

Michelangelo's Slave

by

Atar Hadari

atarhadari@yahoo.co.uk

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CHARACTERS

MICHELANGELO	50s, the worse for wear
DAVID	Teens to 20, a wonder to behold. also plays
BOY	a memory of the younger DAVID
LANDLADY	A crone. Speaks like Chico Marx.
PRIEST	Ageing fast.
COP 1	Among a sky of stars not quite the very brightest.
COP 2	Among a sky of stars a little brighter.
PORNOGRAPHER	Not an innocent. (May also play POPE.)
MENDICANT	Ageing friar. (Played by a cop.)
CARDINALS 1, 2, and 3	A gaggle of geese. (COPS and POPE.)
POPE	Not an innocent either.

Scene 1.

(Michelangelo's chamber. The stage is dark.)

(There is a knocking at the door.)

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

(Pause) (There is some stirring.)

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

COP 1 (off)

Seignior Michelangelo di Buonarotte! Open up!

(There is more stirring.)

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

(A match is struck. Light is made in a bed-side lamp. Michelangelo's bed, small, stark. A shadowed room. Dark slippers on the floor. A man sits up in bed, puts his feet to the floor, puts on slippers.)

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

COP 1

Michelangelo! We haven't got all night!

You want the bugger caught or not?!

(The figure moans, shakes head, rises to the door and goes upstage. A door, marked by cracks of light. The door opens, light silhouettes the painter.)

COP 1

Michelangelo. Tomasso, Giuseppe, di Buonarotte?

MICHELANGELO

What time is it?

COP 1

Are you the party?

MICHELANGELO

Yes, yes. You have the time?

I nodded off- I don't know how long.

They don't call the hour every hour on this street.

COP 1
It's two.

COP 2
Nearly four, sir.

COP 1
The last bell got rung in the Vatican's two!
You the Pope's painter?

MICHELANGELO (walking away, in)
Come in, come in.

COP 2
Thank you very much sir.

COP 1
You're the painter?

MICHELANGELO
I work in stone mostly. This year.

COP 1
You painted the naked pictures in the Abbey?

MICHELANGELO (Pause)
Naked?

COP 1
Women. Bending. All over.
Men with leaves on their crotches.

MICHELANGELO
Sounds like something I might take a crack at.
I do so many Abbeys. D'you want a cordial? (walking away)

COP 1
What?

COP 2
Yes please sir.

MICHELANGELO
A cordial. Anisette. I can't think past eight at night
without one. After twelve I can't think with or without.
I keep some in a bottle I lower on a string into the well

at the middle of the house. It's cool.

COP 2

Yes please sir.

COP 1

Alright.

MICHELANGELO

Very good.

(exits)

(They look around. COP 1 looks for drawers, finds one, opens it.)

COP 1

Filth, probably.

(Pause)

COP 2

And?

COP 1

Wax.

He lets wax candles burn to the wood in these drawer bottoms.
It's outrageous.

(MICHELANGELO returns with wine-skin and little cups. COP 1 slams
drawer shut, SLAM.)

MICHELANGELO

Ooh!

COP 2

Are you alright?

MICHELANGELO

I can't stand undiluted noise at this hour.
Open whatever drawer you want
-just don't slam them. Take a seat. Here's the cups.
Only clay I'm afraid- the porcelain's all broken.

COP 2

Not to worry, not to worry.

COP 1

This cordial legal?

COP 2

Of course it's legal. Article 127 new Greater Rome Penal Directives:

Anisette and other fruit cordials-

COP 1

I wasn't asking you!

MICHELANGELO

(drinks a cup, wipes mouth, sighs)

The Pope gave it to me.

COP 1

Ha-hum.

COP 2 (accepting cup)

Thank you very much.

(MICHELANGELO pours three cups.)

MICHELANGELO

Your health.

COP 1 & COP 2

The Church!

MICHELANGELO

St.Peter's!

COP 1 & COP 2

St. Peter's!

(They drink.)

COP 1

The..suspect has been sighted-

MICHELANGELO

Suspect?

COP 1

My sergeant informed me you had lodged-

MICHELANGELO

A complaint of a missing person-
a missing person report.

COP 2 (helping)

A runaway slave.

MICHELANGELO

Well- yes.

COP 1

The suspect. Sections 1 to 57 of the Official Penal Code, volume eleven, clearly delineate numerous counts of felony involved in the unwarranted absence of slave personnel. Without owner's leave. The suspect was sighted in the lower city, by several officers.

MICHELANGELO

Why didn't they catch him?

COP 1

We are not a dog-catching service.

COP 2

He was too fast for him.

MICHELANGELO

Ah. Another?

COP 2

Thank you.

COP 1

No.

COP 2

No. No, thank you.

MICHELANGELO

Very well.

(pours for himself)

I don't think without less than four of these after midnight. One an hour. If it's nearly four I need- one more after this. To think.

(COP 1 & COP 2 looks at each other.)

COP 2

We just came to - keep you informed -
of the - unfolding situation.
And any direct leads you may have

of possible locations in the lower city?

MICHELANGELO (pours another drink)

Brothels, pimps, hostelryes-
 usurers' habitations, amusement arcades,
 whores' closets, bordellos, distilleries- (no probably not),
 knocking shops, casinos, dice-sharks' parlours,
 houses of ill-repute, dens of women of the night,
 iniquitous boarding houses, prostitutes' front door-ways, whores'
 divans.

COP 2

Would he be hiring women or men sir?

MICHELANGELO

Women.

COP 1

Why not distilleries?

MICHELANGELO

He doesn't drink. (burp) He goes with whores.

COP 2

Right. The lower city. Fleeter street.
 Quite appropriate. Hee hee.

COP 1

The Pope- his royal holiness-
 requested my supervisor to enquire-

MICHELANGELO

The statue isn't finished.

COP 2

You're doing a statue for the Pope?

MICHELANGELO (sweeping them out)

Run faster. This way out again.
 It will be light. He'll be going from one whore's bed
 to some money-lender's.

COP 2

Who's the statue of? Luigi, right?
 Pope Boniface III- it's gotta be!
 On horseback, right? The Germanic campaign!

MICHELANGELO

I don't do contemporary subjects.
I'm a portraitist.

COP 2

This is stone! It's a popular medium!
Anyone can see it!

MICHELANGELO

I don't do prelates.

COP 2

A general, right? Right? A general?
Someone from Rome's classic history.
Romulus. Aeneas. Paul the Apostle.

MICHELANGELO

Mind the top step. It's treacherous.

COP 2 (through closing door)

Give us a clue. It's a woman, isn't it? Another dirty statue. Who?
Bathsheba in the bath? Eve with the snake?
His holiness is paying for it- it must be juicy, right?
She got big knockers?

MICHELANGELO

It's David.

COP 2

Who?

We never had a general called David.

MICHELANGELO

Try the whores on the river front wharf first.

COP 1

We'll get back to you about the cordial.

(SLAM, door slams.)

(MICHELANGELO shuffles back,

SHUFFLE SHUFFLE SHUFFLE

SHUFFLE SHUFFLE SHUFFLE

in slippers, to bed. He goes to bed. Blows out light. The daylight
through the chinked window lights his face.)

MICHELANGELO

David. The thief.

(Blackout.)

Scene 2.

(The Dolce bar. A doorway. Colored beads on strings. Light emits and samba music rips the quiet of the alley where DAVID waits. He is muscular, blond, tall, good-looking. He holds his neck as if it's sore, his wrist is bent. His pose suggests the David. He wears dazzle shorts and little else. The music falters, changes tempo. Fra Lippo, a fat MENDICANT, exits the bar, somewhat un-sober in his bearing.)

MENDICANT

Out my fucking way.

DAVID (tugging forelock)

Beg pardon sir.

MENDICANT

What is it? What is it? Ver- bizzy man!

DAVID

Begging your pardon sir- if I might have a message delivered from your worship's college- the Duke of Messina-

MENDICANT

Messina! Nev- heard of him.

DAVID

He goes by the name of Fra Loppo.

MENDICANT

Loppo! You making fun of the holy Roman Pontiff's own corps of hand anointed Church Mendicants!? Lippi's my name. Fra Lippi- and anymore lip out of your game-

(DAVID clocks him one, MENDICANT falls forward, DAVID catches him, lays him to wall - his bald head falls uncovered from the hood.)

DAVID

(knocks on head) Like I said- mess in 'ere!

(cuts purse strings & lifts)

Fat fool. Hmm. Now I think of it. Mendicant.

Maybe you'll serve someone's soul after all. You're about my size.

(DAVID drags MENDICANT off by the feet and the hem of his cassock rides up, revealing hairy legs, boxer shorts.)

DAVID

I was wasted as a stable boy. Wasted.
 An artist's model. Waste. I should've been
 a holy man. I've got the legs.
 If this old dog gets birds- think what I'll get!!
 (exeunt DAVID and MENDICANT.)

Scene 3.

(Lights slowly change to the sleeping room. MICHELANGELO's face in
 the bars of the light. The sound of a tin bowl being banged with a
 wooden spoon reverberates.)

MICHELANGELO (turns)

Madonna. Why me?

LANDLADY (off)

Madonna, Sophia Loren, Hibachi, Ragu, Maradona.. (curses in
 Italian)

MICHELANGELO

God god god.

LANDLADY (enters)

Maradonna- Putana- filthy hound of a dirty old diseased rat of a
 woman- she thinks-

MICHELANGELO

Old WHORE- how many times must I tell you-

LANDLADY

She thinks she can hang her washing on the line in front of my
 house like some ORDINARY woman's household-

MICHELANGELO (without hope)

It's not your household.

LANDLADY

Hanging out her whites and little frilly things as if this were a
 whores' neighborhood. When she KNOWS- the whores live down the
 street. TWO blocks.

MICHELANGELO

Mrs. Olvet.

LANDLADY

And I say- I say to her- Mrs. Domani- I have nothing to say
 only don't hang the short short short outside. The petticoats.
 The little little frilly things. You know how short?

MICHELANGELO

How short?

LANDLADY

To here.

(indicates mid-shin)

It's scandalous. I was a girl you showed the big bone on your foot in the public square it was virtual provocation for a man to rape you - let alone show what you wear over your- Santa de Dio- on the wet line. Hoo-hoo! And you Signor- painting the naked kitchen boys. It isn't good.

MICHELANGELO

He's gone Mrs. Olvet. I sculpt.

LANDLADY

It's very bad for the neighborhood.
He gone, is good. What about you?
You up. Is time to wash the dirty.
Sheets. Your trouser pants. Your pillows.
What you got hang in the studio.

MICHELANGELO

Nothing goes out of the studio.
Take the clothes out of the corner.

LANDLADY

You got wash the draperies atop a you things.
Mister Michelangelo- you don't wash, things got to get dirty-
other painters I do for it don't matter-
they paint horses, houses, trees- it's a nice-
you- your paintings get any dirtier- mamma mia-
the Pope, he make you burna you brushes.

MICHELANGELO

The Pope orders the painting Mrs. Olvet.
No painting without the Pope. No rain without sun.
No paint without money. No art without Popes.
You get paid next month.

LANDLADY

This month you owe already. Three weeks.
What's with you Mr. Michelangelo- you don't look well.

