Even more threatening*) For everyone I don't know, but for you I assure you that it is better if you do it and also quickly!

Letitia: But take it with the benefit of inventory.

Titian: No, whoever he is, I'm taking him by the neck.

Letitia: (*Crying*) Promise me you won't hurt her.

Titian: All right, I'll kill her without her suffering.

Letitia: Don't say that, please! Otherwise there will be repercussions on me too.

Titian: Nothing compared to what I could do to you if you don't make up your mind to talk.

Letitia: Your sister-in-law stole the chair.

Titian: Who was it?

Letitia: Cynthia, your sister-in-law, are you deaf?

Titian: *(Letting himself fall into the chair, astonished to hear such revelation)* How is it possible? Wasn't it enough to destroy my car? She wants to see me in extreme poverty. But how did she know the swag was in that place? I was right then: there are spies.

Letitia: This however means that the magician is innocent.

Titian: Before making this statement, wait for me to talk to my sister-in-law. Indeed, do me a favour: go and call her, but don't say a word about what you just told me.

Letitia: I'm not crazy! Anyway, don't say that it was I who saw her take the chair away, I would deny it anyway, I don't want to lose Mary's friendship by accusing her sister.

Titian: Don't worry! I'll leave you out of this story, I promise you!

Letitia leaves the scene and after a few minutes Cynthia arrives.

Cynthia: Did you want to talk with me? It seems strange to me, I thought you didn't want me in this house anymore.

Titian: That's why on the first chance you did “zac”. You knew you would never set foot there again!

Cynthia: *(Astounded)* zac?

Titian: Did you understand! Zac. *(Imitating with the hand the gesture that is usually done to indicate a theft. Cynthia, however, doesn't notice it)*

Cynthia: *(Thinking he's talking about the car)* Do you mean that it is to be thrown away?

Titian: Looks can be deceiving, but it's the substance that matters. You know something about this!

Cynthia: Honestly it didn't look great.

Titian: But you were satisfied anyway.

Cynthia: You talk as if I had taken a liking to it!

Titian: I, in your place, would have enjoyed a lot.

Cynthia: I'm not that cynical! After all, I was really sorry. But now what do we do?

Titian: In your opinion, should I wait and do nothing?

Cynthia: Of course! I don't see other alternatives.

Titian: I have an idea: I go out and, when I come back, I want everything to be as before, let's turn over the page and everything will be over.

Cynthia: To turn over the page, would it be a right solution?

Titian: If everything goes back to the way it was before, why not? You don't want to ruin family relationships, do you? After all, Mary is your sister and I am your brother-in-law.

Cynthia: It seems to me a strange solution.

Titian: There could be even more gory, but I'd rather not get there.

Cynthia: You convinced me! If you are so happy, I assume that it is the best solution.

Titian: But what role does the magician have?

Cynthia: He is a consultant. Like my sister, I too never act without first consulting with him. Don't forget that it was I who introduced him to Mary and made him come to your house.

Titian: I was sure of it! Thanks for your sincerity, it does you honour! *(And he leaves)* Everything as before... to turn over the page.

Cynthia: *(Thinking aloud)* My sister got married a really very strange man!

Mary enters the scene.

Mary: I finally found you! I was looking for you.

Cynthia: I was to talk to your husband. But do you know he's not angry at all?

Mary: How is it possible? I left him upset while he was inveighing against you.

Cynthia: He was actually calm, a little strange, but calm. In my opinion, the shock of

the news of the damage to the car must have destabilized him, in fact he called the crash “zac”.

Mary: Zac?

Cynthia: That's right, Zac. Then he also told me that as a solution, we would just have to turn over the page.

Mary: *(Turning her back to Cynthia, she reflects aloud)* If we don't take the chair home right away, he won't just turn the page, he'll throw a whole encyclopedia of books at us!

Cynthia: *(Catching on only part of the speech)* You can see that I was right and that he is a bit strange! He makes himself problems even for an old chair.

Letitia enters the scene.

Letitia: *(Turning to Cynthia, after having looked at her from head to toe)* Luckily you're okay!

Cynthia: I see you know about the accident. Thanks, but luckily everything is fine.

Letitia: In these things you never know what can happen.

Cynthia: At most some bruises.

Letitia: Sometimes it can end up even worse.

