

SYNOPSIS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI

PART I

SCENE 1. The chorus tells what will be shown.

SCENE 2. AT SACCO'S HOME, STOUGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS. MAY 5, 1920. 8PM. Nicola Sacco and his wife Rosa rehearse a scene from *A Doll's House* in Italian. They are interrupted by the arrival of their friends Bartolomeo Vanzetti (just back from New York), Mike Boda, and Riccardo Orciani. Their friend Salsedo jumped or was pushed from the fourteenth floor following a police interrogation. Fearing a similar fate, the men leave to pick up Boda's car, in order to collect and hide suspicious anarchist literature.

SCENE 3. ELM SQUARE GARAGE, WEST BRIDGEWATER. MAY 5, 1920. 8:30PM. Half an hour later, Boda and Orciani arrive at the Elm Square Garage in West Bridgewater by motorcycle. Simon Johnson (the owner) and his wife Ruth find their Italian accents suspicious. She calls the police. Boda and Orciani leave; Sacco and Vanzetti arrive by streetcar and are arrested, as the Johnsons demand a reward.

SCENE 4. POLICE OFFICE, BROCKTON. MAY 6, 1920. 2PM. Chief of Police Michael Stewart and DA Frederick Katzmman interrogate Sacco and Vanzetti the next afternoon, and bring in witnesses to try to identify them.

SCENE 5. BROCKTON PRISON. MAY 8, 1920. MORNING. Sacco and Vanzetti are visited by attorney John W. McAnamey and Mrs. Elizabeth Glendower Evans. The defendants believe they have been arrested because they are anarchists. It is revealed to them that the actual charges are robbery and murder, of which they maintain – and convince their visitors – they are innocent.

SCENE 6. MEMORIAL DAY PARADE IN MASSACHUSETTS. MAY 30, 1921. Loyalty is celebrated.

SCENE 7. DEDHAM COURTHOUSE. MAY 31, 1921. Jury selection and opening arguments before Judge Webster Thayer. California attorney Fred Moore leads the defense.

SCENE 8. THE SEPARATE CELLS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI. 1921. Vanzetti describes his routine with cheerful irony. Mrs. Evans tries to cheer up Sacco. Rosa comes to visit her husband. She and both defendants long to return to their hometowns in Italy.

PART 2

SCENE 1. DEDHAM COURTHOUSE. JULY 1921. The defendants testify and are convicted.

SCENE 2. SACCO'S CELL. 1921 – NOVEMBER 18, 1925. Appeals pending, Sacco tells Mrs. Evans he wishes he could work at shoemaking again. He recalls his meeting and courting Rosa, then hallucinates that their son Dante is being tormented. Vanzetti, in a neighboring cell, urges Sacco to end his hunger strike. Another prisoner, Celestino Madeiros, passes a message on November 18, 1925, confessing to the crime of which Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted, exonerating them.

SCENE 3. VANZETTI'S CELL. 1926-1927. Vanzetti desperately bemoans the theft of his books.

SCENE 4. DEDHAM COURTHOUSE. APRIL 9, 1927. Judge Thayer rejects final arguments and the last speeches of defendants to the court, sentencing them to death, then gloats about it to Professor James P. Richardson.

SCENE 5. PRISON YARD. MAY 12, 1927. Philip Stong interviews the defendants for the *New York World*. Sacco just wants everything to be over. Vanzetti makes his famous statement: "If it had not been..."

SCENE 6. GOVERNOR'S AND COMMITTEE'S CHAMBERS. JULY 22 – AUGUST 3, 1927. BOSTON COMMON. AUGUST 7, 1927. Governor Alvan Fuller interviews Madeiros, but refuses to give him credence. His select committee, headed by Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell hears appeals attorney William Thompson's arguments, but refuses to recommend overturning the conviction, because "all Italians lie – just like Jews." Mary Donovan loses her job for speaking at a rally.

SCENE 7. PRISON AND WORLD STAGE. AUGUST 22-23, 1927; AUGUST 28, 1927; JULY 19, 1977. Vanzetti and Sacco are led to the electric chair. Vanzetti reassures Thompson that they are innocent. Thompson asks him to eschew violence, and to forgive. Sacco dies, extolling anarchy. Vanzetti dies, saying "I wish to forgive some people for what they do." On July 19, 1977, Governor Michael Dukakis orders that "any stigma and disgrace" be "forever removed from the names" of Sacco and Vanzetti, and calls upon the people of Massachusetts "to reflect" upon these events and prevent their reoccurrence.