MICHELANGELO

I haven't been sleeping.

LANDLADY

Really. That's terrible.
I give you my doctor's address. He very excellent medicine doctor.

MICHELANGELO

What time is it?

LANDLADY

Seven. Six thirty. Whatsamatter? The sun she rose. Hours ago. Now-
like a chicken- half-way across the yard- she goes puck puck puck.
And I need my money if I'ma going to buy eggs.

MICHELANGELO

That's lovely Mrs. Olvet. Very lyrical, but..there's no money.
Not since the kitchen boy left. I've incurred a loss.

LANDLADY

He STOLE - from YOU??

MICHELANGELO (sits up slowly)

No no no no. He didn't steal-
I didn't receive a commission end-payment I was expecting.
Last thing.

LANDLADY

So you don't have the rent.

MICHELANGELO

No.

LANDLADY

Not till-

MICHELANGELO

Not till- I don't know.

(Pause)

LANDLADY

You know- thisa like.. you fadah-
'at time you told me he got all you got
cos you gotta go a buy him orchards-

MICHELANGELO

Vineyards.

LANDLADY

I give a damn. He can choke for all I care. Orchards.
Ev'y time you make a piece of gold. 'At's right?

MICHELANGELO

Yes.

LANDLADY

You got no money cos
all o'you money- vine, an' fruit-tree
an' bee-hive for you fadah.

MICHELANGELO

Yuh.

LANDLADY

So is how you live here in this small but beautifully kept
apartment on this here beautiful part of a once great block
now a little bit-a-run-down?

MICHELANGELO

Yeah.

LANDLADY

All o' you money. She go to Poppa.

MICHELANGELO

Uh-huh.

LANDLADY

Outta Pope's pocket innada Poppa's.

MICHELANGELO

Yup.

LANDLADY (grabs him)

Wella listen heah- Mistah da Sculpture-
you get Poppa da sell one a da stinkin' bees-
you make Poppa da sell one a da stinkin' vines
an' you make Poppa da give you fifty crowns
so you can put money on my table so I can eat!

MICHELANGELO

You own the whole building!

LANDLADY

I got alot I wanna eat!
One studio rent is no good! You think I a ant?
No- I need food.

MICHELANGELO

 Alright.
I can't do that Mrs. Olvet.

LANDLADY

Why not? Uh?

MICHELANGELO (turning away)

I was to turn the completed commission in
to the College of Cardinals last Friday
I would've got the end payment but.. it didn't work.

LANDLADY

What- didn't work?

MICHELANGELO

The hands.

LANDLADY

The hands? Your hands shake? Mr. Michelangelo you gotta sleep.
I go to the doctor myself, get you good strong milk.
Made from bat droppings. Good for the brains.
My Luigi- it worked for like charm. God rest his poor soul.

MICHELANGELO

No, thank you Mrs. Olvet. Thank you
indeed for the offer. My hands are fine. My hands are..perfect.
It's not my hands are the problem.

LANDLADY

Whose hand is it?

MICHELANGELO

I-

LANDLADY

 You got art trouble?

MICHELANGELO

Yes Mrs. Olvet I have. I've got art trouble.
Would you go away and let me sleep.

LANDLADY

You don't got two hands all good on a painting- you wanna get the
painting model back but the stupid whore got herself pregnant an'
her fingers all got bigger?

MICHELANGELO

No.

LANDLADY

I give up. Wha-happen? What's your problem?

MICHELANGELO

I - why am I talking to you? Leave!

LANDLADY

You owe money Mr. M - I can't leave you dying here a sick man.

LANDLADY

I'm not sick- I don't have a two handed buffoon of a boy for a model - alright? The boy burnt his hands catching a plate falling from the oven. He scalded his hands and they're all swollen. Bandaged. Bare bone hanging out of wet skin. I can't sculpt him. That's it.

LANDLADY

Mr. M - please- I didn't mean to bother you. You don't got a oven inside your kitchen. Your place got a open fire.

(Pause)

MICHELANGELO

I'm sorry Mrs. Olvet.

LANDLADY

I'm sorry Mr. Michelangelo. I let you sleep.

(She gets clothes, goes to the door.)

Your rent due on Thursday in a week.

MICHELANGELO

I know Mrs. Olvet.

LANDLADY

Goodnight Mr. Michelangelo.

MICHELANGELO

Good morning.

(She exits.)

His hands are burnt. But not in bandages.

(He rises and looks out of the window.)

Scene 4.

(The street. A procession of monks passes, chanting. One monk lurks, in the costume of the Mendicant in earlier scene, around a

corner hiding from the passing procession. He plays with the rosary like worry-beads - tossing the cross up in the air and catching it; letting go, it dangles off his wrist. He scratches his butt through the cassock and peeks round the corner again. Finally he pulls his hood back, unable to see with it on. It is DAVID. The monks exit.)

DAVID

Blimey. Almost press-ganged into another kitchen there. Oughta watch myself. I'll make a life-time of honest toil- no good can come of that. (to rosary)
Come on love-beads. Let's see if you can't bring me money somehow before sunset comes so I don't have to beg room at the brothel. Come on, little darlings, come on.

(He runs to another corner.)

The Monks pass again. They walk past a stage area which lights up to reveal a tableau of a priest in a confessional. Monks exit. DAVID pulls his hood up, follows them to near the tableau, opens a door, church music blares out. He shuts the door, noise dies.)

DAVID

Why not follow? It's Church.
Itchy outfit but what the f-
(Music drowns him out as he opens door and sneaks in.)
Crikey.

(He looks up. Awe.)

Crumbs. That's...God.
And doesn't he have a lot of angels.
(Enter PRIEST, in monk's cloak.)

PRIEST

Friar Benedict.

DAVID

What? I mean- yes, my son.

PRIEST

Benedict?

DAVID

Yes. Novim epidibum. Dominem.

PRIEST

What are you doing?

DAVID

Praying.

PRIEST

You're in the wrong end of the Church.

DAVID

Ah..well. I was just..warming up.

(Pause)

PRIEST

A-ha! Very good, very good. (laughs) Always the card Benedict, you rogue. Ahem, sorry. Brother.

DAVID

Don't worry about it. Brother. Who did this- I mean
- did the holy father choose the painter of this place himself?

PRIEST

What place?

DAVID

This-

PRIEST

The arches? That hack from Florence did them. And the rest.

DAVID

Oh.

PRIEST

Why?

DAVID

His holiness..

PRIEST

Same man does all the Pope's ceilings these days
haven't you seen? You can tell his style! Naked women, men-
it costs more to have painters come in
and paint underwear onto the figures he drew
than it can have cost to have him draw the little-
(mimes with finger)

on the men angels in the first place.
I don't know. Doesn't seem economical to me.
Still. Nice wings. Eh? Your confessional on the left.

DAVID

Eh?

PRIEST

Yours. The left today.
 That's what I came over to tell you.
 Come on. Get a move on. We're falling behind.
 The line of supplicants is virtually out to the holy water basin.
 (PRIEST moves to go.)

DAVID (looks up)
 God.

PRIEST (comes back)
 Come on then. Sin's waiting.

(DAVID crosses himself, follows PRIEST off. Chant rises.)

Scene 5.
 (Cop 1 is in the street outside Church. Enter PORNOGRAPHER.)

PORNOGRAPHER
 Get your books here! Lots of books here!
 Only sixteen sestersis each!
 All your favorite meditations and prayers!

COP 1 (troubled)
 Holy father, what have I done?
 How can I enter your house?

PORNOGRAPHER
Exquisite books. Only the best.
 Only the most select of tales.
 Every woman's fancy, every gentleman's dream.
 Only the best of the Bible. Peaches and cream.
 God to make you-

COP 1
 What is it?
 Can't you see people are coming here for quiet worship?

PORNOGRAPHER
 Your pardon officer, I think you'll find
 I and a number of my fellow citizens
 come here to buy the latest literature,
 engage in biblical.. knowledge.

COP 1
 You what?

PORNOGRAPHER
 I have the very best.

Latest on Samson and Delilah money can buy-
Michelangelo himself couldn't draw better-

COP 1

Really.

PORNOGRAPHER

Don't take my word for it. Really.
Come see for yourself. Delilah.
The exegeses on her alone are- ooh-
eight sestersis each I should think.
Look at the exegeses on that!

COP 1

Look- you haven't got a license have you?
Did his holiness permit you by holy writ
to sell the Lord's word in the street?

PORNOGRAPHER

Who said anything about word?
We're selling an interpretation here-
I happen to have five- six- of the best- the very best
biblical scholars working for me- my Eve is known
all over the lower quarter- my serpent's been
subjected to the strictest tests-
people pay damn good money for this
sort of insight into the great
feminine mysteries of the Gospel.
Next month's printing of Mary Magdalene will probably sell out.

COP 1

How much?

PORNOGRAPHER

For you officer? Ten big ones.
(COP 1 counts out coins.)
Here's a preview copy I give only to critics.
As you are a gentlemen of only the selectest tastes
I give it to you at this pre-release date
with- extra on the inside back cover-
special reviewer's edition preview
of the Salome story. Can I put you down for a copy?

COP 1

Oh God oh God oh God
what have I done?
I hate myself! I have to go confess.
(drops book, rushes off)

PORNOGRAPHER

Tch.

(bends to pick up book)

(COP 1 re-enters, comes to PORNOGRAPHER, takes book)

COP 1

I have to cleanse my soul.

PORNOGRAPHER

Amen.

(COP 1 exits.)

Select books. Only the most select...

(PORNOGRAPHER exits.)

Scene 6.

(MICHELANGELO by a statue which is obscured by a canopy; he sits to one side of it drinking. His studio, a vast untidy space. There is a goat in the corner.)

MICHELANGELO

Here goat goat goat. Here goat goat.
I've got some barley for you.

(BOY emerges from the shadows and remains there, above MICHELANGELO's head, a memory.)

BOY

Goats eat leaves, not barley.

MICHELANGELO

Goats eat anything, that's what makes them goats not sheep. Goats eat garbage. I've seen it with my own eyes. This one. Eating faeces. Off the drain outside. Here goat goat, eat barley. (to BOY) How did you get in here?

BOY

The skylight's open. As usual.

MICHELANGELO

I was out on the roof. Looking at the stars.

BOY

You remember the one you told me was up there- with his belt and arrow?

Orion.
MICHELANGELO

BOY
Rion- that was his name.
I bet an old man two coins I could name him.

MICHELANGELO
Did you?

BOY
I've got two coins.

MICHELANGELO
Did you say Rion?

BOY
I can't remember what I said.
It was this morning.

MICHELANGELO
If you said Rion it's not the same thing.

BOY
I said what I remembered.

MICHELANGELO
It's not the same.

BOY
Wanna see the coin?

MICHELANGELO
No.

BOY
You're jealous.

MICHELANGELO
Yes! A little gutter-mouth
mis-names stars and makes a fair living at it.
Yes I'm eaten hollow with envy at the thought.
What will you rise to next- mis-spelling saints' names?

BOY
I don't go school. What's it to you?

MICHELANGELO

ORION. I told you.

BOY

Alright.