Cynthia: Ultimately it was just a trivial mistake.

Letitia: I'm glad to hear you say this, but how did Titian take it?

Cynthia: Initially he took it very badly.

Letitia: I seem to see him!

Cynthia: But then we found a compromise.

Letitia: This seems strange to me!

Cynthia: More than strange!

Letitia: The important thing is that he hasn't lost his patience.

Cynthia: Instead he has really lost that one: he absolutely doesn't want to wait.

Letitia: I can also understand why!

Cynthia: Sometimes there are situations that are beyond our will.

Letitia: From our maybe, but from yours certainly not.

Cynthia: Why, do I know how to be a coach repairer?

Letitia: The coach repairer? And you say he's the weird one?

Cynthia: There is something that escapes me. What were you alluding to?

Letitia: I am alluding to the chair where all the money of Titian and Mary were stored that you took home.

Mary: You, Letitia, did you tell Titian that you had seen Cynthia on the stairs with a chair?

Letitia: Yes, he forced me to.

Mary: This explains everything. To buy time to retrieve the chair, I let him believe the thieves had stolen it, so he thought the thief was Cynthia.

Cynthia: So when he said “zac”, he was not referring to the accident but to the alleged theft. I, having misunderstood, have also confirmed his suspicions. What an intrigue and above all what a disaster!

Mary: Why?

Cynthia: How will Titian react when he finds out ... that I have already thrown away the chair.

Mary: We are truly ruined! Wait a moment! Is there no way to get it back?

Letitia: I recommend you to do it and quickly too!

Cynthia: Is it possible to know at least how much money was hidden inside?

Mary: I don't have the faintest idea, but I will try to find it out. Shut up! He is coming.

Titian: *(After looking well in the room)* It doesn't seem to me that everything is still okay, am I wrong? *(Cynthia hides behind her sister to be protected)* I don't see the most important thing, I only notice two sisters trying to protect each other.

Mary: Cynthia was forced to do it.

Cynthia: What?

Mary: Shut up, let me talk! Titian, it was not a theft. *(Letitia also gestures to Cynthia)*

to let her sister speak)

Titian: And how do we want to call it?

Mary: Loan. *(Letitia tries not to miss a single word)*

Titian: When you lend something to another person you should be aware of it. And I didn't know anything about it.

Mary: But the wife should also be informed by her husband, when the latter is hiding money.

Titian: This is a whole other matter!

Mary: Speaking of that, how much money was there in that damn chair?

Titian: Ask your sister, maybe she has already counted it by now.

Mary: I'm asking you!

Titian: So can we get it back?

Mary: We'll tell you this later, now tell me, how much money was that?

Titian: Ten thousand pounds.

Letitia: Wow how many!

Titian: The savings of a life. Now, if you don't mind, go get them!

Cynthia: If I could I would!

Titian: What? You can, you can!

Cynthia: I don't have them anymore, I've already spent them.

Titian: Did you spend all that money in a few hours? And what did you buy? A new car to give back to me?

Cynthia: *(She makes up the first excuse that comes to her mind)* no, I needed it for my husband. *(Mary nods in approval to her sister)*

Titian: Did you buy him food for when Ramadan ends?

Mary: Do you think it's time to be funny?

Titian: So, what was my money for? Will you tell me or not?

Cynthia: To buy him medicines.

Titian: Gosh! And how many diseases does he have?

Cynthia: *(Pretending not to be able to go into details due to the gravity of the matter)* only one, but very serious. I'd rather not tell you which one, just say that name...

Titian: Couldn't you say it without making many subterfuges?

Cynthia: Why, would you have helped me?

Titian: Maybe yes.

Mary: Or maybe not!

Titian: In any case we must not steal and especially in the home of relatives.

Cynthia: To save one's own husband, this and more!

Titian: Now how do you plan to pay back the money?

Cynthia: Give me some time!

Titian: All right! One, two and three, time out!

Cynthia: At least a month.

Titian: A month?

Cynthia: Twenty days.

Titian: Twenty days?

Mary: Yes, twenty days are fine!

Titian: But I...

Mary: Do you want to lose it?

Titian: Twenty days, but not one more, did we understand each other?

Cynthia and Mary: *(In chorus)* We understood each other!

THIRD ACT

Same scenography of the two previous acts. But the window is open.

