THE MARRIAGE OF *Figaro*



Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte to the opera
Le nozze di Figaro by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

English translation by Roger Brunyate

Origins of the Text

The libretto of *Le nozze di Figaro* is based upon the play *La folle journée, ou Le mariage de Figaro* (The Crazy Day, or The Marriage of Figaro) by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. A sequel to his *Le barbier de Séville* (The Barber of Seville), Beaumarchais probably completed it in 1778. The play was accepted by the Comédie Française in 1781, but not performed publicly until 1784, due to the initial objection of the King to such incendiary material—an objection that was eventually overcome by prudent editing and the passage of time.

The two Beaumarchais plays were available in print in Vienna, and Giovanni Paisiello scored a success with an operatic setting of the earlier *Barber* in 1783. So the time was ripe for Mozart and Lorenzo da Ponte to start work on *Figaro* in 1785, a year after its Paris premiere. Although the Austrian Emperor, more restrictive than even his French counterpart, had banned the play from the Viennese stage, he gave permission for the operatic version, which is less overtly political. It opened at the Burgtheater, Vienna, on May 1, 1786.

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The Characters in the Opera

COUNT ALMAVIVA, *lord of Aguas Frescas**

COUNTESS ALMAVIVA, *Rosina, his wife*

SUSANNA, *the Countess' chambermaid, engaged to Figaro*

FIGARO, *the Count's valet, engaged to Susanna*

CHERUBINO, *a page*

DR. BARTOLO, *the Countess' guardian before her marriage*

MARCELLINA, *housekeeper of Aguas Frescas*

DON BASILIO, *a cleric and music master*

DON CURZIO, *the Count's lawyer*

ANTONIO, *head gardener at Aguas Frescas and Susanna's uncle*

BARBARINA, *Antonio's daughter and Susanna's cousin*

CHORUS *of servants and peasants on the estate*

The action of the opera takes place within a single day in Count Almaviva's palace and on his estate at Aguas Frescas, in four acts, as follows:

ACT ONE	*The room intended for Figaro and Susanna. Morning.*
ACT TWO	*The Countess' room. Mid-morning.*
ACT THREE	*A lavish hall in the palace. Afternoon.*
ACT FOUR	*The palace garden. Evening.***

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* The character and scene descriptions on this page are not found in the original libretto but have been supplied by the translator.

** The libretto describes the opening portion of this act as taking place in a small room, but most productions set the entire scene in the garden.

A Note on the Translation

This translation is intended to be read as text, rather than for use with a score; still less is it intended to be sung. Why, then, is some of it written in prose and some in verse?

Classical libretto-writing is a branch of poetry, and Lorenzo da Ponte would certainly have described himself as a poet. His use of verse is important in articulating the shape of his libretto, and in prefiguring the kinds of music that Mozart would write (although the composer generally had an extra trick or two up his sleeve in addition). He wrote recitatives in short lines but more or less in prose, using rhyme only to mark an exit or to prepare for a musical number. His ensembles are written in a free verse which uses rhyme for punctuation, intensifying when characters are singing together. Arias generally have more formal rhyme-schemes, which set them off as self-contained artifacts within the freer texture of the rest; this is especially the case in a piece such as Cherubino's *canzona* "*Non so più*," a poem composed by the character himself. Additionally, Da Ponte often uses increases the frequency of rhymes and shortens the lines part-way through an aria, giving the piece a kind of verbal *stretto* that Mozart would pick up in his music.

I have therefore thought it important to preserve these gradations in texture, even in a translation designed for reading. I have, however, scaled everything back, rendering the recitatives in ordinary prose, matching the rhythm in the ensembles but reducing the amount of rhyme, and attempting to parallel the original only in the more formal arias. If the meaning has sometimes been shaded to preserve the form, this is only one of the compromises that translation always involves.

Although I did not refer to any previous published translations in preparing my version, I have worked with several of them in the past, and inevitably have many phrases lingering in my head. If I have inadvertently echoed some of these, I hope that it will be understood as an accident—and also a reflection of the fact that English is much more limited in its rhymes than an inflected language such as Italian, in which numerous roots share a few common endings.

The symbol { after character names in ensembles indicate that Mozart has set the lines of the consecutive characters so marked to be sung simultaneously (as Da Ponte presumably intended). Most stage-directions are given as in the score. However, when I have considered additional directions necessary to explain the action to the reader, I have included these in square brackets. *r.b.*

ACT ONE

Partially-furnished room, with an armchair in the middle.

