

# Leonardo

A Murder Mystery

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## Act1 Scene 1

all-(Mother Anna & sister Camilla).

### A cemetery in Florence (full stage)

**Gauze up**

**Music:**

**Dancers and actors portray a funeral**

**A priest** *making the sign of a cross over the coffin* God have mercy on her soul.  
*actors and dancers pass by as to give a last greeting to the corps*

## Act1 Scene 2

Leonardo+Guido + Antonio.

### Leonardo's studio in Florence (front stage right)

**Gauze down**

There is a table with loads of stuff on, and the model of a gearbox. The wall behind it is filled with sketches. Stacks of paper on the table, in disarray.

*Antonio is looking at all the drawings of wings and flying machines on the wall.*

*Guido is more interested in some strange contraption of which he does not understand the use.*

*Leonardo is seemingly absent-minded folding paper into little aeroplanes.*

**Guido** What a funny looking armour.

**Leonardo** That is my under-water-walking-suit.

**Guido** Under water, like a fish?

**Leonardo** That suit that allows me to walk under water and provides air for breathing, through this tube here.

**Antonio** *not interested in the diving suit* And what on earth is this supposed to be Leonardo?

**Leonardo** What?

**Antonio** Here, the sketches on the wall, it says 'Flying Airship' ...

**Leonardo** *finally looking up from his folding experiments* Oh ?! That!

Well, it is what it says, isn't it? A Flying Airship.

**Guido** I think it is ridiculous to want to walk under water, I am not a fish, I'd be very claustrophobic in that thing. He *moves away from the diving suit, sees the gearbox*  
But anyway, what is this for, Leonardo? *wants to touch the model of the gearbox*

**Leonardo** Don't touch it, it isn't finished yet.

**Guido** But what is it for?

**Leonardo** It's a gearbox.

**Guido** A what?

**Leonardo** A gearbox, for my automatic car.

**Guido** I give up, your mind's too fast for me. What on earth is an automatic car?

**Leonardo** A kart that would be able to run without animals pulling it.  
See *he walks towards the model of the gearbox* imagine a car being able to be propelled forward by the power delivered by, for instance, steam.

**Guido** Steam?

**Leonardo** Yes, steam, when you boil water and force the steam through narrow piping, it has great power. It could make a car go forward, propel it so to say.

**Guido** *hesitantly* Ok, I guess.

**Leonardo** Anyway, the steam can push a rotor, the movement of the rotor can be translated into movement of the wheels. Hence, now the car is moving forward.

**Antonio** *has come close by* And if I wanted it to go backwards and not forwards?

**Leonardo** Than the gearbox comes in handy.

**Antonio** How so?

**Leonardo** See, it's a tongue and groove thing. This wheel here turns because this one does.

**Antonio** Hm ...

**Leonardo** Now, let me ask you. If you have 2 wheels of different diameters connected to each other, at the axes, one behind the other, both rolling over the floor.

**Guido** Yes?

**Leonardo** Then, which of both turns faster, the smaller wheel or, the bigger one?

**Antonio** The smaller one, of course!

**Leonardo** Exactly.  
If I can make the wheels of a gearbox react like that as well, then my automatic car could go faster than if it were propelled by steam alone. Even if steam is the only propulsion it has.

**Guido** Now I think I am with you? If the car has smaller wheels, they will turn faster.

**Antonio** But the car wouldn't go any faster because the wheels need to turn more to run over the exact same distance as wheels that are slower but larger would have to.

**Leonardo** Good thinking, Antonio. No, for the car to go faster but still using the same amount of energy, or more or less the same amount, you would need gears. A series of smaller wheels rotating into bigger wheels, and the bigger wheels would be the ones making the car go forward, the smaller ones are just there to have some kind of double-up-speed function. Do you get it now, Guido?

**Guido** As that why the top wheel is smaller? And this one here looks like a whirligig?

**Leonardo** You're getting there, Guido, you're getting there!

**Antonio** Now explain your Flying Airship to me, Leonardo.  
Who will make those enormous wings move, or would you use steam as well?

**Leonardo** I am still struggling with the wings. To make them move I mean, they are too big. But if I make them smaller, they would never carry the Airship. Here catch this.  
*Leonardo throws a few of the paper planes at them*

**Guido** Those are paper birds!

**Antonio** Or Flying Airships, yes Leonardo?

**Leonardo** More like soaring Airships really, they can't fly, only soar gracefully down on the wind.

**Antonio** How did you make these, Leonardo?

**Leonardo** You just fold them out of paper, see ! *he shows them*  
But they only fly nicely if the wings are light enough. Otherwise, they just crash to the floor.

**Guido** Wait, I want to fold one!

**Antonio** And would you want to make one big enough for a human to fly on?

**Leonardo** No, paper is not strong enough to hold a full grown man. But I study them to find a way to make the wings on my Airship smaller, but still be able to carry the weight of a human. And I need to solve the propulsion issue as well.

**Guido** Why?

**Leonardo** Well, for my Flying Airship to do more than just soaring down from a cliff or so, it needs momentum, it needs to be able to go up, like a bird, free as a bird ... It needs to be like my automatic car but then with wings to fly ...

**Antonio** What about silk, Leonardo?

**Leonardo** What about it?

**Antonio** I was just thinking of silk for the wings. It is lightweight and durable. Maybe you could make them of silk.

**Leonardo** Indeed ... it is ... *thinking* that doesn't solve my problem of propulsion yet, but I could try and work with silk wings. Hmmh, like make a frame out of wood and then stretch silk around that. That would be light, and might be sturdy enough to carry the Airship ...

I know what, let's go to the market tomorrow and buy us some silk to play around with.

*exeunt*

**Gauze up**

**Music:**

**Dancers portray flying airships, and the dance evolves into a lively market being set-up and brought to 'life.'**

## Act1 Scene 3

Leonardo+Guido+Antonio+ Carolina & Francesco+extra's.