On stage there are Mary and Cynthia. Cynthia paces frantically back and forth.

Mary: How is it possible that it is no longer there?

Cynthia: The garbage workers went by and loaded it.

Mary: They will have taken it to the dump. But I believe that the waste, before being disposed of, is stored. Maybe it's not too late.

Cynthia: However, we should know the storage location

Mary: We need a person who knows how to find out and who knows many people.

Cynthia: We have that at home.

Mary: At home?

Cynthia: Exactly on the stairs.

Mary: Who are you referring to?

Cynthia: I'm referring to Letitia, of course! She knows everything about everyone, surely she knows someone who works in the dump.

Mary: It's true! How did I not think about it before! Let's go and look for her right away.

Mary and Cynthia go out to look for Letitia and immediately afterwards Titian and Ahmed enter the scene.

Titian: Come in, don't stay where you are!

Ahmed: I just wanted to see if Cynthia had come here, because I needed to tell her something.

Titian: *(After realizing that the house is empty)* you don't know how many things I would like to say to her! There is none, but if you wait a few minutes I'm sure we'll see them appear. Can I offer you something to drink?

Ahmed: No, thanks. The sun hasn't set yet.

Titian: (*Thinking aloud*) Sometimes these customs come in handy.

Ahmed: What do you mean?

Titian: Do you need to use the bathroom?

Ahmed: No, thanks, but can I sit down?

Titian: Of course, you can do it on any chair, since the right one there isn't anymore.

Ahmed: Why, did you have a personal one?

Titian: Sure, but fate took it away from me.

Ahmed: Why did it break?

Titian: Much worse, it dissolved.

Ahmed: Perhaps the material with which it had been made was not very substantial.

Titian: There was too much solidity, that's why it didn't last!

Ahmed: Even though I have lived here for many years, I sometimes don't understand your language and what you mean when you make certain statements.

Titian: None so deaf as those that will not hear! Rather, you're not very pale, to see you wouldn't seem...

Ahmed: Ramadan is just a little renunciation, not a torture!

Titian: But in your state, shouldn't you be exempt?

Ahmed: Why? There too it works exactly as it does here.

Titian: I meant in your condition.

Ahmed: We don't let ourselves be conditioned by anything. We're faithful to our belief and this is it!

Titian: Okay, forget it! But when do you take your medicines?

Ahmed: Medicines? I manage very well to endure everything without taking anything.

Titian: I get it! You don't want to talk about it, but do you think it's a long thing?

Ahmed: A month.

Titian: So, in a month, how much can you ever spend?

Ahmed: It isn't a question of spending, but of making sacrifices.

Titian: If anything, I do those myself!

Ahmed: Why, are you a Muslim too?

Titian: Listen, they often called me a rabbi (*Intended in the derogatory sense of the term referring to a miserly person*), a Muslim never, I really missed this!

Ahmed: Good heavens! I had no idea you were Jewish.

Titian: But what a Jew of Egypt! By the way: if you don't hurry to become a mummy, they will soon put me in the sarcophagus too because I will starve, not having a penny to buy food.

Ahmed: I can't understand what you are saying, could you explain better what you mean.

Cynthia and Mary enter the scene who, seeing the two men, begin to confabulate between them.

Titian: I would do it very willingly, but now I can't. It is better to continue this conversation in another place. Bye-bye women! (*He takes his brother-in-law by the arm to get him up and drags him out of the house. Ahmed would like to say good-bye to his wife, but he can barely graze her hand. Before closing the door, Titian reminds the two women of their agreement*) Twenty days.

Mary: Now we just have to hope that Letitia is able to retrieve the chair.

Cynthia: In the meantime, we would need to come into our mind an alternative idea to scrape together some money, in case she couldn't get the money of the chair back. But how could we do it in such a short time?

Mary: Maybe there would be a way.

Cynthia: Aren't you alluding to the possibility of offering sexual services?

Mary: Are you crazy? Also because, I think the bulk of the work would be up to me.

Cynthia: (*Offended*) Is it a veiled way of telling me I'm not attractive?

Mary: Don't be touchy! I remind you that Islamic law is in force in your house and I don't think it is very favourable to this type of transgressions. However, even Titian, I think he prefers to be poor than cuckold.

Cynthia: I don't know this! So what did you devise?

Mary: We will try to exploit the magician.