MICHELANGELO

It's a thing. A thing is a thing.
 It's not just something. It's a thing.
 If you mistake in describing
 it's not the thing it's lying.
 You have lied in the face of God
 who made the thing and gave you eyes
 and gave you tongue and sent the fool
 to ask you to put your tongue to your teeth,
 your eye to the thing, your eye to your tongue,
 your tongue to the thing
 to describe the thing in all its glory-
 for you, the fool and the thing
 all to be his glory. You have two coins. And a dirty mouth.
 Here goat, eat barley.

BOY

I'm going.

MICHELANGELO

You don't describe precisely you're making something
 else, something bad, something is dirty when you're wrong.
 When you don't tell the truth- don't get it right- describe-

BOY

You burnt his hands?

MICHELANGELO

Who?

BOY

The cook. The kitchen-boy.

MICHELANGELO

I don't remember.

BOY

Eat barley. You and your goat at the drain, eat barley.

(BOY leaps off stage.)

MICHELANGELO

He may not have burnt them. (drinks) I wasn't looking. It was dark.

(Enter COP 2)

COP 2

Michelangelo- we have to talk.

MICHELANGELO

How'd you get in?

COP 2

Your landlady let us on the roof.

MICHELANGELO

You and your friend?

COP 2

No. My superior officer could not make it this time. (He did ask me to proffer to you his warmest regards. He hopes we can all get together again real soon.) Where is the marble you have left?

MICHELANGELO

The-

COP 2

Yes, the Papal Commission.

MICHELANGELO

Not far.

COP 2

I need to see it. The Papal Nuncio was clear. Verify work progressing. Positive attitude. Sufficient supplies. An adequate sense of managerial input. No other impediment. The only thing- my partner doesn't know this- there might be a change in the commission. (Pause) Mr. Michelange-

MICHELANGELO

I heard.

COP 2

And?

MICHELANGELO

No. No no no no.

COP 2

Well- Mr. Michelangelo- I am your greatest fan,
indeed the depth of my response to your work goes so far
that I would say I am your only fan
in the Vatican as of this morning
when your deadline for delivery was near seven days expired.

MICHELANGELO

Ah well.

COP 2

They wanted to replace you. "Bring the stone," they said.
"We can get another sculptor to cut it.
He did the rough cut? We'll pay him, he's a good Joe-
get a polish man. Who's good? Ginarelli- I hear he's good."

MICHELANGELO

That butcher?! You'd let that rock-breaker touch my material,
you-

COP 2

I dissuaded them. I was sincere,
I was penitent (on your behalf),
I said "technical" - that always works-
"technical difficulties burdened the project"-
I said "the crew ran into difficulties on location."

MICHELANGELO

What crew? What location?

COP 2

I told them they couldn't get the rock in the door.

MICHELANGELO

It's marble, thank you, my biggest fan.

COP 2

Whatever. They bought it. You're still on the statue.

MICHELANGELO

Gosh.

COP 2

And you can change the theme.

MICHELANGELO

Really.

(Pause) "Delilah."

COP 2

(Pause) I'm sorry?

MICHELANGELO

"Delilah."

COP 2 (with outspread arms)

Get out.

MICHELANGELO

Just consider it.

COP 2

Do you have any-? -get out.

MICHELANGELO

COP 2

Look, come seven days- they come to take it away.
All the stone in here. That's to cover the bond
for the non-completion. If you've a statue of David-
that's wonderful. If it's a woman with (mimes) biblical dimensions
they'll buy that too. They'll love it.
Trust me. I know these people. I was a choirboy.
No, really. You think I could get this job on looks?
What's to finish anyway, one hand?

MICHELANGELO (looks up at him)

Two.

COP 2

Use my hands.

MICHELANGELO

No.

COP 2

Use another slave.

MICHELANGELO

I only have one slave.

COP 2

What's with you anyway? I heard you were engaged to be married

but..

MICHELANGELO

One slave is very much like another.
 I don't form attachments. I probably couldn't pick him out
 if I saw him in a line up on the pier
 or in the marketplace at dawn.
 All the boys walk the street at dawn.
 You can see them if you go out.
 Between the rotting fruit and the scavengers,
 the oranges, the old women- boys
 left roaming alone in the bruising light
 if they haven't found somebody special
 to pay them to be their Daddy that night.
 It's a marvelous sight. I must paint it sometime.
 Slaves all look sort of the same to me.
 I don't know what it is.

COP 2

I understand.

MICHELANGELO

His hands I'd recognize anywhere.

COP 2

What?

MICHELANGELO

I can't do without his hands.

COP 2

My friend went to seek him in the lower city. Maybe he'll find him.
 Could you- sculpt from memory- the outline?

MICHELANGELO

I need his hands.

BOY (re-appears in shadows)

What do you mean?

MICHELANGELO

He doesn't have hands like anyone.
 His hands are-

BOY

-bandages.

(BOY exits.)

COP 2

I'm sorry?

MICHELANGELO

I'm thinking aloud. I must ask
the housekeeper to start the fire.
It's late and I must bathe. You'll come tomorrow for food?

COP 2

Elevenes?

MICHELANGELO

Certainly. Bring olives.

COP 2

Tomorrow then.

MICHELANGELO

Yes.

(COP 2 exits.)

(Holds his face.)

Bandages. I must do something.

(MICHELANGELO goes upstage behind the statue.)

LANDLADY (enters)

Mr. Michelangelo- your water is ready. It's hot downstairs.

(MICHELANGELO reappears. He is wrapping his hands in bandages, which trail off behind him into the statue's shadow. His hands are massed in a knot of bandages he's carrying against his belly; their ends trail into the darkness.)

MICHELANGELO

I'll be there in a minute. I'm just finishing up something.

LANDLADY

You cut yourself?

MICHELANGELO

No, I'm..modelling.

LANDLADY

Plaster of Paris? Is for children, no?

MICHELANGELO

I.. hurt my hands.

LANDLADY

Touching the oven? (Pause)
I thought you said he burned his hands, not you.

MICHELANGELO

Does it matter?

LANDLADY

Your bath water's ready.

(exits)

MICHELANGELO

David. Your company.
(He wraps his hands.)
Maybe I'll never touch a stone again.

Scene 7. (The vestibule of the Cathedral. Two confessionals. DAVID,
in cloak, enters followed by PRIEST.)

PRIEST

This alright then?

DAVID

Oh yes.

PRIEST

This one sticks a bit today. I blame it on the rain. Partition
puffs up. Slows down the old to and fro. Never mind, eh? You'll
manage?

DAVID

Never mind..Brother.

PRIEST

Good, good. And- take it easy today. Not like your usual.
The Holy Father says- Thursday- low heat.
Friday- medium broil. They come on Monday- hell-fire!
Keeps them on their toes and believing.

DAVID

Or regulars.

PRIEST

That too. See you at closing time.

DAVID

Sure...Reverend.

PRIEST

Ha ha ha ha. You kidder.

(Slaps DAVID's arm hard, DAVID clutches it; PRIEST slips in booth.)

DAVID

Blimey- what a gig! No silverware.
Pity. Bet the women go for this, eh!

(DAVID slips in other booth.)

(COP 1 enters and goes in confessional of DAVID's booth.)
(Pause)

COP 1

Forgive me father. I'd like to make a confession.
I have not made confession in seven days.

DAVID

What took you so long? Seven days
you waited- and now look what happened!
You're stuck and miserable- I can tell by your face!

COP 1

Oh, I'm sorry- would you like help moving the partition father?

DAVID

If you would.

COP 1

Certainly.

(They struggle with the wooden grille.)

There. We have it.

DAVID

Very good. Very good. One, two, ten fewer hail-Marys for that
brother-

COP 1

I'm sorry- I'd rather stay
within the prescribed regulations for punishment.
Father. You haven't heard what I've done yet-
forgive me father!

DAVID

Well- make it good. Spit it out. Haven't got all day.
Other sinners have got souls to save.
This isn't an all day session!

COP 1

Forgive me father. I was trying to think
where to begin.

DAVID

When did you first conceive
unGodly and indecent thoughts about your mother?

COP 1

I beg your pardon! Father, my mother is a saint!

DAVID

Aha! So you did resent me sleeping with her didn't you?!!
Even if I got you in her- hah! Now it all comes out!
This is so classic- why are you wasting my time with this text book
stuff? Any kid with collar and cassock out of missionary school
could handle this stuff- give me a challenge, I want sin- something
to sink my teeth into.

COP 1

Holy father- I have prevented
a man from going about God's work.

DAVID (picking his nails)

Oh really?

COP 1

Yes. I am in torment.

DAVID (opens booth to reveal giant
chart on inside of door)

Let's see. Where are we? Thursday Thursday. Monday. No. THURSDAY.
(reads) Two Hail-Marys. Your session's up.

COP 1

No- you don't understand! I stopped a man of God from doing God's
work! I stopped him- we failed to find-

DAVID

Well- he shouldn't have let himself be stopped should he.
Sentence stands. Next sin please.

COP 1

No- he was not a man who LET himself be- your reverence
- he is not a man of the cloth-

DAVID

What do you mean by that? I take exception to that!
I'll have you know I work ninety two hours a week!
And that's just Sunday!

COP 1

He's not a priest, your reverence,
he's an artisan.

DAVID

An artisan?

COP 1

Makes things.

DAVID

Yes yes yes yes. Don't patronize the Church, sinner.
Or you'll burn in hell for longer than an eagle takes to move
the alps one atom at a time- from Switzerland to Mesopotamia!

COP 1 (cowering)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

DAVID (aside)

God- this cassock really gives you something.
Good thing I didn't knock off a Cardinal.
God only knows what I'd be spouting!
(to COP 1) Who is this maker anyway?
What does he make? Is not God
the only maker worthy of the name
and as such- is he not an imposter
who seeks to bandy his bare bum
upon the holy throne of Christ
which is celestial- and not to be
contaminated with the poo of ordinary mortals' rear ends?

COP 1

He's a sculptor your worship.

DAVID

A sculptor?

COP 1

Yes.

(DAVID slips out of the booth.)

Father? Father?

DAVID (aside)

If it's him? What if it's him? What do I say? It's him.
(back in booth) What kind of sculptor my son?

COP 1

A sculptor of lewd forms.

DAVID (out again)

It's him, it's him, it's him!
What do I say!!!

COP 1

A sculptor for the Holy Father, reverend father.
A sculptor for God.

DAVID (back in booth)

If he is sculpting for God he cannot sculpt lewd forms.
God does not permit lechery in his instruments.

COP 1 (penitent weeping)

I know, I know, I know!!!

DAVID

You must be mistaken.

COP 1

He painted a naked woman on a Church ceiling.

DAVID

(aside) Oh God.
(to COP 1) Tell me more.

COP 1 (talks through sobbing)

It all began when we got a call
down at the station- 57th Precinct-
to put a warrant out for the arrest
and apprehension of a slave
escaped from the employ of one
Mi-

DAVID

Don't tell me his name!
I mean, my son, do not betray

the confidence of this poor man-
 as I am sworn before God to
 preserve the anonymity of my clients..
 Just as a matter of interest.. How much reward did he post?

COP 1

Reward?

DAVID

He must have posted a reward.