### A market in Florence (full stage)

several trestle tables with loads of stuff on, all things one would find on a market

There is the normal chaos of a rather busy marketplace. The silk and cloth stand of Francesco is standing stage front.

*L+A+G come up and browse through the different market stalls, slowly making their way to the silk and cloth stand.*

**Guido** *looking at the birds in cages on the table of the animal dealer* Don't you need to buy some birds, Leonardo? Like you did last week? You know, to study how the wings work when they fly away. You should buy some chickens this time, if you let those go, I could still catch them and make myself a nice dinner.

**Leonardo** Chickens don't fly, Guido.

**Guido** My point exactly, Leonardo.

*They laugh at this.*

**Antonio** Look, there is the silk stand. By god, it seems that Francesco Giocondo is at the stall himself! He must have reason to leave his nuptial bed.

**Leonardo** Hey, what do you mean, Antonio?

**Antonio** Well, don't you ever listen to gossip? He recently got married.

**Leonardo** Wasn't he married, like since a long time?

**Antonio** Twice! But his second wife died during childbirth, God rest her soul *he and Guido cross themselves*

**Guido** God rest her soul.

**Leonardo** *a bit impatient and stopping at the wood merchant* Let's stop here first, I am going to need wood for my Airship. Silk alone will never keep the shape of a wing. *To the*

*vendor while browsing what there is on offer, I'm going to need these and this and, yes, a good few meters of rope as well.*

**Vendor** Is that all good sir? That 'll be 35 soldi.

**Leonardo** Man, you're expensive, maybe I should instead take my business elsewhere!

*Prepares to leave his purchases behind and walk away*

**Vendor** Oh, no, mister Da Vinci. I'll make you a reasonable price! An excellent price! 30 soldi !

**Leonardo** 30 soldi, you're mad. 20.

**Vendor** Do you want my family to starve, good sir? 27.

**Leonardo** 22.

**Vendor** I can't sir, I really can't.

**Antonio** 25, then?

**Vendor** My wife will kill me over this, but okay. *To Leonardo* 25?

**Leonardo** Deal. *He pays* Guido, would you mind carrying the stuff?

**Guido** Why do I always have to carry everything?

**Antonio** Because I am the clever one.

**Guido** Blah!

**Leonardo** Stop bickering, bunch of children, sometimes I wonder why I bother with the 2 of you? Come, let's go and get that silk, now.

*On their way to the cloth merchant, Antonio stops to flirt with Carolina ; a pretty barmaid.*

**Leonardo** *after a short while* Antonio, come now!

**Guido** Yes, come, Antonio ! *if he can manage to carry the wood and rope in one hand, he should grab his crotch at 'come' with the other hand.*

**Antonio** Arrividerci, my pretty. I will see you later! *Wants to steal a kiss but Carolina shuns him away.*

**Leonardo** You should learn to keep that brain of yours above your belt, Antonio.

We are on a mission.

**Antonio** You are always on a mission, Leonardo. But I try and keep a broader perspective.

**Guido** A horizontal perspective you mean?

**Antonio** You're just jealous that the prettiest girl of Florence will share her bed with me.

**Guido** ... and with others ...

**Antonio** *Wants to attack Guido* How dare you!

**Leonardo** *Impatient* I'm sure Carolina is the most virtuous barmaid in the whole of Italy.

But will you two just calm down!

*Antonio and Guido exchange a last angry look but follow Leonardo.*

*They arrive at the cloth stall without further distractions, and Leonardo starts browsing the fabrics, feeling the quality with his fingers.*

**Francesco** Are you looking for something in particular?

**Leonardo** I need something very smooth.

**Francesco** Take this then, sir, this silk is smoother than the skin of a newborn baby.

**Leonardo** Can I feel the quality?

**Francesco** Of course, sir ... may I ask what you need it for?

**Leonardo** I want to see if it could work to make wings for my flying Airship.

**Francesco** Flying airship? *Takes another good look at Leonardo* Mister Leonardo Da Vinci?

Are you the famous artiste?

**Leonardo** I am Leonardo Da Vinci, yes.

**Francesco** I heard so much about your work, sir. And I have seen some of it too, at the palace of the Medici's; Lorenzo de Medici showed me the portrait of his mistress that you are working on.

**Leonardo** Oh! That! There are many portraits and other works, that I start on but then I lose interest, and they remain unfinished.

**Francesco** Nevertheless, how you bring out light and shade in your paintings is really magnificent.

**Leonardo** You flatter me.

**Francesco** Oh, no, sir ... the truth may be told.  
Could I ask you something, sir?

**Leonardo** Go ahead.

**Francesco** Would you be so kind as to be my guests for dinner, tomorrow evening?  
You, and your friends.

**Leonardo** Gladly, but why, dear man?

**Francesco** As you may know I just recently got married.

**Leonardo** *looking at Antonio* I heard something of the kind, yes.

**Francesco** I would like you to meet my young wife, she is the prettiest lady of the whole of Italy.  
*Guido to Antonio on the side*

**Guido** Competition for your Carolina, Antonio.

**Antonio** Oh, just shut up!

**Francesco** I would like to discuss with you the possibility of having her portrait made by you, that is ... if you would lower yourself to work for people who are not clerics or nobility?

**Leonardo** I need to eat too. I paint for who pays me, I have no other allegiance than to myself.

**Francesco** Tomorrow evening then, at my humble home?  
*From here both conversations should happen at the same time/interwoven, as Antonio and Guido are talking together while Francesco and Leonardo conclude the silk deal*

**Antonio** Humble home? The man is one of the wealthiest merchants in Florence.  
So what he's not a Medici, but I wouldn't mind living in the house he calls his own.