Cynthia: Do you want him to be the one to do the work we were supposed to do?

Mary: Absolutely not! I meant that we will use his ideas. Didn't he say the dog has some capacities? Then we will put them at our service. We unleash Letitia and let her spread the voice that the dog is able to understand, by sniffing any garment, whether the owner is a sincere person or not. Do you know how many women will take their husbands' underpants to understand if they are adulterers?

Cynthia: This is a great idea. There are people willing to spend a lot of money to discover the betrayals of their spouses. We could give them the answers they are looking for in exchange for a modest sum.

Mary: Our Brioche will be our four-legged Sherlock Holmes.

Cynthia: Who is this Brioche?

Mary: The dog. That's how I'll call him, or rather, I'll call her, because, I don't know if you've noticed, but she is a female.

Cynthia: Female or male now let's go find Letitia, which is better!

Mary turns off the light, but the switch seems to be faulty.

Mary: This light never goes out! *(The two women leave the scene. In the dark room, a hooded man is seen entering the window. The figure, making light with a torch, starts rummaging everywhere. Then he sits down on a chair to analyze some objects taken out of a drawer inside a piece of furniture and doesn't notice the arrival of Titian. The landlord, having heard noises from outside, enters without turning on the light and catches the thief in the act. Taking him by surprise he manages to immobilize him, despite the man resisting. After tying his hands tightly behind his back, he goes to turn on the light)*

Titian: This light, it never turns on! *(Then he removes the balaclava from the thief, discovering that he is the one who passed himself off as an aspiring property manager)*

Titian: So it was you the rascal who came into my house every time to try to steal!

Conrad: I saw you go out, why did you come back?

Titian: I got smart and I caught you red-handed.

Conrad: I swear I didn't steal anything, look in the bag.

Titian: I am sure of this, someone has preceded you and took away all the loot.

Conrad: Don't tell me there is a smarter thief than me who has discovered your hiding-place. I knew I wasn't wrong and that there must be one somewhere!

Titian: How he did, I still don't understand it, but he succeeded.

Conrad: So what would you like to do now? Please let me go, I promise you will never see me again!

Titian: Now you could go and do the condo property manager! But before you disappear, you should do me a little favour.

Conrad: If I can...

Titian: You should kill two people.

Conrad: Do you call this a little favour?

Titian: For a rascal like you, this should be a child's play!

Conrad: I don't kill people.

Titian: In that case I'll be forced to report you.

Conrad: It is better to go to jail than become a killer! But, out of curiosity, who would be these two to be killed?

Titian: The first lives in this building and is already about to die.

Conrad: So, why do you want to anticipate the times?

Titian: Let's say that the more he lives the less I have the chance to live well. He would save himself a long agony and I would have a life with less hardship.

Conrad: If I had done a bank robbery today, I would have made my life less complicated! And the second, on the other hand, who would it be?

Titian: A parasite, someone who steals money from naive people and then also passes himself off as a philanthropist.

Conrad: Won't he be a politician!

Titian: No, a magician.

Conrad: You're really a queer chap! You want to eliminate a terminally ill and a magician. Listen to me: it is never worth getting your hands dirty.

Titian: All right! You convinced me, I set you free and let you go.

Conrad: *(As soon as he is untied, he picks up the torch and the empty bag of stolen goods)* I thank you and I promise you that somehow I will repay you. *(Titian hands the balaclava to Conrad who leaves the scene. Titian, observing the man's quick gait, realizes that when he showed up for the first time he also feigned his limp and imitates that gait)*

Titian: *(Thinking aloud)* Perhaps it was better if I proposed him to kill the coach repairer! *(And he leaves the scene)*

Letitia and Mary enter the scene.

Letitia: I described the chair to my friend who works in the dump. As soon as the truck that served this road returns, he will see if he can retrieve it.

Mary: Then we just have to wait and hope that it is not broken during transport. Rather, have you seen if someone is going to Cynthia to bring the clothes?

Letitia: In fact, I noticed a lot of movement on the stairs.

Gina (offstage): Help me!

Gina enters the scene crying desperately with bloody hands.

Gina: Call the Police, he's dead!

Letitia: How did I not notice! *(Then, turning to Gina)* Who is died?

Gina: My husband. I went home and found Mario lying on the floor with a knife stuck in his throat.