COP 1

Well-

DAVID

A handsome one too. Young slave. Fit.
 Peak of physical condition. Prime.
 Dare I say it- handsome. I mean-
 a lot of these domestics are very. well fed.

COP 1

There wasn't a reward...that I remember.

DAVID

Nothing?!

COP 1

Er..no.

DAVID

Not even a nominal one?

COP 1

No- he just made a call to the police station-
 it was a morning rate on the carrier pigeon-
 anyway, back to my sin- we call on him, the sculptor-
 and his vestibule on the way out I see this-

DAVID

Listen- listen listen listen.
 About this reward.

COP 1

-a gigantic- there wasn't one - I don't know who she was-
 probably commission for a portrait- I couldn't ask- he'd slammed

the door- rude painters and sculptors- have you noticed? Never a drop in the house for the law. But she-

DAVID

If you can get your friend Buonarotti-

COP 1

Buonarotti, yes.

DAVID

To spring for a reward, say- modest estimate- three thousand gold-

COP 1

Father?

DAVID

There are confessions
that make and break a life, my son.
I can find him- your slave.

COP 1

Father- how did you know his name?

DAVID

Who?

COP 1

The sculptor. Michel-

DAVID

Don't say his first name.
We must preserve some things- at a distance.
My son, God works in deep and radiant ways
like a goldfish swimming in a inky ocean.
When you said slave, and reward-

COP 1

There was no reward posted-

DAVID

His name lit before my eyes.
Right underneath the partition.
In gold, even. Almost letters of fire.
You get him to post a reward,
my son- God tells me- someone
will confess to hiding the man.

COP 1

You're sure?

DAVID

I have a clear vision. I'll see
the reward is well spent. I'll
guarantee it.

COP 1

Father- you solve my problems!

DAVID

Hey- that's what the guy in the little red hat pays me for!
Now get outta here ya big lug!

(COP 1 moves off.)

COP 1

Thankyou thankyou thankyou thankyou.

(COP 1 exits, pause, returns.)

COP 1

Father, about my sin- ?

DAVID

The woman with the big knockers in the lobby?- that's Victoria
Colombina- God can get you an introduction.

(Blackout.)

Scene 8.

(PORNOGRAPHER in MICHELANGELO's studio. He is carrying drawings.
MICHELANGELO is totally covered in bandages, head, arms, feet-
anything bare outside clothing.)

PORNOGRAPHER

I came as soon as I could.
I'm sorry to see you unwell.

MICHELANGELO

I am not unwell.
(Pause)

PORNOGRAPHER

I brought some originals as you requested.

MICHELANGELO

Good. (takes drawings) There are copies?

PORNOGRAPHER

Plates, engravings, copies. All I could do.
You're a popular scholar you know.

MICHELANGELO

Spare me the sales talk. How much?

PORNOGRAPHER

How much for what?

MICHELANGELO

How much to buy back every scrap of flesh?

PORNOGRAPHER

Well-

MICHELANGELO

Every buttock. Every tit.
Every eye-lid lowered with desire.
Every hand curved to cup a cheek.
Every elbow lowered to effect
a pulling closer to a mouth,
a hip, a turning organ-

PORNOGRAPHER

I don't know. You're talking years of labor.
It's life we're talking about here.
My life. I couldn't live if I sold all this back to you.

MICHELANGELO

Leave your life out of it- how much for the bodies?
Make me a cash offer.

PORNOGRAPHER

I can't. The people depend on me.

MICHELANGELO

Come on.

PORNOGRAPHER

They do! Little old ladies- men-
the bags disapprove - but some of them come look
at Delilah's stockings- and her bodice and her ripped
toga and her robe all held open-
and they buy. I couldn't give that up!
I'm making them happy.

(MICHELANGELO looks at him)

What is wrong with you anyway?

(MICHELANGELO walks away)

Your skin.

MICHELANGELO

Nothing is wrong with anything.

I want back every bum I've drawn-
every body- back under this roof.

PORNOGRAPHER

Why?

MICHELANGELO

I need to be- I can't explain.

PORNOGRAPHER (quiet)

Clean again?

MICHELANGELO

I need my drawings.

PORNOGRAPHER

You have them. Burning prints won't make you clean.

MICHELANGELO

I can try- feeling like I'm not touching.

PORNOGRAPHER

You can't burn what people love.

MICHELANGELO

People don't love these drawings!

They ejaculate less fluid in their hands
than the octopus spits black ink in the sea
in a hissy fit once in a while,
when they look at these things -that is not love!

PORNOGRAPHER

Have you seen what they do to each other when they're touching?
At least what they feel for your painting's consistent...
The octopus..well.

(touches MICHELANGELO's shoulder)

MICHELANGELO

Don't.

PORNOGRAPHER

I'm sorry. You really are burnt!

MICHELANGELO

No..Don't worry about me.
I need.. not to have these drawings
being loved quite so consistently.

PORNOGRAPHER

I understand. It's a matter of...personal integrity.

MICHELANGELO

No.

PORNOGRAPHER

You know- if you could give me something new...

MICHELANGELO

What?

PORNOGRAPHER

There's talk you've done this new
enormous nude.

MICHELANGELO

It's not for sale.

PORNOGRAPHER

Ah well.

MICHELANGELO

It's a commission, from the Vatican.

PORNOGRAPHER

Unfinished and unpaid for. Who d'you think's
going to pay for all those copy-hours
making scale improvements and enlargements
of the tits you got down on five bits of foolscap
in some twenty minutes? Me? Nooo!!

MICHELANGELO

They're mine.

PORNOGRAPHER

I beg to differ.

MICHELANGELO

I made them.

PORNOGRAPHER

I bought them.
Give me this new thing, you can have
what I've got in stock- the rest's gone south.
Spain, Portugal, Greece- they love your stuff in Greece.

MICHELANGELO

I'll have money by August.
I'll sell.

PORNOGRAPHER

How will you tell your father?
I have this statue of a boy
I do not want to sell. You'll have to
move your things. We're selling the estate.

MICHELANGELO

I'll get money.

PORNOGRAPHER

You've never had money
longer than paper takes to burn
under a magnifying glass. You throw it away,
trash it, feed the wolves with it.
Money's a weapon to kill the wolves with
not make them fat enough to sit on your chest.
like some bloody great Hound of the Baskervilles.
Yes. I sell detective stories too.
There's a market for them too I think
if you put the right proportions
on a woman on the cover.

MICHELANGELO

Go away.

PORNOGRAPHER

Who am I to argue if good people want to spend money?
I told you I make copies.

MICHELANGELO

And I can't have back my bodies?

PORNOGRAPHER

Frankly, you can have these gratis.
You've been a good employee. Hell,

I like you. But the real thing
 -originals- I mean- copies I made-
 have gone. All gone. All money these days.

MICHELANGELO

Leave please.

PORNOGRAPHER

It's all fame you know.
 Whether they call it art or jerk off to it. It's all..

MICHELANGELO

..money.

PORNOGRAPHER

Well- sure.

MICHELANGELO

Go.

PORNOGRAPHER

Alright. The offer's open on the big sculpture.

MICHELANGELO

It's a boy.

PORNOGRAPHER

I know.
 As you know, I don't discriminate.
 (exits)

MICHELANGELO

Parasite.

PORNOGRAPHER (returns)

I heard that. I'm more a benign culture.
 I'm what your body couldn't live without.

MICHELANGELO

Get out.

PORNOGRAPHER

I'll be back
 when you're desperate enough.
 Hope the sensitivity clears up.
 (PORNOGRAPHER exits.)

MICHELANGELO

Innocent.

(Off-stage door slams.)

Scene 9.

(In the street, COP 1 and COP 2 conferring.)

COP 2

What do you mean "a reward"?

COP 1

Money. The friar was most explicit.

COP 2

What Church was this?

COP 1

St. Peter's.

Would I go to any but the highest talking booth?

COP 2

Well- I've known you-

COP 1

He was a very wise man. Well- spoken.
Yet knew the world. Obviously steeped in religious lore.
Yet not unacquainted with the street.

COP 2

He wasn't yay tall and yay thin
with eyes the color of uncut granite?

COP 1

From what I saw through the open grille.
How did you know?

COP 2

That's Mickey stonemason's ID of the suspect.
I got his artist's impression an hour ago.

(holds up rolled sheet)

Needless to say- due to his profession

it's extremely accurate.

(Rolls open huge cartoon, hopelessly romanticized chin and nose, of David.)

COP 1

I don't know. It was dark. That could've been him.

(Cops exit.)

Scene 10.

(DAVID in monk's cowl, on a bench in St. Peter's abbey. PRIEST joins him after a moment of DAVID's rapt wonder, staring bareheaded at the ceiling; DAVID pulls up his cowl hastily as PRIEST enters.)

DAVID

I never really looked at heaven.

PRIEST

Yes. Visceral section.

'Specially since they painted pants on those good souls.

Buonarotti- I think that's his name- who did the figures- wouldn't come back, finish them to a decent state.

Artists! Thieves, more like! Would you leave a brick-layer roaming who didn't put the door on your house?

DAVID

They were naked.

PRIEST

Unfortunately so. I wouldn't look up.

More than my soul is worth. Staring at that filth.

But his Holiness in his wisdom- saw fit to let Buonarotti evade his duties and brought in another chap to paint

the corduroys on those ones. Quite forgot

his name- remarkable. Clearly retained

the name of that one left the filth,

the one with decent work- quite vanished.

Awful taste the memory.

DAVID

I've not seen God

before.

PRIEST

There's a better one upstairs.

In the Abbot's enclosure. Let me show you.

DAVID

Alright.

(They go.)

Scene 11.

(Cops arrive at the church, they stand at the confessionals.)

COP 2

Where was it?

COP 1

The confessional.

COP 2

Which one? There's hundreds.

COP 1

That one over there.

(points over audience)

COP 2

That's empty

-with the curtain open. He must be somewhere in the building.
How long ago? Ten minutes?

COP 1

Twenty?

COP 2

You take that corner, I'll do this one.

(Exit different ways.)

Scene 12.

(The Cardinals' preserve, St. Peter's. DAVID and PRIEST enter.)

DAVID

Are you sure we're supposed to be here?

PRIEST

Wherever I lead you you're supposed to be.
Rely upon it. I know all the routines.
When the matin lets out. When the choirmaster
puts the hymnals in a stack.
When the lame organist arranges her sheets
title-wise along the ledge behind her seat.
I know the dawn-hour when the bent friar
comes from below to unlock the gate.
I know when everyone is gone
and it is time to be an apostate.

DAVID

What's that?

PRIEST

Someone who's turned bad.

DAVID

You're bad here, at this hour?

PRIEST

You never know what happens here
at this hour, the paintings come alive.

(Kisses him.)

DAVID

Ugh. Hey!

(DAVID pushes him off.)

PRIEST

You're inexperienced in the field of art appreciation?

DAVID

Yes.

PRIEST

I'll teach you. The satyrs up here make
me hot. You notice, up here he didn't hire
the man to paint over their groins?

DAVID

I noticed.

PRIEST

And you noticed-
their hands aren't the only things reaching to God?
(kissing DAVID's neck)

DAVID (moving away)

I've never been so close to God.