**Leonardo** Tomorrow it is, but now how much for a meter of this silk here?

**Francesco** That particular weave is 225 soldi per meter.

**Guido** Another evening that we do not have to scramble for our own food, or pay for it at the tavern. I am glad enough to put my feet under his fine dining table.

**Leonardo** Expensive cloth.

**Francesco** I know, but this is not just any cloth, artiste. This is the best silk available. The last client to buy of this material was Donna Clarice de Medici herself.

**Antonio** Then you better hope his cook is as beautiful as the linens and silks he sells.

**Leonardo** Luckily I only need a meter, as I'm not planning to make a full length 'camisia' from it  
*laughs*

**Francesco** Donna Clarice asked for 20 meters of it to be brought to the Medici palace.

**Leonardo** Ha, if only I could go and ask her for her leftovers of the material. *sigh*  
But give me a meter, that just will have to be enough.

**Guido** And wine smooth as the skin of a newborn baby, hey ?! *laughs*  
*Leonardo has just finished paying Francesco and picks up the silk he bought when he overhears the other 2.*

**Leonardo** Stop it, you two are really just like children!  
*Exeunt.*

**Gauze down**

## Act1 Scene 4

Leonardo+Antonio+Guido+Francesco+Lisa+Marta

At the house of the Giocondo's (front stage left)

A dining table, lavishly decorated (15<sup>th</sup>-century Tuscan style) behind the gauze, but the scene starts in front of the gauze though ...

*Leonardo is at home by the Giocondo family, he meets Lisa, and they discuss the painting of her portrait.*

**Francesco** Lisa, my wife, is everything ready for our distinguished guests tonight?

**Lisa** Cook is doing her best, Francesco, and the children are with their nurse.

We should have a peaceful evening with the great artiste.

Isn't it going to be terribly expensive, to have Leonardo da Vinci paint my portrait?

**Francesco** We'll have to see about that. That is why I invited him here; so we can discuss things.

But you mustn't break your pretty head about the finances, leave that up to me.

Is the dining room ready?

**Lisa** It is, Francesco.

*a servant maid enters*

**Marta** Your guests have arrived, signor.

**Francesco** Send them in.

*As Leonardo, Guido and Antonio enter, but Lisa hides away a bit.*

Welcome to my humble abode, artiste.

**Leonardo** You were most kind to invite us here, signor Giocondo.

Did you ever really get the names of my friends?

*Francesco hesitates*

This here is Antonio di Ser Pisa and my good friend Guido of Bologna.

**Francesco** Nice to meet you, Antonio, Guido. Welcome to my house.

May I present you my lovely young bride, Lisa, Lisa dear come to show yourself.

**Lisa** Most honoured to meet you, maestro Leonardo. I heard so much about you.

**Leonardo** giving her a hand-kiss and a bow. Not all bad things, I hope? And the honour is all

mine. Your husband did not do you justice when he described you to me.

**Lisa** Oh no, maestro, you make me blush.

**Leonardo** Your complexion will allow for perfection in painting, my dear signora.

**Marta** coming in Dinner is served.

**Francesco** Let's talk further while we eat. One cannot make agreements on an empty stomach.

**Gauze up**

**Musical background with song**

*Francesco walks his guests to the dining table. They all sit down, Lisa first, then Leonardo, then Antonio and Guido, last Francesco. Some wine to moisten our throats before we eat?*

**Guido** Oh, yes, most certainly *filthy look from Leonardo towards Guido*

**Francesco** Marta, fill the glasses and keep them filled. *She serves wine to all, then she goes off.*

So, Leonardo, what do you think of my Lisa?

**Leonardo** She is indeed a beauty, sir. It would be a joy to paint her.

*The maid comes back with a big pot of soup.*

**Francesco** Ha! Soup! I hope you are all hungry, the cook has been busy all day.

*The maid serves soup to all.*

**Antonio** *to Guido* The minestrone, my Carolina, makes is better ...

**Guido** I'm not complaining, I could eat a lion at this point.

**Leonardo** My compliments to your cook, misses Giocondo.

**Francesco** More wine? *signs to Marta to top up the glasses*

And, Leonardo, will you be persuaded to immortalise Mona Lisa?

**Leonardo** She will be a delight to put on canvas, Francesco. What kind of depiction did you have in mind?

**Francesco** I don't understand?

**Antonio** Leonardo could portray your wife in the face of one or another saint, Mary the mother of Christ visited by the archangel Gabriel for instance.

**Guido** Or in a more laic setting, a meadow and your children around her playing.

**Leonardo** Or, obviously a portrait, giving her features all the focus they deserve, nothing to distract from her beauty.

**Francesco** And the costs?

**Leonardo** That depends. The size of the canvas desired. The work I need to put in, the time spend on what you could call the background,...

**Francesco** I see.

**Antonio** Or would you instead prefer a fresco, on the walls of this magnificent home?

**Francesco** Is that not sturdier than canvas, a fresco?

**Leonardo** Yes, but not so mobile. Should you at one stage like to have the painting in a different room perhaps.

**Francesco** Or should we move. *thinks for a second*  
Do you not sometimes paint on wood, artiste?

**Leonardo** I have some beautiful pieces of poplar in my studio, for the moment.  
*Marta comes to clear the dishes*

**Francesco** Poplar, hey? *He thinks about the possibilities presented.* I like that idea.

**Leonardo** It is entirely up to you, Francesco; the poplar panels I have are about the right size for a beautiful picture but would be too small for any more elaborate scenery. A classic portrait of fair signora Lisa, emphasising on the play of shadow and light, perhaps?

**Francesco** Ha, you remembered I complimented you on that, over your painting at the Medici palace?

**Leonardo** I try not to miss any significant detail, Francesco, often it is all in the detail.

**Francesco** How big are your poplar panels?

**Leonardo** All vary in size, but are about one and a half times the length of my forearm, by 1 time that. *He shows a size roughly 70x50cm.* The panels are treated and ready to be painted on.