Mary: I'll take care of it right away! *(She picks up the phone and dials a number)* Hello, Police?... Come immediately to this address: 27 Thames Street, we found a body in an apartment, it was killed... Of course we are sure! ...What makes us believe it was a murder? The fact that he had a knife stuck in his throat. Come on, hurry up! *(Then, turning to Letitia and Gina)* They're coming, there's a patrol in the area and in a few minutes it will be here.

Letitia: Gina, sit down! You'll be upset.

Mary: Do you want some water?

Gina: *(Sitting up)* It was certainly a theft that ended in the worst way.

Letitia: Do you have any valuables in the house?

Gina: The usual things that everyone owns. But the thieves only took the cash away. And to think that all the gold was within reach on the commode.

Letitia: This is really strange!

Titian enters the scene.

Titian: Hi Gina! Why are you crying? Did something happen?

Gina: Yes. They killed Mario. He probably caught thieves red-handed.

Titian: And how much did they take away?

Gina: What are you doing, do you think about money? Don't you ask me how they killed poor Mario?

Titian: I worry about who remains, for the dead there is little to do!

Out of scene: sound of the Police siren.

Mary: You have a stone instead of a heart!

Titian: Listen Gina, I'd like to ask you something. Did Mario still keep the spare oxygen bottle in front of the door of your flat?

Gina: Yes, why?

Titian: *(Thinking aloud)* Who would have said that the thief would have satisfied me, the problem is that he mistook the sick person and now they could even accuse me of being the mandator. *(Then replying to Gina)* I was saying so out of curiosity.

Mary: What if the thieves who entered our house were responsible for the murder?

Gina: Why, have you also suffered a theft recently?

Titian: I wouldn't really call it that. Something has disappeared, but it should be back soon, or at least I hope so.

Someone knocks on the door and Letitia goes to open it.

Freddy: I'm the inspector Thompson, we've already inspected the crime scene, which of you is the victim's wife?

Gina: It's me.

Freddy: Was it you who found the body?

Gina: Yes, when I entered the house, I found *(Crying)* that holy man of my husband who was dead.

Letitia: Well, holy, let's not exaggerate! *(Titian and Letitia burst out laughing)*

Gina: Why do you say so? He never hurt anyone, in fact everyone took pleasure in talking to him.

Letitia: Not just talking to him! *(Letitia and Titian laugh again)*

Freddy: Excuse me, but who are you?

Letitia: My name is Letitia and I live in this building.

Freddy: So can you tell us something that might help us? Do you have heard any suspicious or unusual noise?

Letitia: *(Titian beckons to her that perhaps it would be better to keep silent)* Actually, given his state of health, I would also have heard some unusual noise.

Freddy: Do you want to be more explicit and make us understand what you're alluding to?

Letitia: I am alluding to the fact that he kept the volume of the music very high and often accompanied those pieces with the mouth organ.

Gina: My husband owned a mouth organ, but I've never heard him play it, not even when I sometimes played the piano.

Letitia: Obviously you've never found the right music sheet! *(Letitia and Titian laugh again)*

Freddy: But it doesn't seem to me that there is anything strange about playing a wind instrument.

Gina: In the case of my husband, yes, inspector. Because he often needed oxygen to be able to breathe regularly.

Titian: I don't even know how he did it!

Freddy: Who are you?

Titian: I'm the owner of this house, but I haven't seen or heard anything.

Freddy: I don't seem to have asked you.

Titian: Prevention is better than cure!

Freddy: I have the impression that you have something to hide.

Titian: Absolutely! What reason would I have? I'm not the one who steals, on the contrary!

Freddy: Why, have you also suffered a theft?

Titian: A long time ago.

A constable enter the scene and informs the superior of what has been ascertained at the crime scene.

Darius: Inspector, the windows were broken from the inside and therefore it is clear that whoever committed the murder wanted to make us think of a robbery trying to put the investigation off the track.

Freddy: Mrs. Gina, when you entered the house, was the door double-locked?

Gina: Absolutely not.

Darius: So it is plausible that the killer entered with the complicity of the landlord and, after committing the crime, broke the window and left undisturbed from where he had entered. This means it must have been someone the victim knew well.

Letitia: How did I not see him?