SCENE I

Figaro with a measuring device in his hand, and Susanna in front of a mirror, trying on a hat decorated with flowers.

1. Duet

FIGARO
(measuring)

Five... ten.... twenty... thirty...
thirty-six... forty-three.

SUSANNA
(looking at herself in the mirror)

Now I couldn't be more happy;
this bridal cap seems made for me.
Look at me, my dearest Figaro;
see my darling little bonnet!

FIGARO

Yes, my dear, the flowers upon it
seem to suit you to a tee!

SUSANNA & FIGARO

On the morning of our wedding,
this pretty bonnet that Susanna tied
looks lovely on the darling bride;
Susanna made it well, as all can see!

Recitative

SUSANNA

What are you measuring, Figaro sweetie?

FIGARO

I'm looking to see if this bed which the Count has given us will look all right in here.

SUSANNA

In this room?

FIGARO

Certainly; the Master has generously let us use it.

SUSANNA

You can have it to yourself.

FIGARO
You have a reason for this?

SUSANNA
(tapping her forehead)
My reason's in my head.

FIGARO
(doing the same)
Why can't you get it into my head too?

SUSANNA
Because I don't want to. Are you my servant, or no?

FIGARO
But I don't understand why you're so displeased to have the most convenient room in the palace?

SUSANNA
Because I'm Susanna, and you are crazy!

FIGARO
Thank you for the flattery! Just look a moment and see if we could do better anywhere else.

2. Duet

FIGARO
If Madame should
call for you in the night,
ding, ding—in two steps
you could be with her.
And then if my Master
should need me for something,
dong, dong—in an instant
I'd be there to serve.

SUSANNA
And so if one morning
our charming mister Count
ding, ding, would send you
some three miles away....
Dong, dong! To my door
the Devil would bring him,
and then in an instant...

FIGARO
Susanna, be quiet, no more...

SUSANNA
Listen!

FIGARO
All right, out with it!

SUSANNA
If you want to hear what follows,
then banish suspicions
insulting and bold!

FIGARO
I must hear what follows...
but doubt and suspicion
make my blood run cold.

Recitative

SUSANNA
All right; listen and be quiet!

FIGARO
Tell me: what's going on?

SUSANNA
Our lord the Count, tired of going hunting for girls outside the estate, wants to try his luck right here in the palace. And it is not his Countess, you can be sure, for whom he has this appetite...

FIGARO
For whom, then?

SUSANNA
For your little Susanna.

FIGARO
For you?

SUSANNA
For me myself; and as he hopes to consummate his noble project, it will be convenient to have me so close by!

FIGARO
Bravo! Go right ahead!

SUSANNA
This is his kindness; this is the care he takes of you, and of your little bride.

FIGARO
Who could imagine such selfless charity?!

SUSANNA

Hush! Here's the best part. Don Basilio, my singing teacher, is his go-between, and every day when giving me my lesson, he repeats the same old tune.

FIGARO

Who? Basilio? The scoundrel!

SUSANNA

And you thought perhaps that he gave me my dowry just because of your handsome face!

FIGARO

Well, I had hoped so...

SUSANNA

He gave it me in order to obtain certain sweet moments that used to be his feudal right...

FIGARO

What? Hasn't the Count abolished the *droit de seigneur* on his estate?

SUSANNA

He did, but now he's sorry, and wants to reinstate it just for me.

FIGARO

Bravo! I like that! My dear Mister Count!
If you want amusement, you'll soon find...
(a bell rings offstage)
Who is ringing? It's the Countess!

SUSANNA

Good bye, good bye, dear Figaro...

FIGARO

Have courage, my darling.

SUSANNA

And you: start thinking!
(she goes out)

SCENE II

Figaro alone

FIGARO

Bravo, my lord and master! Now I begin to understand the mystery, and to see clearly the extent of your plan. We're off to London? You as minister, I as courier, and my Susanna... ambassadress in secret! No, that won't be! Figaro has spoken!

3. Cavatina

FIGARO

I will be happy, dear lord and master,
to play the guitar if you want to dance.
If you would care to visit my schoolroom,
I shall be glad to teach you to prance.

I shall!... But softly, working in secret,
hiding my purpose, I'll make my advance!

With rapid footwork, dodging, adjusting,
now nimbly feinting, now quickly thrusting,
I'll put an end to your thoughts of romance!

I will be happy, dear lord and master,
to play the guitar if you want to dance.