**Francesco** And your wages?

*Marta brings on the main course, a roast of some kind. Francesco gets up to carve the meat. While Marta fills the glasses of wine again.*

**Leonardo** Only a small piece for me, please. I am not a big carnivore.

**Guido** *seeing the succulent meat* But I am!

**Francesco** *having cut the meat, Marta, you can serve now.* To Leonardo Well? Your price?

**Leonardo** *showing, in his hand gestures, that he is calculating, estimating how many colours and what paint to use, etc.* I should be able to work it for 75 florins. Excluding the material.

**Francesco** And you said my silk was expensive!

**Leonardo** Silkworms are not as demanding as I am. Worms can live on nothing more than a few leaves, and they don't live as long as we humans do.

**Francesco** Touché, my friend. 75 Florins you say, is that non-negotiable?

**Leonardo** Well, for 85 florins I'll include the material, and the risk of pigments or oils getting more expensive is mine?

**Francesco** 85 Florins now ?!

**Leonardo** But that includes all materials used, and you have a done-deal price.

**Francesco** On one condition.

**Leonardo** And that is?

**Francesco** That you do not let one of your students do any of the work on the portrait, you are the only one to work on it.

**Leonardo** Agreed.

**Francesco** Marta more wine to celebrate our deal!  
*Marta fills up the glasses*



## Act1 Scene 5

L+A+G+C

### Leonardo's studio in Florence (front stage right)

A canon is taking centre place on the table. The wall behind it is still filled with sketches.

- Carolina** Why do you work on war-machinery, Leonardo?
- Leonardo** It pays better.
- Antonio** who are you designing them for? Lorenzo de Medici?
- Leonardo** If the Medici don't want the design then I might just sell it to the king of France.
- Guido** Would you sell a canon to our enemy?
- Leonardo** The French are not my enemies. No-one is my enemy but human stupidity.
- Carolina** Why are you not working on your flying machine instead?
- Leonardo** It is tedious to be occupied with one thing only, my mind needs the freedom to wonder about, and contemplate new things all the time.
- Antonio** *flirting with Carolina (she may be baring leg, clearly suggestively)* My mind has enough distraction, maybe you should try my diet once, Leonardo?
- Leonardo** If it is that kind of distraction that you mean then I suggest that you 2 get a room.
- Antonio** *leaves Carolina alone for a second.* Oh, you're really no fun, Leonardo.
- Carolina** Never mind him, Antonio, my love.
- Antonio** Is that why you stopped working on the painting for Francesco del Giocondo? Did you get bored? *since Leonardo's is not listening to him, A and C start flirting again*
- Guido** How does your cannon work, Leonardo, this looks nothing like a standard cannon.
- Leonardo** That is because it is not a regular canon, it's more like a continuously firing machine. See, the firing barrels rotate around this axis. So while one set fires, the other set cools down and a third set gets loaded with gunpowder.
- Guido** Ingenious
- Carolina** But what about the pretty Gioconda, Leonardo?
- Antonio** Oh, he has forgotten all about her! Mona Lisa will just remain one of Leonardo's many unfinished paintings. He should never have agreed on not letting his students help him, they could have finished the portrait for him, but no ...
- Leonardo** *interrupting the rant* I have not really forgotten about that portrait. But signora Gioconda was with child, and so I had to stop visiting them for a while. She couldn't sit long enough to pose. But, I am invited over there tomorrow to work on lady Lisa's portrait.
- Carolina** Doe she not also have the care of a child of a former marriage?
- Antonio** Yes, an infant, called Bartolomeo I think.
- Carolina** Is the new baby a boy or a girl?
- Leonardo** A boy, Piero.
- Guido** Francesco will be happy, 2 sons, and his wife is still young, he can have more!
- Carolina** The future of his family name is secure.
- Leonardo** I'd rather leave my own legacy than to just leave a family name.
- Antonio** But then again, you are an illegitimate child, aren't you, Leonardo?
- Leonardo** My mother was not good enough for my father's family so they couldn't get married. And I was not legitimate enough to be accepted at a university, even though my father never as much as tried to disown me.
- Antonio** Would university really have done anything for you, Leonardo?

Your brain would be bored there within days.

**Leonardo** True, perhaps. Anyway, it is what it is, and I am what I am.

**Guido** What is for dinner, Carolina?

**Carolina** I was not planning on cooking for you guys tonight, I have to work  
You'll have to come to the tavern and eat there.

**Leonardo** You guys are terrible, all you think of is eating and drinking

**Antonio** And love, hey Leonardo, love! *he grabs Carolina in a way that clearly shows what kind of love he's thinking about*

## Act1 Scene 6

L+Lisa+M+ singer

### At the house of the Giocondo's (stage left)

A chair with armrests for Lisa, maybe a window behind it, an easel and paint-stuff for Leonardo.

### A song right behind the gauze under 1 spotlight

**Leonardo** Are you comfortable, my lady?

**Lisa** I am all right, maestro.

**Leonardo** If you could please lay your right hand to rest on your left, like this ...  
*he positions her left arm on the armrest and the right hand over it.*

**Lisa** Like this?

**Leonardo** Yes, excellent.

**Lisa** Why this gesture, maestro?

**Leonardo** It is a widely accepted symbol in portrait paintings, it says that the subject, in this case, you, my lady, is virtuous.

**Lisa** Oh, ok.

*Leonardo starts painting, they don't talk for a short while.*

### The song began earlier continuous (or repeats) right behind the gauze under 1 spotlight

**Lisa** Do you need me to sit entirely still? Or am I allowed to engage in conversation?

**Leonardo** I am not busy with your smile at this point, my lady, but your hands, so we can talk, but please keep your arms and hands still.