Freddy: In this case, you are all suspects, now we need to investigate further to find the motive. If any of you know anything, you better talk right away, before your position gets worse!

Letitia: I would have seen one thing.

Freddy: Come on Miss, tell everything!

Letitia: I have no idea who she is, but a blonde lady has often visited Mario these days.

Darius: And had you ever seen her before?

Letitia: The strange thing was exactly this: that I didn't know her.

Darius: Why, do you know everyone who comes to this building?

Letitia: (*Embarrassed*) In a sense.

Freddy: So no one ever introduced you to this woman?

Letitia: No.

Cynthia enters the scene in a hurry waving some money without paying attention to

who is in the room.

Cynthia: I got the money back!

Freddy: Very well, this is getting interesting!

Cynthia: *(Realized the presence of the Police, turning to Titian)* The police? Didn't we agree...?

Freddy: *(Turned to Titian)* I said right away that I didn't like you, come on, speak up!

Titian: I've not idea what she is talking about.

Freddy: *(Turned to Cynthia)* Confess madam! Is it the theft money?

Cynthia: Yes...but...

Darius: Now come with us to the police station!

Cynthia: Why? Didn't I bring back the money?

Freddy: So, in addition to murder, the charge will also be of money laundering.

Cynthia: Murder? *(Turning to Titian)* Who did you kill, the coach repairer?

Darius: The coach repairer? Tell us who you're talking about right away, so we'll arrest also him for aiding and abetting.

Cynthia: I don't know him, it's him *(Pointing to Titian)* who is his client.

Freddy: We are defeating a real gang of terrorists. Compared to you those of the clockwork orange were altar-boys.

Titian: But what you're saying!? We're innocent!

Darius: Everyone always says so.

Gina: I'd have never imagined that you, *(Turning to Cynthia)* together with Titian and a blonde, would go that far!

Cynthia: Titian? A blonde? A murder? Are you crazy? I just brought back part of the money that was inside the chair.

Darius: So did you find the money in a chair?

Gina: It's not possible! I kept it in the toilet box.

Freddy: So, whose is all this money?

Titian: It's mine.

Freddy: If you don't hurry to explain the thing well to me, I'll arrest everyone, present or not!

Titian: Are you referring to the condo property manager?

Darius: Why, where is the condo property manager?

Titian: I would like to know too.

Freddy: I ask you one last time before I get really angry: would you like to explain to me what is happening? (*Addressing Letitia, Titian and Cynthia*) you, come out with me and it will be good that your explanation is convincing, otherwise I'll throw all three of you in jail! (*The inspector leaves the scene followed by the three. As they leave, Cynthia and Titian continue to quarrel*)

Gina, Mary and Darius remain on stage.

Gina: They aren't involved, are they?

Mary: It's just a big misunderstanding. But we should find out who this blonde is and who could be cross with Mario. Do you have no suspicions?

Gina: I assure you that I have no idea, if he had a lover I don't know, also because, in those conditions, I didn't think he could have sex.

Mary: Let's admit that this famous blonde was Mario's lover, why would she kill him?

Gina: Certainly not out of jealousy. There had been no sexual intercourse between the two of us for years.

Mary: Maybe that was why he had found someone else to enjoy.

Darius: So if it's not a question of money and jealousy, what could be the motive?

Gina: Why couldn't it be a matter of jealousy?

Darius: Are you confessing?

Gina: Absolutely not! It may have been this blonde's husband who committed the crime, assuming she had one.

The inspector returns to the scene followed by Cynthia, Letitia and Titian.

Freddy: It's all terribly complicated, but I finally understood. Anyway, if things are as you say, we have yet to find out who killed this man.

Mary: Maybe we have an idea.

Freddy: Then say it!

Mary, Darius and Gina: *(In chorus)* The blonde's husband.

Freddy: Why, is there one? But if we don't even know who this woman is.

Mary: Regardless of who she is, this is a possibility not to be discarded. The husband of this woman could have staged the theft not to make understand the motive of the murder and to remove suspicions about himself.

Gina: But, if Mario didn't know him, why would he have let him in?

Titian: I know this!

Darius: Why, are you an accomplice?

Titian: Absolutely not! But our man could be that guy who came with the pretext of the census. Perhaps he had tagged after his wife and had seen her enter this building and, not knowing the identity of his rival, he used that trick to find him out.