PRIEST

He's cracked if you get closer. The ceiling's too round.
Let me show you some of the detail work
on the satyrs.

DAVID

I can see them. (gets away across space)

I can see them.

PRIEST (pause)
Shall I tell you how I came in the Church?

DAVID
No don't. Please. I can imagine.

PRIEST
I came in the Church several times actually.

DAVID
Don't. I want to..enjoy this.

PRIEST
What? The dust up here? I'm sorry- I should've brought cushions.
Didn't realize I was trying to make the Virgin Mary.

DAVID
I've never been up close to God, OK?
I want to look.

PRIEST (sits)
It's my fault. I'm sorry. I should've gone slower.
It's a nice beard. Go look. I won't touch you.

DAVID
You mean it?

PRIEST
Yeah. Yeah.

DAVID
OK. (goes across, looks)

PRIEST
You never have?

DAVID
What?

PRIEST
With a man?

DAVID (Pause)
Is this a confessional?

PRIEST

The house of God is sacred in all its parts
for those who come to seek succor.

DAVID

So you can't-

PRIEST

I can't tell what you say, no.
God you are fresh. I knew you weren't Benedict,
I didn't know you were so young.

DAVID

Do I have to tell you?

PRIEST

No, you don-

DAVID

But my soul will be burned if I have a chance
to confess my sin and I don't confess.

PRIEST

I suppose-

DAVID

I have to ask forgiveness,
and pray Our Lady to punish my sins.

PRIEST

Yeah yeah. So? What is it?
(Pause) My son, what is your confession?

DAVID

I knew this man. And he wasn't a true man of God..

COP 2 (off)

You see him up there?

COP 1 (off)

It's someone in a priest's outfit.
How'm I supposed to know if it's him?!

COP 2

Well go up there, genius!

COP 1 (off)

If you don't catch this runaway
 your field promotion goes with sunrise
 and you're going to wish you'd kept your mouth shut.

COP 2

We won't miss him- up the stairs.

PRIEST

Shit! Shit shit shit! Oh shit!

DAVID

Can they find us?

PRIEST

Jesus! Shit shit shit shit. Oh Jesus.

DAVID

What do we do?

PRIEST

I don't know. If they could see you they can get up here.

DAVID

You know the routines!

PRIEST

There's only one staircase!

DAVID

You know when the old crone
 bent like a pin comes does the gate!

PRIEST

They're Vatican officers. I'm a hanged man.

DAVID

You know when the choirmaster comes!

PRIEST

That was a line to get me in your robe!
 The place is bigger than the main stables
 and marketplace put together-
 I'm a humble friar what do you want me to know
 on my own of the comings and goings
 of the biggest Church in the world!
 I know there shouldn't be
 anyone here at this hour! I'm dead.

They'll cut my fishing tackle off! Run!

DAVID

Which way?

PRIEST

Run!

(They run off two ways; pause; both run back.)

DAVID and PRIEST

Dead-end!!

DAVID

Paintings.

PRIEST

More paintings. Naked men!

DAVID

We need to get out of here!

PRIEST

How?

DAVID

Climb on my shoulders.

PRIEST (reluctant)

..Ok..

DAVID

It'll work. Just trust me.

PRIEST

The one staircase...

DAVID

Trust me.

COP 2 (just off)

I can see someone. Just out of the light.

PRIEST

Alright.

(He mounts DAVID's shoulders.)

DAVID

Now- undo your belt.

PRIEST

What?

DAVID

Your cassock belt- holding the extra length - let it go!

PRIEST

Now he wants me!

DAVID

Do it!

COP 1 (just off)

I see someone.

DAVID

Now!

(PRIEST releases cassock. They stand, a tall figure, seemingly one, in the darkness. COP 1 and COP 2 appear with lights- candles- and DAVID with PRIEST on him, steps forward.)

COP 1 and COP 2

A-aaaagh!

DAVID (big voice)

I am the mad ghost of the circle of God- why do you torment me?

COP 1 and COP 2

Aaaaagh!!!

(they turns and flee)

DAVID (following)

I am tormented- I am on fire!

COP 1 and COP 2 (off)

Aaaaaaagh!

PRIEST (getting down)

Good acting.

DAVID

I used to be in a circus.

PRIEST

Very fine characterization. The burning.

DAVID

They won't stay away long, will they?

PRIEST

Well, it's a new legend. Eventually they'll figure-

DAVID

Let's follow them down.

PRIEST

Not yet. Let them run round the corner.

DAVID

Are we safe here?

PRIEST

I don't see why not.

If we were safe when there was no-one else.

DAVID

Alright.

(He paces.)

PRIEST

They're at the doors.

DAVID (Pause)

I knew this man. Worked for him. He wasn't
a man of the cloth, actually
but you might say he was - in the business.
Did a lot of work for you people
-jobs, alterations.

PRIEST

Contractor was he? This might not be the place...

DAVID

Well- I don't know-

PRIEST

This is the largest wholesale buyer
of manufactured goods in Italy.
We deal with every major tradesman in the city.
Bricks, mortar, asparagus, crinoline-
we buy everything. Talk away.
You don't betray anyone by telling me
your boyfriend took coin from the Church.

DAVID

He wasn't my boyfriend!

PRIEST

I beg your pardon- it was a professional relationship!

DAVID

He washed my hands.

PRIEST (still looking off)

What?

DAVID

He washed my hands. With soap.
And scented oils. Every night before..
I served him.

PRIEST

(Pause) Kinky.

DAVID

No- you don't understand.
I never touched him. He-
I mean- I touched his clothes-
and once- I mean- I picked up his dirty clothes
sometimes for the housekeeper
but sometimes- and I-

PRIEST

Take your time.

DAVID

He wanted me to touch him.

PRIEST

Mm. If he washed your hands..

DAVID

No no no. You don't understand.
He never washed my hands for me to touch him.
He scrubbed my hands. With a soft towel.
He bathed their ends. And he didn't- he just
wanted me to stand there. In the light.
Until that night.

PRIEST

He would- perform acts- while you stood there?

DAVID
 ...In a manner of speaking.

PRIEST
 Impure acts?

DAVID
 Well- I don't really-

PRIEST
 He touched himself.

DAVID
 No. Only a hammer and chisel.
 And some kinds of stone. He was sent the stone.

PRIEST (nodding)
 This is a very sick man.
 He didn't in any way expose himself. To you.?

DAVID
 Not that I noticed.

PRIEST
 In nomine patris et figli et spiritu-

DAVID
 What are you doing?

PRIEST
 You have committed no sin.

DAVID
 I hurt him.

PRIEST
 I don't understand. The hammer
 and chisel- this was some kind-

DAVID
 No no no no.

PRIEST
 I missed it.

DAVID
 That night. The last night I worked.

He didn't want to bathe my hands.
 He wanted me to...
 He came into his room from the bath
 and he wanted to get undressed.

PRIEST
 You- to get undressed?

DAVID
 No- I was already undraped.

PRIEST
 I'm missing something here.

DAVID
 He wanted to also be undressed.

PRIEST (shakes head)
 I am lost.

DAVID
 He wanted to be undressed as well
 and I refused. I refused to touch it.

PRIEST
 Touch what?

DAVID
 He sat in the bath
 the brass tub
 he dragged it in-
 and he sat naked- he sat naked in the tub
 and he wanted me to touch it.

PRIEST
 The- bath tub?

DAVID
 He wanted me to wash it for him? Isn't that a sin father?
 He wanted for me to touch him. With the cloth. I wouldn't.

PRIEST
 In nomine patri et spiritu-

DAVID (grabs his hand)
 What are you doing?

PRIEST

There is no sin.

DAVID

I - hurt him.

(Pause) I've never been so close to the face of God before. I've never seen it. All those times in the studio, I didn't look. Now I see it.

(He lets go PRIEST's hand.)

PRIEST

There's nobody there now.

(PRIEST walks away. DAVID halts a minute, face drawn, looks at ceiling, then follows down the stairs.)

Scene 13.

(MICHELANGELO's chamber. LANDLADY speaks, MICHELANGELO eats soup at a table, through bandages, with a spoon.)

LANDLADY

Mr. Michelangelo- when youa gonna wise up? You wrap your head inna bandages but youa eyes gotta see thisa no funny bizness heah. Thisa rent. Thisa outona street, no stone, no chisel, no paint- out- you no have a hammer, they take it away 'cos you didn't pay the ferryman. You hide yourself- cos if they find you..You better wear a bandage cos you know- you no gonna have no skin left. So if they leave bandage on the floor around you you can pick up a ragged ends, put your bones in clothes. They won't leave meat on your thigh-bone. Mr. Michelangelo. This is money, not art.

MICHELANGELO (eating)

I know what's art.

LANDLADY

You want your bandages change? Why you wear a bandage anyway? (Pause) Sorry sorry. I no ask again. You looka like I'm gonna eat out your liver, fry it with tomatoes an' little green peppers. I don't likea mushrooms. I don't say another word. You want clean bandages- you ask. I give you a discount. Two free rollsa linen for every five you buy. Okay? I make you special funnel- you pour a soup through your hole, you don't gotta get all the bandages dirty around you face.

MICHELANGELO

The door is not bolted from the outside. You are free to leave, when you're ready.

LANDLADY

No no- I don't have to stay. I stay cos I like you. I worry 'bout you. Mr. Mick I worry big big time about you- what you do- when you got no tissue between you bones.

MICHELANGELO

Go.

LANDLADY

Rent.

MICHELANGELO

Mrs. Olvet, may I offer you a bowl of soup?

LANDLADY

No- I know where that soup from. My Anthony he got it for you where I sent him. They over-charge, that place. Not enough ham in the kettle, and they don't soak the beans enough.

MICHELANGELO (wipes mouth with hand, burps)

It's ok.

LANDLADY

You got no sense of economics. (She sits.)

MICHELANGELO (tears bread)

Piece of bread?

LANDLADY

No, it cost two pennies where my nephew Antonio goes for you. I buy flour for a hundred loaves with one penny and spit in the cup of flour- wish it with my finger, throw it in the oven with some wood I pick up on the mountainside. I got bread. You spend money like fish spend stream. You got no sense. I buy diamonds like you buy potatoes. You shouldn't live in the city.

MICHELANGELO

I get good deals. I make money.

LANDLADY

I charge you too much for rent.

MICHELANGELO

Mrs. Olvet-

LANDLADY

I do- it's a tiny apartment.

MICHELANGELO

It's huge.

LANDLADY

Two rooms- one's got no heat.
A bad kitchen.

MICHELANGELO

I wouldn't need to sleep
in a separate room, if my model wasn't so fussy.

LANDLADY

I could jus hit myself.

MICHELANGELO

Mrs. Olvet-

LANDLADY

Whattayou gonna do?!!!

MICHELANGELO (burps)

Change my bandages. I have to go to the loo. (rises)

(Enter COP 2)

COP 2

We have to talk.

MICHELANGELO (takes bowl, crosses)

What about?

COP 2

We may have a clue.

MICHELANGELO

About what?

COP 2

The man, the man. The slave.
Is she to be trusted?

MICHELANGELO

As much as anyone.

COP 2 (sitting down)

Ok.
We saw him in the God circle of St. Peter's

I believe. In a cassock and a hood.