**Lisa** That I can do.

*Marta comes in*

**Marta** Piero is finally asleep, my lady.

**Lisa** Finally. That child hates having his eyes closed.  
Go back to him and stay with him, Marta.

**Marta** Yes, ma'am. *she leaves*

**Leonardo** Is your baby a vivacious little boy, then?

**Lisa** Yes, I swear he is going to give me lots of trouble growing up.  
The first few months of his life it was as if he was permanently attached to my breast, but now he can start eating some fruits and some vegetables as well. So I can finally have a bit of my own life back again.

**Leonardo** Do you nurse him yourself, my lady?

**Lisa** Yes, I do believe a child needs its mother, not a wet-nurse. Well, if that is possible of course, poor little Bartolomeo will have to do with me, God rest his mother's soul.

**Leonardo** God rest her soul, indeed.  
Was he very young when his mother died?

**Lisa** Just over a year. He probably thinks I am his natural mother.

*conversation halts again, Leonardo still paints*

*Marta enters*

**Marta** A letter came in for you, my lady.

**Lisa** A letter? From whom?

**Marta** It is from your mother, my lady.

**Lisa** My mother?

**Marta** Yes.

**Lisa** Please read it to me, I cannot move my hands now, but I am also anxious to know what my mother writes me.

**Marta** *reading* “ My dear daughter, I hope you are well. And that the baby is thriving. I would come to visit you myself, but my health keeps me fettered to home. I do hope you will be able to visit me soon. But I am not writing you just to inquire about your and the babies health, although these things are important to me. I would like to petition your help in another matter that is equally close to my heart. Your husband is a man of influence in Florence. Could you maybe talk to him on my behalf? You see, I had word from the convent of San Domenico di Cafaggio, news about your sisters. Well obviously not directly. So, let say I heard rumours that one of your sisters there has gotten into trouble ... “

**Lisa** *unsettled* Which one, what kind of trouble ?

**Marta** *reading on, Lisa gets more and more stressed while Marta reads*  
 “ As you know the nuns at the convent of San Domenico are not allowed outside visits. I only heard the news via via. Mother superior keeps strictly to the rule of silence. But I am worried sick. Your father told me to let things rest, he said that if there really were some kind of trouble, mother superior would have written herself. I don’t even know if it is your sister Camilla or your sister Marietta that is in trouble. And what kind of problem? My dear Lisa, could you not persuade your husband to use the influence he has to obtain more information? I am continually praying to our Dear Lord, but I know that nothing less than more information will really be able to put my heart at ease.  
 Yours lovingly, mother.”

**Leonardo** You seem preoccupied my lady

**Lisa** I am. I’m sorry.

**Leonardo** Nothing to be sorry about, my lady.

**Lisa** *to Marta* Thank you, Marta, now go. *Marta off*  
 The problem is, my husband will not want to help. In such matter, he is as stubborn as my father is. He’ll just say, if one of your sisters were dead, the mother superior would write. He is of the opinion that if there is no news, then everything must be okay. But women are different than men in this regard, we women worry about such things ... Can you understand that maestro?

**Leonardo** I am a man, but I do understand, my lady.  
 Is there anything I could do?

**Lisa** Unless you have enough influence to inquire at the convent about the state of things?

**Leonardo** No, my lady, I would never have such influence, but let me ponder about the matter. Maybe I can still come up with some kind of solution and bring you and your mother the information you so desperately seek.

**Lisa** If only you could, maestro. I would be eternally grateful.

**Leonardo** My lady *he bows to her*

**Blackout**

## Act1 Scene 7

monsignor Alessandro Farnese + brother Rafael + extra's

**Gauze up**

**At the tavern (full stage)**

**Trestle tables, extra's drinking and eating.**

**A dance portrays the liveliness of the tavern with plenty of booze and food**

After the dance L+G+A come in and seat themselves at the table stage front

Carolina has already been serving the customers.

**Guido** Hey there you are Leonardo! I was starting to think you would not come.

**Antonio** Yes, he was too busy with painting the fair Lisa Gioconda ...

**Leonardo** No.

**Guido** What's up, Leonardo, you seem preoccupied.

**Antonio** What an excellent word for you to use, Guido! Not your normal vocabulary.

**Leonardo** I've been thinking ...

**Antonio** You never do anything else, Leonardo, tell us something new ...

**Leonardo** I was thinking about Lisa

**Guido** Ohohoh, Leonardo! She's married!

**Leonardo** Not in that way!

**Antonio** In what way then?

**Leonardo** She received a letter while I was painting her.

**Guido** And?

**Leonardo** It left her worried, and I would like to see if I can help her ...

*Carolina approaches their table, Leonardo doesn't directly notice*

**Carolina** Good evening, Leonardo. The usual?

**Leonardo** *still a tad distracted* Euh? Oh, yes, thanks.

*Carolina goes to fetch Leonardo's food*

**Guido** So, what was in the letter?

**Leonardo** Something about the convent of San Domenico ... apparently, Mona Lisa has two sisters who are nuns there.

**Antonio** San Domenico?

**Leonardo** Yes, why?

**Antonio** That is if I'm not mistaken the convent where Carolina was educated as a very young girl.

**Leonardo** I thought San Domenico was a cloister, that the nuns did not have any contact with the outside world?

**Antonio** Yes, it is, but Carolina was left on their doorstep as a baby, she was cared for by the nuns until she was old enough to go to school, well, that is to another convent and boarding school.

**Guido** I don't see a lot of all of this convent upbringing left in her now!

**Antonio** Don't joke with it, Carolina was lucky to have been found, so many unwanted babies are left to die on a dump.

