

# **GALILEO'S CRIME**

## **CHORUS 4: YEARS OF SILENCE**



When her father returned from Rome in 1616, Marie Celeste knew immediately that things had not gone well. Galileo, famed for his appetite, could hardly bring himself to eat now. His workshop-- once bustling with talented students, lively debate, and experimentation--fell strangely quiet as pupils awaited direction from their master. But Galileo's trademark optimism, passion and humor were gone.

His health, never the best, began to fail him. Bouts of rheumatism or gout left him bedridden for weeks, even months at a time. His work suffered. Listless, feverish, Galileo found himself seeking refuge in the nearby hills of Tuscany. He needed to escape the demands of Florence with its foul air, social pressures and constant threat of plague.

When he was able to do Science, Galileo took on more down-to-earth topics or practical projects. Disputations with lesser minds over the laws of motion or floating bodies distracted him for awhile. When he did look to the Stars, it was to calculate new ways to navigate at sea--not to prove Holy Scripture or the Ancients wrong. As the best years of his life slipped away, Galileo's frustration grew. Forbidden to follow his heart's desire, the great observer's eyesight failed, and he fell into despair.