MICHELANGELO (eyes shut)
He wasn't religious when I last saw him.

COP 2
Maybe he's made new friends.

LANDLADY (recovers herself, bows to ground)
Your eminence.

MICHELANGELO
He's not Church.

COP 2 (flashes ID)
Missing Persons ma'am. Vatican P.D.

LANDLADY
Oh-h.

MICHELANGELO
I've given up my slave.

COP 2
Oh?

MICHELANGELO
I don't think there's hope.

COP 2
What are you doing here eating then?
Why don't you slit your throat?

MICHELANGELO
Habit, I suppose. (burps) Habits. Like a nun.

LANDLADY
People will come for him soon eh?
Cardinals!

COP 2
I'll come for him ma'am.
If he doesn't snap out of it.
(to MICHELANGELO) There's been a ransom demand.

MICHELANGELO (double take)
What?

Ransom. A reward.
COP 2

He isn't kidnapped.
MICHELANGELO (resumes apathy)

He is you know, I saw him.
COP 2
Dragged off by the Black Knight.

Black what?
MICHELANGELO

COP 2
It was like this.
There was this Knight. A black hooded figure.
A ghoul. Standing at the top of the stairs
in St. Peter's. Waiting for us. Preying. Pouncing.
And we came up the stairs and I saw him.
His flaxen hair all billowy in the moonlight.
His little arms going up and down,
his face shut.

MICHELANGELO
This is a missing slave
not a laxative commercial.

COP 2
He was enwrapped- by the black phantom
lost in his arms like a flame in the vast oceans of night.

MICHELANGELO
What do you read before these stake-outs?
Your reports must be dynamite reads for the carriage ride.

COP 2
He disappeared into thin air
as did the black knight who enwrapped him.
Only this sandal has remained
of the youthful form we saw
in the Circle of God.
(hands him a sole)

MICHELANGELO
My God. It is him.

COP 2 (aside)
Hallelujah.

MICHELANGELO

Who is this- Black-?

COP 2

He wants seventeen thousand sestersis.
Silver, in unmarked leather bags.

LANDLADY

Seventeen thousand sestersis.
Where you gon' get that kind o'money?

MICHELANGELO

I'll go to the Cardinals.

LANDLADY

With what?

MICHELANGELO

The body. They want the hands on the giant-
they'll have to buy David back.
How did they know he was worth this much money-
this..Knight person?

COP 2

He was mouthing off.
About his modeling career. "I'm very in demand."

MICHELANGELO

I've warned him and warned him about that!

COP 2

It's very sad. I wish we could protect all our citizens
and most of all your tender lad.
He seemed so..gentle and..windblown in the moonlight.

MICHELANGELO

You'll have to forgive me- my bandage is itching.

COP 2

I'll see myself out. The Cardinals. Tomorrow?

MICHELANGELO

I'll see the Cardinals at daylight.

COP 2

They want the ransom at night.

LANDLADY

They?

COP 2

There was a horde. Shadows
thick as the marsh wind.

MICHELANGELO

I'll have the money two hours past sun-up.

COP 2

I'll go set a trap for the Knight.

MICHELANGELO

No. Nothing must go wrong.
I need him alive.

COP 2

Nothing must stand in the way of art.

Goodnight.

LANDLADY

Night night. (COP 2 exits)

He's up to something I jos know it.

MICHELANGELO

He's got the boy. The Cardinals must pay or he'll never come back.

LANDLADY

You can finish another statue.

MICHELANGELO

He must come back.

(LANDLADY walks round to look at MICHELANGELO's face in
the bandages; he tugs at those over his eyes.)

LANDLADY

Alright. Alright.

MICHELANGELO

I'll have to take the bandages off. Get money.

LANDLADY

You won't break.

MICHELANGELO

Can you guarantee it?

LANDLADY

Mr. Mick- you owe me seventy five gold crowns.
I don't gotta guarantee nothing.

(LANDLADY walks away. Lights fade. End of Act One.)

Act Two. Scene 15.

(MICHELANGELO's studio. The stage is bare except for the monolith covered with tarpaulin. A step-ladder is before the statue. Lights fade up. Beat. One by one three Cardinals in red robes enter. They face away from the audience.)

CARDINAL 1

Very impressive, but how is it?

CARDINAL 2

He didn't make the stone.
The stone was this big when we paid for it.

CARDINAL 3

We don't know anything until we see the veins.
If he's cut along the soul of the stone
or against the marble. We'll see.
He's washed up and can't carve his name
on a toilet wall, what I hear.

CARDINAL 1

It's a big marble.

(MICHELANGELO enters.)

MICHELANGELO

Gentlemen. Monsignors. You honor my house
with your learning and holiness.

CARDINAL 3

You left your door open. This isn't your marble you know.
Not yours to let be stolen. Not yours to let be looked at even.
Why isn't it finished?

MICHELANGELO (goes to footstool)

Not finished excellency?

CARDINAL 2

It's covered.

It's very big.

CARDINAL 1

Why is it not finished? It's seven,
the morning of the seventh. It should be finished.

CARDINAL 3

You had a problem?

CARDINAL 2

It was too big?

CARDINAL 1

You're in default.

CARDINAL 3

There is a minor emendation
still to be completed.

MICHELANGELO

You're in default.

CARDINAL 3

It isn't irremediable.

MICHELANGELO

Remedies take time. You're in default.

CARDINAL 3

It is very big.

CARDINAL 1

Let's look at it. We know nothing
till we've had a look.

CARDINAL 2

The thing is- remedies cost more than art.

MICHELANGELO

What are you talking about?
We could have you flayed to string
just for the delay you've caused.
The contract states- the work's to be picked up
at sun-up or seven whichever comes first
the morning of the seventh. Don't come it - art!

CARDINAL 3

MICHELANGELO

What I did - I did. What I do now
is not art but remedy.

CARDINAL 3

What?

CARDINAL 2

Let's look at it. What are we
discussing a cat in a bag for anyway?

CARDINAL 3

I don't like his tone of voice.

CARDINAL 2

If the holy father liked his voice
he'd be an organist and altar boy
like you were!

(Pause)

CARDINAL 3

Pull the sheet off!

MICHELANGELO

Very well.

CARDINAL 1

God it's big.

(MICHELANGELO unveils the stone. It is the David, all but out of
the stone, but his hands are clouds of marble.)

CARDINAL 2

God.

CARDINAL 3

What's that on his hip?

CARDINAL 1

On his shoulder.

CARDINAL 3

Good God. It's massive.

CARDINAL 1

It is very big.

CARDINAL 2

God.

MICHELANGELO

The hands are not finished.

CARDINAL 3

His hip looks like he's crippled with a block.
A growth like he can't walk properly.
And his head looks like he's got
another head beside. A man with two heads.
Is that what you had in mind?

MICHELANGELO

His hands- at his hip and at his shoulder.
Are not finished. That is what needs remedying.

CARDINAL 2

You must finish it. I will inform the Holy Father
that all is in order. (moves off, pause)
God. Do not stop until
the stone speaks out of his hip and shoulder.

CARDINAL 1

A man with no hands..

CARDINAL 3

What are we going to do about the irregularity?!

CARDINAL 2

You stay and sort it out. Give him whatever he wants.
Anything.

CARDINAL 1

It's huge. Even in the middle.

CARDINAL 2

Anything. God. Bless you.

(CARDINAL 2 exits with CARDINAL 1 scuttling after.)
(MICHELANGELO drops the tarpaulin from his hands. CARDINAL 3 looks
at him.)

MICHELANGELO

A man without hands is nothing.

(MICHELANGELO descends the steps with his back to CARDINAL 3.

Blackout.)

Scene 16.

(Another roof. PRIEST and DAVID.)

PRIEST

Good thing I said move when I said move.

DAVID

Yuh yuh- keep a look out- they're not gone yet.

PRIEST

Alright.

You are young. You can't be expected-

DAVID

I could've seen them if you hadn't touched-

PRIEST

I was brushing your cloak. It's dirty up on that roof.

DAVID (muttering)

Tell me about it.

PRIEST

Friends?

DAVID

Keep a look out.

(They prowl the roof-space. DAVID stops one side and looks .)

DAVID

I can still see his work-bench.
There- underneath that washing,
over the gutter- that's him. You see?
Between the shutters- there's just a crack
-wait for the night-time- that'll be open.

PRIEST

Needs air does he? Well- don't we all.

DAVID

He goes staring in the sky at night.
Or the windows. Dirty old man.

PRIEST

How old is he?

Old. DAVID

PRIEST
Old enough to be your father?

DAVID
My father's dead.

PRIEST
Oh.

DAVID
He's not old enough. Mind your hands.

(PRIEST takes his hands off his shoulders.
DAVID jumps off the roof.)

PRIEST
Where are you going?

DAVID
To hide indoors. We need a hiding place
for the day-light hours. Till he opens his windows.

PRIEST
I thought you weren't going back.

DAVID
Wonderful what money does, isn't it?
Let's hide.

PRIEST
Where?

DAVID
With my girlfriend.
(DAVID leaps off stage.)

PRIEST
Shit! David, David! Shit.
Why can't I fall in love
with choirboys like I used to.
I'm getting old. I must be.
This one's almost old enough to shave.
But he'd cut his throat if you left it
in his hand a minute. Wait, wait a minute!

A bare throat and no-one to kiss it
 when he shaves nicks in it.
 Just dumb hands and a big knife trembling.
 Wait David, hold on a minute.
 What will I do when the knife trembles
 falling a little on him, do I go between
 -then I'll be covered in knife's kisses.
 And why do I need more church lives lost-?
 As it is like a cat- if I've not lost all rank
 with the Church it's because I've burnt five lives and not all
 and those police saw me but didn't see.
 My gown of chastity sheltered me.
 And I have been hiding on roof-tops in light of day-
 not in the folds of my cassock, not dark alleys.
 Bare hands trembling. I in my cassock...kneeling.
 Hidden, or not hidden. David-

(He pulls his cassocks up over his hips to climb down.)
 I'm coming.

(PRIEST exits.)

Scene 17.

(MICHELANGELO's tool table. COP 2 and COP 1 are with MICHELANGELO.)

MICHELANGELO

This one is for power. Blast the edges away.
 With a hammer on it- clears the stone from a contour-
 an arm or an inner thigh- silk-
 like ten men driving a knife through - like butter.
 This one- detail pike- pick in for a pimple. A blemish.
 Something the eye didn't get
 last time that's too big for sandpaper.
 This- a nice little gadge this- my hammer
 for breaking up stone. It doesn't
 answer me when I come calling-
 it doesn't bend when I say over
 -it breaks right open. I am not a patient man.
 This one-

COP 2

-draws the arrows on the boxes
 saying "This way up." All I asked was
 do you have a hammer?

MICHELANGELO

I have seventeen different mallets
 and weighted implements. This is
 my "hammer"- it breaks stone for me

when I am displeased with it.

COP 1

That what took the leg?

MICHELANGELO

Yes, exactly.

COP 2

What leg?

COP 1

Christ in Genoa. Pieta. Lovely tone-
so I'm told. I don't - travel much myself.
He took the leg off.