(he goes out)

SCENE III

Bartolo and Marcellina with a contract in her hand

Recitative

BARTOLO

And you wait until the day of his wedding before talking to me?

MARCELLINA

I do not lack the courage, my good doctor, to put a stop to marriages further advanced than this one. One merely needs a pretext, and he has given me certain undertakings, besides this contract.... But enough; we have to get Susanna frightened. If we could manage to get her to reject the Count, he would take my side out of vengeance and Figaro would thus become my husband!

BARTOLO

(taking the contract from Marcellina)

Good; I will handle it. Without holding back, explain everything to me. (How I would love to foist my old servant as a wife upon the man who robbed me of my sweetheart!)

4. Aria

BARTOLO

Vengeance! On to vengeance!
For it is a wise man's pleasure.
Excuse an insult? Forget an outrage?
Only cowards sink so low.

With skill... with cunning...
legal tangles... subtle wrangles...
I could do it.... The case is serious,
but be assured it shall be done.

Combing the codices
for legal covenant,
searching the indices
for something relevant,
I will investigate,
argue, equivocate;
if there's a loophole,
I'll soon slip in!

All Andalusia knows Dr. Bartolo;
that rascal Figaro shall marry you!
(he goes out)

SCENE IV

Marcellina; later Susanna with a woman's night-cap, dress, and a ribbon

Recitative

MARCELLINA

(I have not lost everything yet; I still have some hope. But here's Susanna; I'm going to try something... Let's pretend I don't see her.) [*aloud*] So that's the little pearl that he wishes to marry!

SUSANNA

(remains in the background)

(She's talking about me.)

MARCELLINA

It's a pity that Figaro can't do better, but you know what they say: *money talks.*

SUSANNA

(What slander! It's a good thing that everybody knows what to make of *her!)*

MARCELLINA

Brava! What discernment! You'd think with those modest eyes, with that pious manner... and yet...

SUSANNA

(I'd better go.)

MARCELLINA

What a darling bride!!

(They both make to leave, and meet at the door.)

5. Duet

MARCELLINA
(making a curtsy)
I curtsy in homage,
brilliant young mistress!

SUSANNA
(making a curtsy)
The homage is mine,
well-seasoned madam!

MARCELLINA
(curtsy)
No, you go before me!

SUSANNA
(curtsy)
No, no, after you!

SUSANNA & MARCELLINA
(curtsies)
I know my good manners;
I will not be rude.

MARCELLINA
(curtsies each line)
The bride of the hour!

SUSANNA
(curtsies each line)
The lady of leisure!

MARCELLINA
The Count's little flower!

SUSANNA
The national treasure!

MARCELLINA
Your worth!

SUSANNA
Your outfit!

MARCELLINA
Your position!

SUSANNA
Your age!

MARCELLINA{
I can't stay here longer,
I'm too angry by half!

SUSANNA{
Decrepit old harridan,
you do make me laugh!
(Marcellina leaves)

SCENE V
Susanna; later Cherubino

Recitative

SUSANNA
Off with you, pretentious old schoolmarm! Just because you've read a couple of books and tutored Madame as a child...

CHERUBINO
(enters rapidly)
Susanetta, are you there?

SUSANNA
I'm here; what do you want?

CHERUBINO
My God, what a calamity!

SUSANNA
Another one! What happened this time?

CHERUBINO
Yesterday the Count, just because he caught me alone with Barbarina, dismissed me from his service; and if the Countess, my most lovely lady, does not ask him for pardon, I must go away and never see you any more, darling Susanna!

SUSANNA
Never see *me*? That would be something! But I thought it was for the Countess that your heart was secretly yearning?

CHERUBINO
Ah, she inspires me with such respect! How lucky you are to be able to see her whenever you want, to dress her in the morning, undress her in the evening, pin up her hair, lace her bodice... Ah, if I were in your place... What have you got there? Tell me!

SUSANNA
Ah, it's the pretty ribbon from the nightcap worn by your most lovely lady.

CHERUBINO
(snatching the ribbon from Susanna's hand)
Come, give it me, sister; give it me for pity's sake!

SUSANNA
(trying to get it back)
Give that back at once!

CHERUBINO
(dodging her around the armchair)
Oh dearest, prettiest, most fortunate of ribbons! I would die rather than surrender it!

SUSANNA
(begins to chase him, then stops as though tired)
What is this insolence?

CHERUBINO
Calm down! In exchange for it, I'll give you my latest poem.

SUSANNA
And what would I do with a poem?