**Guido** So, for all you know Carolina's mother is a hooker working at this bar?

**Antonio** *grabbing Guido by the throat* I am going to kill you, I swear, one of these days !!! ...

**Leonardo** Stop it! You are the worst friends I ever had!

*Carolina comes with Leonardo's plate*

**Carolina** What's the matter here? *puts down the plate in front of Leonardo*

**Leonardo** You could call it a lovers' quarrel. These two are terrible.

**Guido** We were just talking about you.

**Antonio** Come sit here with me, my dove. *Carolina sits down on his lap*

**Leonardo** Carolina? Do you know the convent of San Domenico di Cafaggio?

**Carolina** Yes, why?

**Leonardo** Do you know how to get in there?

**Guido** What plan is brewing in your mind now, Leonardo?

**Carolina** There is no way to get in there unless you want to become a nun in their cloister, but then you will never come out again ...

**Antonio** You got out!

**Carolina** I was a child, they wanted to get rid of me once I turned 7.

**Leonardo** Still, would you know how I could get in?

**Carolina** Why do you want to get in there?

**Leonardo** Two of Mona Lisa's sisters are nuns there, and one aunt as well if I recall well; a sister Albiera?

**Carolina** I remember sister Albiera, she was always kind to me.

**Leonardo** *thinking aloud* Mona Lisa is of your age, so her sisters would not yet have been in the convent while you were in the care of the nuns ...

**Carolina** What is the matter with signora Gioconda's sisters?

**Leonardo** That is the trouble, there is no way of knowing unless I can get into the cloister.

**Carolina** Maybe I can help you after all.

**Antonio** How?

**Carolina** See that man over there? The one with the big cross around his neck?

**Leonardo** Yes, what about him?

**Carolina** That is monsignor Alessandro Farnese. He is an envoy from the pope, I heard him talk about San Domenico. I think he is heading there, I am sure he will get in through the front doors.

**Guido** An envoy of the pope visiting a cloister? Is that regular?

**Carolina** Not, as far as I know, he must have been sent there by the Pope.

**Antonio** And why would the Pope send an envoy to a cloister in Florence?

**Leonardo** Maybe because he got word of trouble within its walls?

**Carolina** A very plausible theory.

**Leonardo** Is this envoy travelling alone?

**Carolina** No, he has a young brother with him, see the one pouring his wine? That is brother Rafael.

**Leonardo** Than I have a plan!

**Guido** Tell us.

**Leonardo** We will hang around here all night, and watch this papal envoy from a distance. We will follow him as soon as he leaves these premises ...

**Carolina** You'll have to wait long, they have booked rooms for the night here.

**Leonardo** Even better, Carolina, let us hide in his room and we will grab him and bind him the moment he retires there. I will put on his clothes, and I will take his place as papal envoy and make my way into San Domenico.

**Guido** And what about the brother he has with him?

**Leonardo** We will have to detain him as well, one of you can take his clothes and help me.

**Antonio** *eying Carolina* I'd rather stay here and help Carolina guard the prisoners.

**Leonardo** So Guido, a few days of religious life for you?

**Guido** As long as I don't have to take any vows, I'm okay with it.

**Leonardo** Okay, so you Antonio stay here at the inn, you guard the envoy. It will be best to keep him sedated. Carolina, can you make sure no-one gets into his room? Keep him safe, but silent and out of sight?

**Carolina** That is easy enough, Leonardo.

**Leonardo** Bring us to the room of the envoy then, we'll go hide there and get ready.

**Guido** I'll get some rope from the tack room.

**Carolina** And I'll get some cloth to gag him.

**Antonio** Let me help you with that, Carolina *he grabs hold of her in a suggestive way*

*exit Leonardo, Antonio, Guido, Carolina*

**musical :**

**A dance portrays the liveliness of the tavern with plenty of booze and food, reprise halfway during this dance monsignor Alessandro Farnese and brother Rafael also exit**

**Gauze down**

## Act1 Scene 8

L+G+Mother superior

### Office of Mother Superior at San Domenico (front stage right)

*A kneeling chair below a big cross, a sober table/altar, maybe a gothic arched window.*

Leonardo and Guido in the clothes they took from monsignor Alessandro Farnese and brother Rafael

**Leonardo** So, mother Anna, what is the trouble that made you decide to ask our holy father the Pope himself for help?

**Mother Anna** Lucrezia Borgia.

**Leonardo** What about the Pope's daughter?

**Mother Anna** Her nurse is my sister. That coincidence comes with ties and obligations. Any scandal within these walls can reflect poorly on Pope Alexander.

**Leonardo** That is true, so your sister is Lucrezia Borgia's nurse you say?

**Mother Anna** Yes, why?

**Leonardo** Just that the world is small that is all. But tell me more about what made you send for me?

**Mother Anna** I am afraid a scandal has been brewing within the walls of this cloister monsignor.

**Leonardo** Yes?

**Mother Anna** A while ago we had the visit of 4 pilgrims, they had special permission to come and pray in our church because we have a relic of our patron saint here.

**Leonardo** And what happened then?

**Mother Anna** The brothers stayed here for one week.

**Leonardo** So?

**Mother Anna** About 3 months after they left, our sister Camilla became ill, very ill ....

**Leonardo** What makes you think there is a correlation?

**Mother Anna** Sister Camilla was one of the few sisters that had contact with these men ... I'm afraid the contact must have gone further than the logistics of providing food for our guests. I am convinced sister Camilla had ... more carnal relations ... you know what I mean

**Guido** Are you saying that they had sex?

**Leonardo** Brother Rafael !!!

**Mother Anna** May God forgive your vocabulary on account of your youthfulness, my child.

**Leonardo** Go on, mother Anna.

**Mother Anna** I think that sister Camilla must have been with child and tried to abort it herself, and that this has made her so ill.

**Leonardo** You think that sister Camilla and one of the pilgrims ...

**Mother Anna** Yes.

**Leonardo** May I visit sister Camilla now, I will need to ask her a few questions myself.

**Mother Anna** Is that really necessary? I would not like to expose our poor sisters to even more male eyes. With all this happening ...