MICHELANGELO

I got annoyed.

How many Christs can you put up with?
That was my third. The marble was atrocious.

COP 2

So you marked his leg.

COP 1

Chopped.

MICHELANGELO

Chopped.

COP 2

All of it?

MICHELANGELO

'Fraid so.

COP 2

With this?

MICHELANGELO

This.

COP 2

I'll have it.

MICHELANGELO
You can't have that!

COP 2
I need it!

MICHELANGELO
What for?!

COP 2
Oh go on! You asked me for my helmet and I let you wear it!

MICHELANGELO
That was different- that was for research.

COP 1
Oh let him have it. He'll be impossible otherwise.

MICHELANGELO
It's my best mallet. I'm impotent
without it. What if a rage strikes me,
a piece of stone gets insolent,
a new creation drives its way into my body-

COP 2
You haven't touched a thing in here
since the slave left.
Have you? I can see the dust
gone where you touched that one.

MICHELANGELO (shrugs)
Take it.

COP 2 (moving off)
We'll try not to crack the skull with it.
If there's trouble.

COP 1
Still- you only want the hands.

MICHELANGELO
Come back!

COP 2
We will - and we'll have him.
Rest assured- your money will be well spent.

MICHELANGELO

Take the pick.

COP 1

We wouldn't want to cut his throat.
That isn't legal.

MICHELANGELO

Take the chisel.

COP 1

We only want to bruise him. Break a bone
if necessary. Wouldn't want to pierce the skin.
You'd have contusions. Blood. Healing.
We'll be back with him in no time.

(They leave. MICHELANGELO slumps before his tools.)

Scene 18.

(At the brothel. A room with a bed in it. Yellow grime on the walls. Sound of feet in sandals going up and down the hall outside.)

PRIEST

What are we doing here?

DAVID

I'm going to rest. You want the floor or the bed?

PRIEST

Where are you going to rest?

DAVID

I'll take the bed.

PRIEST

I'll lie next to you. Isn't there room?

DAVID

Not really. I'll lie on the floor.

PRIEST

You can't lie on that. You don't know where it's been.

(DAVID shrugs, grins.)

You know what I mean. It could have anything-
it probably has had- I see a crab-

louse crawling in that straw now. (stamps)
Lie on the cushions. I won't touch you.

DAVID

It isn't big enough.

PRIEST

For what?

DAVID

My girlfriend'll be here in a minute.

PRIEST

She goes off the meter for you does she?

DAVID (in PRIEST's face)

Oi! Oi! Oi!

PRIEST

Sorry, sorry, I beg your pardon.
I've yet to meet the young lady-
I assumed-

DAVID

You assumed wrong-

PRIEST

She is a girl of good family-

DAVID

Damn straight. Her mother's owned this place-
five years, at least.

PRIEST

(Pause) Well, that's different.

DAVID

It is. Be a little bit more respectful.

PRIEST

Are you- you can sit down you know.
I won't mind. Are you getting married?

DAVID

Are you stupid?

PRIEST

Not that I've been told to my face.

DAVID

She wouldn't look at a slave, would she?
Not when she's got all this.

PRIEST (looks around)

Oh yes..What would she want with you.

DAVID (sitting)

Go on- rub it in.

PRIEST

Is that why you want the money?

DAVID

Eh?

PRIEST

To get married. (Pause) To have something.
So- she- will- look- at- you.

DAVID

(Pause) Yeah. Yeah, yeah, that's it.

PRIEST

You're a genius. I'd never have stumbled
upon such an ingenious device.

DAVID

Thanks.

PRIEST (rises)

I should be going.

DAVID

You're going?

PRIEST

If you're going to get married.
You get the money- she realizes
what a splendid fellow you are. You get
married. See you in the confessionals sometime.
It's been nice working with you.

DAVID

Why are you going?

PRIEST

You're getting married.

DAVID

So? Not this minute.

PRIEST (sits)

I don't get it. You're a confused kid.

DAVID

Hey. I don't wear this thing every day you know. I get the dress over my head- I'm not a bit confused.

PRIEST

Take it off then.

DAVID

I am getting married you know.

PRIEST

Take it off if you're going to not be confused.

DAVID

Alright.

PRIEST

What are you scared of?

DAVID

I'm not scared.

PRIEST

You think I've not seen one before?

DAVID

One what?

PRIEST

An erect dick?

DAVID

I'm not erect!

PRIEST

God knows I've seen too many that were dangling so low the turtles must have craned their little heads up to snap at them.

DAVID (flustered)

I'm not that big.

PRIEST

Oh come on!
 You take your clothes off for a living don't you?!
 This man- what's his name-

DAVID

He doesn't look at me that way!

PRIEST

What way?

DAVID

Like he wants to touch me.

PRIEST

(Pause) How does he look at you?

DAVID

Like I'm a statue.

PRIEST

I've seen his statues.
 The Holy Father wants to touch his statues.
Trust me- he wants to touch you.

DAVID

He doesn't -

PRIEST

What?

DAVID

-look at me-
 like I'm a man- like-
 he doesn't look at me
 the way a man looks at a woman-

PRIEST

What way is that?

DAVID

Wicked. Like he wants to bend her over.

PRIEST

You like that?

DAVID

Yeah.

With my girlfriend, of course.

PRIEST

Of course.

Maybe he wants you to bend him over.

Maybe that's why he doesn't look at you like that.

Maybe that's how he looks at you.

Maybe that's why he looks at you like you're a statue.

Maybe that's what he looks at when he looks at statues.

DAVID

He's done the Virgin Mary and our Lord in diapers!

PRIEST (shrugs)

No accounting for taste.

DAVID

You ought to be ashamed.

PRIEST

No, you are now ashamed.

DAVID

I'm not.

PRIEST

What happened that you left?

DAVID

Nothing.

PRIEST

What happened? You had a nice cushy job.

Flashing your pee-pee for a bit of meat

and wine every day and straw to sleep in.

Roof top to stop rain. Clothes even.

If you can call it clothing. What happened?

DAVID

I don't know what you're talking about.

PRIEST (takes his chin)

Listen. Luv. You can play the Saint,

play the little virgin- but you had a roof

-you had a man looking at you nude

and paying good money for it. Why'd you leave?

DAVID (pulls away)

I told you.

PRIEST

What? He asked you to wash his dick and you wouldn't. So-
he pressured you? The little virgin got hot and flustered?

DAVID

No!

PRIEST

He stood over your bed at night-
slavering and doing nasty things.

DAVID

No.

PRIEST

What? Look- I'm bored of this.
I'm off.

(PRIEST rises)

DAVID

I did it.

PRIEST

What?

DAVID

I did it. I washed his ...dick.

PRIEST

Oh.

(sits)

DAVID

And his arse. And his crack. And his dick again.

PRIEST

Oh.

DAVID

And he fucked me. He had me lie
on the bed and fucked me.
With a bit of spit- on his hand
-he opened me up, had me get
on my knees- hold myself up a bit
and-

PRIEST

-he fucked you. Yes. I'm sorry.

DAVID

Why? Why be sorry? You want to look at me?

(PRIEST doesn't answer.)

DAVID

You want to look at me? Say yes.
Say "yes- I want to look at you."

(Pause)

PRIEST

Yes. I want to look at you.

(DAVID takes his cassock off, he's naked, he faces away from the audience.)

DAVID

I liked it. I liked it a lot.
You want to look at me?
Or you want me to wash you too?

(Pause)

PRIEST

I want.. you to wash me.

(DAVID walks up to him. PRIEST moves away.)

PRIEST

You should go back to him.

DAVID

What?

PRIEST

He should finish the statue.

DAVID

What?

PRIEST

You should. It's important.

DAVID

I want to wash you.

PRIEST

Not now. You're getting married.

DAVID

She doesn't know I'm in here. Her mother doesn't want us talking. She won't tell her unless I call.

PRIEST

I have to go back to St. Peter's.

DAVID

Don't you want me to wash you?

PRIEST

You should get washed by- I mean- you should go wash Michelangelo.

(Pause)

DAVID

You don't love me.

PRIEST

No. I don't love you.

Michelangelo loves you. Maybe that's why he looks at you. Maybe that's why it took him so long to touch the stone.

DAVID

I thought-

PRIEST

I'm sorry.

(DAVID sits naked on the bed.)

I'm sorry.

DAVID

Go. I'm not getting dressed again.

I like being like this.

(He puts his hands over his privates.)

(There is a knock at the door.)

COP 1 (off)

Open up! Police!

(Blackout.)

Scene 19.

(MICHELANGELO's chambers. The tools are gone, placed in an oaken chest. The table's cleared. Tarpaulin covers the David.)

Michelangelo sits, scribbling with a knife end on the table.)

LANDLADY

What are you doing?

MICHELANGELO

Nothing! Why do you creep up on me
like that?

LANDLADY

I owna da building. I walk in here just a how I like.
I wanna walk like a chicken I laya eggs. Issa not you problem!

MICHELANGELO

Go away again, I'm drawing.

LANDLADY

Blessed Virgin- issa miracle! Use a pencil- is no worth nothin'
if nobody can't see it.

MICHELANGELO

No.

LANDLADY

You can't make bread from what nobody can hang onna walls. They
can't hang a table. They can't hang you can't takea money. You
can't takea money is no point.

MICHELANGELO

I'm trying to work out something.

LANDLADY

How you work it out- you can'ta see?

MICHELANGELO

I see it when I'm moving my fingers.
It doesn't matter what everyone else can see.

LANDLADY

You a waste o' breath to me Mr. Michelangelo.

MICHELANGELO

Pass the pepper Mrs. Olvet.

(She does.)

Thank you.

(He pours pepper.)

Scene 20.

(DAVID and PRIEST in whore-house as at previous scene. A knock at the door.)

Shit!
PRIEST

They can't've..
DAVID

PRIEST
Put your clothes on! For God's sake!

DAVID (fumbling with clothes)
What's God got to do with it?

COP 1 (off)
We know you're in there. Come out with your hands up!

DAVID
(shouts) Chew lead copper!
(Pause) I wonder what that means.

PRIEST
Out the window- quickly!

DAVID
The money.

PRIEST
There'll never be a penny.
Don't you understand? You will be fucked the rest of your life
and there will never be a penny.

DAVID
I want my money. Or something.

COP 1 (off)
Open up or we're breaking in.

FEMALE VOICE (off)
Not my door!

PRIEST
You will never have anything.
(PRIEST takes the pillow from over DAVID's crotch.)
Get used to it.
(COP 1 and COP 2 break through the door.)
Good luck, pretty baby.

(PRIEST grabs DAVID, kisses him on mouth and leaps out the SL window.)

COP 1

Damn! Right, I'm after him!

(leaps out of window)

COP 2

David, known in the rank of slave.
Formerly of the house-hold staff
of Signor Michelangelo Buonarotti.
You have the right to remain silent..

FEMALE VOICE (off)

My door!!!

DAVID

My ransom.

COP 2

What ransom?
You have the right to make one call.
By messenger. You have the right...

DAVID

I had things coming.

COP 2

You don't have anything at all.
Put your hands on your head.

(Pause. DAVID does, naked.)

You have the right to trial by lions..

(Fade out.)