Letitia: But how could he only think it was Mario, given his health conditions?

Gina: A husband in love understands, beyond appearances, who his rival is.

Darius: So we just have to find him. Would you *(Turning to Titian)* be able to describe him?

Titian: Of course.

Freddy: Then follow us to the police station, so we can do an identikit.

Darius, Freddy and Titian leave the scene.

Cynthia: Fortunately, it all worked out.

Mary: Rather tell me: how much have we managed to scrape together with the dog so far?

Cynthia: You won't believe it, but in a few hours, we managed to scrape together a lot of money. However, we wait until we've reached the full amount before telling Titian.

Gina: I'm really glad that you're not involved in this bad business. But now I have to

go home, I really feel the need to go to rest.

Mary: If you need anything, I'm here.

Gina: Heartfelt thanks Mary. *(And she leaves the scene accompanied by Letitia. Gina, not having much appreciated the wisecracks made earlier, makes her go on and then hits her repeatedly on the back with the foulard)*

Titian enters the scene while Mary and Cynthia are sipping coffee.

Titian: They've already traced the culprit.

Mary: How did they get him so fast?

Titian: It was his wife who reported him.

Cynthia: When he was caught, did he confess?

Titian: Yes and he also confirmed the motive for jealousy. I, however, would have killed her.

Mary: You would only kill if you were robbed. If you were betrayed, you would pass over it.

Titian: But with the car!

Cynthia: I didn't make you so sentimental!

Titian: From today I want to change my attitude, this story made me reflect.

Mary: Have you been to the police station or to Lourdes?

Cynthia: Tell me the truth: is it because you found out we got a lot of money back, huh?

Mary: *(Turning to her sister)* How did he know? Then, didn't you say to wait to tell him?

Cynthia: I wanted to see if he had really changed as he said! *(Then, turning to her brother-in-law)* For now we only have three thousand pounds.

Titian: I'm satisfied with this amount, the rest you owe to me, use it to cure your husband. But how did you earn that sum in such a short time?

Cynthia: It would be too long a story.

Titian: Then forget it!

Cynthia: Seeing as things stand, until you decide otherwise, I'll keep the dog.

Titian: No, bring him here. If Mary wants him, I want him too.

Mary: Not only did Our Lady of Lourdes intervene, even that of Fatima!

Titian: Having a puppy around the house is something I had never considered, but thinking about it, it entices me. So go get him now, I'm curious to see this dog, what breed did you say he is? A Scotch whisky?

Mary: He's not an alcoholic, he's a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, and his name is Brioche.

Someone knocks at the door.

Titian: Come in!

Hasdrubal: *(A garbage worker enters the scene with the chair in his hand)* My name is Hasdrubal, I'm a friend of Letitia and I managed to find the famous chair.

Titian: *(Looking at Cynthia)* Weren't you supposed to have the chair? I knew that Mary had given it to you by mistake, but that you had even thrown it away!

Cynthia: Mary had given it to me to let stay the dog there. I didn't know there was money in it, so after buying the dog's bed, I had thrown it away.

Hasdrubal: Why, is there money inside? *(Looking at the chair intrigued to understand where it might be hidden)*

Titian: *(He raises the seat of the chair and takes out the money)* Yes, and with these I repair the Panda. *(Then, turning to Hasdrubal)* These are for you. *(Handing him one hundred pounds)*

Hasdrubal: This is a nice reward.

Titian: After all, you only cost me twice as much as a magician, but at least you brought my money back.

Hasdrubal: I don't know who this magician is, anyway thanks. Now I have to go, otherwise if they don't find me...

Titian: They would think you slipped away with the condo property manager!

Hasdrubal: Even if I don't understand the meaning of the speech, I would like to make a quip too: maybe it will be the magician's fault, if the condo property manager is not found, he will have made him disappear!

Titian: Do you know that you are truly a genius? This was a possibility I had never thought of.

Hasdrubal goes away and Titian, while watching him go away, states a fact.

Titian: Being good always pays off!

As Hasdrubal leaves the scene, Hannibal enters.

Hannibal: (*Angry*) I learned that you will soon give hospitality to a dog, you promised you wouldn't.

Titian: It's true, but I've changed my mind.

Hannibal: What if all the tenants of this building did like you?

Titian: There would be so many empty kennels and so many full hearts.

THE END