**Leonardo** I understand, but still, mother Anna. If you wish me to prevent a scandal, I must be allowed to run my own investigations in the matter.

**Mother Anna** I am sure there is nothing more to the entire matter than that!

**Leonardo** Why did you send for us, if we are not to meet the sister herself?

**Mother Anna** I did not send for you. I only wrote to my sister.

**Guido** The nurse of Lucrezia Borgia!

**Mother Anna** Yes ... but only so that she could inform his holiness, this is a matter we can deal with ourselves here at the convent. Sisters do get sick, we heal them to the best of our abilities, that is life in a cloister, all sisters know this when they enter these premises and take their vows.

**Leonardo** I am sure, but Pope Alexander sent me here nevertheless. I am sure you will not question our Holy Father the Pope's authority?

**Mother Anna** But ...

**Leonardo** The Pope has sent me here to investigate the matter, I need to see sister Camilla to do my job ...

**Mother Anna** *reluctantly* Very well then. Follow me.

**The cell of sister Camilla (front stage left)**

A simple bed, a kneeling chair or pillow for the knees under a big cross, a small window high behind the bed.

**Mother Anna** Sister, bring a few chairs for monsignor Alessandro Farnese and brother Rafael.

**Beatrice** *nods and exits stage left the first wing.*

**Mother Anna** As you can see, monsignor, sister Camilla is very ill, I doubt she will be able to answer any questions you may have for her.

**Leonardo** *hand on sister Camilla's forehead* She is running a very high fever, have you given her anything to lower her temperature?

**Mother Anna** If God is calling our sister to his side then there is nothing we can do.  
*Beatrice comes back with the chairs, puts them down for the men to sit on.*

**Guido** Thank you, sister. *Beatrice exits stage left first wing.*

**Leonardo** Mother Anna. I need to be alone with sister Camilla. Please leave us for a few moments, brother Rafael here will call for you when we are done here.

**Mother Anna** *in protest* Monsignor

**Leonardo** Shall I have to report to our Pope that you have been less than helpful?

**Mother Anna** No, of course not. *Exits stage left the first wing.*

**Leonardo** Guido, go stand by the door to make sure there are no listening ears around.  
*Guido exits stage left first wing.*

**Leonardo** Now, Camilla, we are alone ... you can trust me.  
I am not really monsignor Alessandro Farnese, my name is Leonardo. I was sent here by your sister Lisa Gioconda, and by your mother. They are both anxious about you.  
*Beatrice comes in from behind the gauze, stage left*

**Beatrice** She will not be able to answer you, signor ... Leonardo.

**Leonardo** Sister, you startled me! How did you get in here?

**Beatrice** Camilla and I are sisters, Leonardo. I am sister Beatrice, I volunteered to take care of my sister as soon as she fell ill. There is a passage over there that links the cell of a sick sister to the one of her caretaker.

**Leonardo** And does your cell over there link to the hall?

**Beatrice** Yes, but brother Rafael, or how did you call your friend, would not see anybody entering.

**Leonardo** He doesn't know these two cells are linked.

**Beatrice** Right, let me go tell him quickly ... *heads for the first wing, stage left*

**Leonardo** No, I'll go, stay with your sister. *he exits through the first wing stage left*  
*Beatrice takes the second chair next to Camilla's bed.*  
*Leonardo returns and takes the chair he was previously also sitting on*  
We are alone now. Talk to me, sister Beatrice. I don't know how much time Mother Anna will allow us.

**Beatrice** Yes, she will find an excuse soon enough to just burst through that door.

**Leonardo** So, why did you want to talk to me? You did come back to talk to me, no?

**Beatrice** Yes, well ... I thought you were the Papal envoy and that you could help?

**Leonardo** Rest assured, as veritable as my name is Leonardo da Vinci, I will try to help you.

**Beatrice** Are you that Leonardo! Oh signore, than you can surely help my sick sister and me here!

**Leonardo** But I need to have all the information I can get, do you understand?

**Beatrice** Yes, I do. I know that Mother Anna has told you that Camilla had indecent meetings with one of the pilgrims. But that can simply not be true, Leonardo!

**Leonardo** Why not, you are both young.

**Beatrice** Camilla chose to live in a cloister, far away from men, Leonardo.

**Leonardo** I don't understand, Beatrice.

**Beatrice** Camilla never had any interest for the opposite sex.

**Leonardo** For the same sex then?

**Beatrice** Oh no !!! Not Camilla! I perhaps *blushes ... gathers her senses* but not Camilla, never Camilla!

**Leonardo** A real bride of Christ then ...

**Beatrice** A bride of science and knowledge, Leonardo.  
My sister is a scholar. She loves books, all kinds of books.

**Leonardo** A kindred soul to mine ...

**Beatrice** The pilgrims had knowledge. Knowledge that was new to my sister, Leonardo.

**Leonardo** What kind of knowledge?

**Beatrice** I don't know. Camilla told me they had left her a book, a precious book that she hid in her cell.

**Leonardo** Where?

**Beatrice** I don't know, I tried to look for it, but Mother Anna is everywhere ...  
Sometimes this place is like a prison.

**Leonardo** Only sometimes?

**Beatrice** There is also much joy in the life of a cloistered sister, Leonardo.

**Leonardo** If you say so.

**Beatrice** Mother Anna told you my sister fell ill just a few months after the brothers had left back for Milan?

**Leonardo** Yes, she did, she made a compelling case for ... abortion ...?

**Beatrice** No. Camilla had no child to get rid of ... For one there has not been excessive bleeding, you know what I mean, don't you? An abortion would have brought that on, and I would have noticed it, being Camilla's caretaker. No, her illness must be something else.  
I do agree with Mother Anna on this though; Camilla's illness is linked somehow to the pilgrims' visit here. I don't know how, but I just feel it. And I pray to God that I may find out what it is so that I can save my sister.