Scene 21.

(MICHELANGELO's chambers.)

LANDLADY (looking over his shoulder)

What, what, what?

MICHELANGELO

You can see the outline of what I drew- in the pepper-
where I made the wounds in the grain for seeds to go in.

LANDLADY

Uh-huh. Thass great Mr. Mick. One good sneeze and I see all o'you
masterpieces up my left hole an' gone poof out the back door.

MICHELANGELO

I can see something moving here.

LANDLADY

What?

MICHELANGELO

When I breathe on the picture
the seeds go further in.

LANDLADY

Such a genius. They shoulda put 'im in jail. There 'e could make
pictures for the other debtors.

(COP 1 and COP 2 flourish in.)

COP 2

We have him.

COP 1

He's gained.

COP 2

He is in our possession.

COP 1

I might have to hit him again.

MICHELANGELO

Where is he?

COP 2

Outside. In a bundle.
Frisky little fellow, your playmate.

MICHELANGELO

What do you mean?

COP 1

He made my nose bleed- twice-
before we got his hands bound. And his friend got away.

MICHELANGELO

His friend? Well- plenty of girls-

COP 2

Not a woman- a man-

a tall man- with bony hands.
 He hit me. Surprisingly hard
 for a friar. We can't assume of course
 he was a friar. Just because he wore
 a friar's dress.

COP 1

That's for sure.
 We tried to put it on this one.
 Even still. He wouldn't let us near.
 So he came as he is.

MICHELANGELO

As he is?

COP 2

Au naturelle.
 The way God intended. Before the fall.

MICHELANGELO

Naked?

You found him naked with a man
 -in a dress?

COP 1

We'd have 'ad him
 if my nose didn't bleed.

MICHELANGELO

He's - still -

COP 2

Not a stitch.

COP 1

Still. No surprises left for you,
 eh chief?

MICHELANGELO (turning away)

Show him in.

(COPS exit.)

LANDLADY (goes with them)

I'll go get him some clothes.
 I can't stand this random violence.
 It'll end in tears.

(She leaves.)

(MICHELANGELO stands alone at his statue. He is trembling.)

(DAVID comes in slowly, he barely edges into the light. He is handcuffed, still naked. Pause.)

I couldn't.

DAVID

You couldn't what?

MICHELANGELO

I couldn't put my clothes back on again.

DAVID

Why not?

MICHELANGELO

I had no shame.
I don't have any shame left.

DAVID

Oh good.

MICHELANGELO (sits)

I have nothing left but -

DAVID

God, put some clothes on.

MICHELANGELO

Why? You've seen my everything.

DAVID

Yes and I don't want to see it now!

MICHELANGELO

Why not?

DAVID

I'm not doing you. In marble.

MICHELANGELO

You weren't doing me in marble then.

DAVID

It's not a professional situation.
I don't want the aesthetic distraction.

MICHELANGELO

What's that mean?

DAVID

It's good to have you back.

DAVID

I don't believe in re-unions. I don't do much around here. To earn my keep. Not too..active. Mostly.

MICHELANGELO

What do you mean?

DAVID

I'm not too active in the creative process.

MICHELANGELO

You're the model!

DAVID

I'm passive.

(Pause)

MICHELANGELO

Do you want to change positions?

DAVID

I can't sculpt.

MICHELANGELO

I know you can't sculpt. I've seen you hold a horse-brush. If you can't groom an animal's back-side you can't make art.

DAVID

You should have no trouble then.

MICHELANGELO (defenseless)

What do you want?

DAVID

I want the keys to the palace. I want -I want to swap round.

MICHELANGELO

You want-

DAVID

I want to swap round.

MICHELANGELO

I can't-

DAVID

Why not?

MICHELANGELO

I'm older-

DAVID

I've had offers.

MICHELANGELO

Who from? This friar you stole the clothes off?
One of your sponsors?

DAVID

An older, kinder man.

MICHELANGELO

And he offered you his bum-hole?

DAVID

He would have. If I'd asked him.

(MICHELANGELO sits.)

MICHELANGELO

I can't stand it. I can't stand it.

DAVID

What?

MICHELANGELO

It isn't done. In my village.
Campagna. It isn't done. If my father should hear of it-

DAVID

Your father? My-

MICHELANGELO

You don't have a father. You're a slave.
My father owns thirty villas I bought for him
North of Florence. Two with orchards.
And still I can't tell the bastard-

DAVID

Your problems
are not really that important.

MICHELANGELO

(Pause) No. Of course not. I should have them cut off your balls. Or maybe mine. Why did I spend the money? I should've let the thugs dismember you. Feed you to the pigeons in the square when the Holy Father spreads his hands like the stale, sorry broken pieces of white bread you are!

DAVID (holds out hands)

You want my hands?

MICHELANGELO

God God God.
Why am I not blind? Why do you curse me with a love for a thing which is inert?

DAVID

I'm not inert. What's that mean?

MICHELANGELO

You cannot love me back.

DAVID

You didn't ask.

MICHELANGELO

I don't WANT- TO- ASK.

DAVID

Then you can't get.

MICHELANGELO

What do you want?

DAVID

I want to fuck you in the arse.

MICHELANGELO

You can't.

DAVID

Why not?

MICHELANGELO

I'm not letting you.
Go fuck your whores. Your women. See if they'll let you.
I thought your whore's daughter was worth a fortune.

DAVID

She loves me!

MICHELANGELO

Go stick your rudder up her water-
I didn't give you away to the rozzers!
You went in that hyena's mouth yourself!

DAVID

Better than some mouths.

MICHELANGELO (strikes his forehead)

Why why why why!

DAVID

Oh stoppit. I'm not going to buy it anymore.

MICHELANGELO

God- forgive my blasphemy.
Make him a stone. Don't let me waste
what's left of my poor eyes
pulling his form from marble
let his heart- that is as hard
as any flint a hodsman laid
upon a roof- turn into marble
whole, that he may be at least
as soft as stone- as soft as
that metal I sweat into
to bring his sour lips out of marble.
There's more sweat in that stone now
than in my body. I put my heat
in you. I'm freezing here.
And you want me to-

DAVID (touches his cheek)

I love you.

MICHELANGELO

Yeah, yeah. And the police just had to let you know
the address you forgot. The cuffs were just
to remind you of the street number
because you didn't have a quill.

DAVID

I got scared.

MICHELANGELO
 What of?

DAVID
 I liked it.

MICHELANGELO
 I liked it too.

DAVID
 You were doing it. I liked it.
 The other. You weren't the woman.
 (MICHELANGELO sits.)
 I have a father.

MICHELANGELO
 Yuh, yuh. (Holds forehead.)

DAVID
 He knows. What I'm doing.

MICHELANGELO
 Our father sees all.

DAVID
 He would be ashamed.

MICHELANGELO
 He-
 (The Pope enters. In full regalia. White.)

POPE
 I hope you don't mind-

MICHELANGELO (falls on face)
 Your holiness-

POPE
 I just popped in. Nice studio.

MICHELANGELO
 Thank you.

POPE
 The police outside- are a little excited.
 I had them stand at ease. So this is the boy?

MICHELANGELO

This is the boy your worship.

POPE

Worth all the fuss was he? Let's have a look.

(POPE takes DAVID by arm under the tarpaulin. Neither is visible. The sound of a slap on skin.)

POPE

Bend over.

DAVID

Holy father-

POPE

Bend over- I haven't got all day.

(Pause. Another slap.)

Fine. Fine. When I was your age
I wasn't afraid of showing off my real-estate
to a fine fellow, older and wiser-
who could bring me to God.
Only too eager if anything.
Got a name for it. Stick with
the one lover if you can. Saves on
the wear and tear.

(POPE emerges from under tarps. DAVID does too, blushing.)

POPE

The cock needs to be bigger. The hands need work.
I don't suppose you can put back the stone
once it's been cut, can you? Be sure my Moses has
a big- sense of justice- on him, right?
I don't want my monument being a girly-man.
Nice bit of flesh you have there.
See you treat him right. Buy him
some clothes. Get him educated.
Get this thing finished. Knock off the hands.
I want my Moses done by Christmas.
(to DAVID) Bless you my child.

(POPE exits.)

(Pause) (Enter COP 1.)

COP 1

Did you see that?!

MICHELANGELO

What?

COP 1

His Holiness- I mean- His-
the Holy Father-

MICHELANGELO

He loves my work.
I never know when he'll pop in for a visit.

COP 1

I'm gob smacked.

MICHELANGELO

Back outside.

COP 1

Right guvnor. (Pause) You- put some clothes on.

MICHELANGELO

Hold your tongue. Don't speak to him like that.

COP 1

It's not decent.

MICHELANGELO

He is not a slave.

COP 1

What?

MICHELANGELO

As of the Holy Father's visit
he has become my ward. I will name him heir
and partner in my estate.
He will attain the rank of gentleman
-and bondsman of the King.

COP 1

Who's a pretty little boy then?

MICHELANGELO

Get out.

COP 1

It's none of my concern, guvnor.
 I'm glad we were able to get him back for you.
 From those forty ghosts. It's a shame we couldn't get the money.

MICHELANGELO

Yes. Don't leave the city too soon
 or they'll be after you. The Vatican
 isn't stupid and they do not forgive
 -in matters of currency.

COP 1 (to DAVID)

You'll make an excellent ward.
 And a shining addition to our city's gentlemen.
 (to MICHELANGELO) It's been a pleasure.
 Call on us again if you have any
 other valuables you want replacing.

MICHELANGELO

If you're heading North past Florence
 you might look at land. Signor Fabrizio Buonarotti
 will be happy to sell to you at reasonable rates
 if he knows you're my patrons.

COP 1 (bows)

Signor Buonarotti.

(COP 1 exits.)

MICHELANGELO

I suppose it isn't too bad.
 If his Holiness got a name for it. Asking for it.

DAVID (approaching him with embrace)

Do you want me to keep my hands still?
 Or can you work from memory?

MICHELANGELO

I work best without a difficult model.

DAVID

You should have no trouble then.

(DAVID turns and goes under the tarpaulin; MICHELANGELO goes
 and joins him, pulling it down over them. Hollywood brass horns
 indicate ending. Pause. LANDLADY and PORNOGRAPHER stroll on.)

LANDLADY

Is that it then?

PORNOGRAPHER

Well, I suppose so- I don't know.
Is that the only racy thing he's got?

LANDLADY

I think so. Get in there and sketch it quick.
Before he and his boy get back.

PORNOGRAPHER

You'll have to help me set the easel up.
Hold my light for a minute.

LANDLADY

Alright, alright- let's get on with it.
You're not paying me enough for this,
you know. You said notin 'bouta light.

PORNOGRAPHER

You don't have to do the accent for me. I'm not paying rent.
Go on- get under there.

LANDLADY

Alright. But no hanky panky.

PORNOGRAPHER

I'm a pillar of the community.
(LANDLADY goes under tarpaulin.)
More upstanding by the minute.
(PORNOGRAPHER winks and goes under.)

LANDLADY

Ooh!

DAVID

Ohh!

MICHELANGELO (deep)

Oooh!

PORNOGRAPHER

Hold it right there!
Everybody, hold that pose!

(Curtain)