**Leonardo** Save Camilla?

**Beatrice** She is dying, Leonardo. Slowly ... but inevitably, she just gets worse every day.  
I don't know how long she still has ...

**Leonardo** I think I need to visit Milan, but I'll be back. I will get to the bottom of this, Beatrice.  
For Camilla's sake, for your sake, but also for your mother's sake and for Mona Lisa who is a good friend of mine.

**Beatrice** Thank you, Leonardo.

**Guido** *off stage* Mother Anna, I cannot let you enter, Monsignor ... (ordered me to keep guard ) ...



**Mother Anna** *interrupting him* I am Mother superior here, I will not be denied entrance into the cell of one of the sisters in my care by an insolent young brother as you, brother Rafael!

**Guido** But Mother, monsignor was explicit.

**Mother Anna** I will be explicit in a second, let me pass !!!

**Leonardo** *to Beatrice* Quickly, go now!  
*Beatrice exits through the second wing stage left the moment Mother Anna enters through the first wing stage left. Leonardo fakes being in deep prayer beside Camilla's bed*

**Mother Anna** Oh, forgive me monsignor?!

**Leonardo** It is nothing. *Crosses himself* I was just finishing praying the Rosary for sister Camilla. There is nothing more we can do than pray to God, is there?

**Mother Anna** No, there is not monsignor, forgive me for doubting you.

**Leonardo** No matter, I will go back to Rome and report to the Pope that you are doing everything you can to heal sister Camilla and that if it should be Gods wish to call her to him that she will be supported by all the sacraments and the constant prayers.

**Mother Anna** Thank you, Monsignor. Let me show you and brother Rafael to the kitchens so you can eat something before retaking the road.

**Leonardo** Thank you, Mother Anna, we would be most grateful.  
*exeunt first wing stage left*

**Gauze up**

## Act1 Scene 9

L+G+A+Carolina+ bar patrons

### At the tavern (full stage)

Trestle tables, extra's drinking and eating.

musical :

A dance portrays the liveliness of the tavern with plenty of booze and food

The table stage front seats Leonardo, Antonio, Carolina and Guido.

Carolina is serving the customers.

**Antonio** So, there is a mystery at hand anyway?

**Leonardo** I believe so, Antonio. And I have no clue where to start looking.

**Carolina** What about Milan?

**Leonardo** Milan?

**Carolina** Yes, Antonio, don't you remember that merchant that dined here a few nights ago?

**Antonio** Yes, I do, what about him, Carolina?

**Carolina** Judas.

**Guido** Why do you call your lover Judas now?

**Antonio** No, she doesn't call me Judas, it's the book she calls Judas.

**Leonardo** What book?

**Antonio** Signore, what was his name, Carolina? That merchant from Milan?

**Carolina** Signor d'Este.

**Antonio** Yes, signor d'Este he called himself. Anyway, he got quite drunk after dinner

**Carolina** No wonder, he had 5 pitchers of wine all by himself.

**Leonardo** Even you would be drunk after 5 pitchers, wouldn't you Guido? But, serious now, what did he say or do, this signor d'Este that could be of importance to us?

**Antonio** He made up a whole story about a book, an ancient book I might add.

**Carolina** A gospel book, older than any of the gospels we know from the Bible. Written by Judas himself!

**Leonardo** A book written by Judas? Judas Iscariot? The man that betrayed Christ San Domenico di Cafaggio?

**Antonio** Well that is what he kept on saying. He said this book is older than any of the gospels In the Bible itself, written in part while Our Lord was still alive and well!

**Leonardo** Interesting.

**Carolina** Some Monastery in Milan had the book.

**Antonio** But it has been stolen!

**Leonardo** Stolen? You say?

**Antonio** Yes, some monastery of brothers, scribes that copy books, had the Gospel by Judas to get it copied. But the ancient manuscript got stolen.

**Leonardo** The plot thickens, Guido, we're going to Milan!

**Guido** Why? I don't feel like leaving Florence again.

**Leonardo** Don't you see the connection? Oh, of course not, you didn't see sister Beatrice's eyes, did you? Sister Beatrice had a kind of honesty in her eyes that made me believe every word she said, and she told me that Camilla is a scholar. She is a lover of knowledge and books.

She even said that Camilla had recently come into possession of a sacred book and that shortly after that she became ill, very ill.

**Guido** What about the baby then?

**Leonardo** Oh no Guido, Beatrice claims there never was a baby, nor an abortion. And she had sufficient reason to argue that she should have noticed, being sister Camilla's real sister and primary caregiver.

**Guido** I'm not with you, Leonardo.

**Leonardo** Beatrice talked about a book, she has never seen it because Camilla had hidden it in her cell, but then Camilla fell ill. Beatrice looked for a book in her sister's room, but besides the usual prayer books could not find anything. I think the book in question might well be the same book missing from the monastery in Milan. So I am going to Milan to continue my investigations.

**Guido** And what about Mona Lisa? Will she not be worried if you do not first go and tell her what you learned concerning Camilla?

**Leonardo** Since you do not want to join me in Milan, Guido. You go visit Mona Lisa on my behalf and tell her everything. But also ask her to keep the knowledge to herself! At least for now, making it all public too soon would not help her sister anyway.

**Carolina** Shall I go with you to Milan, Leonardo? One of my father's brothers is a priest there, he could provide lodging for us.

**Antonio** Than I am coming with you! No way I am letting you travel with my girl alone!

**Leonardo** Ah, why not? Pack your things, we leave in the morning.

**musical :**

**A dance portrays the liveliness of the tavern with plenty of booze and food, reprise**

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INTERVAL

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