CHERUBINO
Read it to your mistress; read it to yourself; read it to Barbarina, to Marcellina; read it to every woman that you find!

SUSANNA
Poor Cherubino, you've lost your mind!

6. Aria

CHERUBINO
I don't know who I am, where I'm turning,
first I'm freezing, and then I am burning;
every woman makes me start blushing,
every woman turns me insane.

Just a mention of love or of passion
churns me up in so headlong a fashion
that I babble in words ever gushing
of desire which I cannot explain.

I speak of love while waking,
I speak of love while dreaming,
to rivers, shadows, mountains,
to forests, flowers, and fountains,

to winds and breezes flying,
which waft my useless sighing
till everything has flown.

And if there's none to hear me,
I talk of love alone.

SCENE VI

Cherubino, Susanna; later the Count

Recitative

CHERUBINO
(seeing the Count approaching, turns round in fear and hides himself behind the armchair)

Help, I'm done for!

SUSANNA
(trying to conceal Cherubino)

Oh no, it's the Count! Now I'm in trouble!

THE COUNT

Susanna, you seem agitated and confused.

SUSANNA

Sir... I beg your pardon... but... if anyone... should come in... For pity's sake, please go!

THE COUNT
(sitting down in the chair, and taking Susanna by the hand)

Just a moment, then I'll leave you. Listen.

SUSANNA

I won't listen to anything.

THE COUNT

Just two words. You know I am the new ambassador to London, appointed by the King. I had intended that Figaro should go with me.

SUSANNA

My lord, if I might...

THE COUNT
(getting up)

Speak freely, my dear; and by that privilege that you will exert over me as long as you live, ask me, implore me, command me.

SUSANNA

Sir, let me be. I ask no privileges; I do not want them, I don't expect them... I'm so unhappy!!

THE COUNT

Oh no, Susanna, I want to make you happy! You must know how I love you; Basilio has already told you everything. Now listen, if for a few moments you'd meet me in the garden around nightfall... I would pay a lot for such a favor....

BASILIO
(offstage)

He went out a while ago.

THE COUNT

Who spoke?

SUSANNA

Oh God!

THE COUNT

Go, and stop him from entering.

SUSANNA

And leave you here alone?

BASILIO
(offstage)

He might be with Madame; I'll look for him.

THE COUNT
(pointing to the chair)

I'll hide behind here.

SUSANNA

No, don't hide!

THE COUNT

Hush! Just make sure he goes.

SUSANNA

Oh no! What are you doing?

(The Count makes to hide behind the chair; Susanna puts herself between him and the Page; the Count pushes her gently aside. As she retreats, the Page moves round in front of the chair and sits in it, pulling up his feet; Susanna covers him with a dressing-gown.)

SCENE VII

The foregoing with Basilio

BASILIO

Susanna, heaven bless you! Have you by any chance seen the Count?

SUSANNA
And what would the Count want with me? Get out!

BASILIO
Wait, listen: Figaro is looking for him.

SUSANNA
(Oh heavens!) Then he's looking for the man who hates him most after you.

THE COUNT
(Let's see how well he serves me.)

BASILIO
I've never heard any moral law that he who loves the wife must hate the husband. You know the Count adores you...

SUSANNA
Get out, you vile procurer for another's lust! I have no need of your morals, of the Count, or of his adoration!

BASILIO
There's nothing wrong in that! Everyone to his own tastes! I only thought you, like every other woman, would prefer as your lover a lord who is generous, prudent, and wise, to some adolescent, a mere pageboy...

SUSANNA
To Cherubino!

BASILIO
To Cherubino! That Cupid Cherubino, who today at daybreak was seen hanging around here, trying to get in...

SUSANNA
You man of evil, that's a vicious slander!

BASILIO
It's a slander in your book to use one's eyes? [*producing Cherubino's canzona, which he had surreptitiously picked up*] And what about this poem? Tell me in confidence—I'm your friend and wouldn't tell a soul—is it for you, or Madame...?

SUSANNA
(What devil can have told him?)

BASILIO
And while we're on the subject, daughter, you should teach him better. He gazes at Madame so often at the table, and with such infatuation, that if the Count picked up on it...! On this point, as you know, he is a tiger!

SUSANNA
You scoundrel! Why do you go around spreading such lies?

BASILIO
I? What injustice! I sell only what I buy. I just repeat what everyone is saying, without adding a word to it.

THE COUNT
(emerging)
Really, what *is* everybody saying?

BASILIO
(Oh marvelous!)

SUSANNA
(Oh heavens!)

7. Trio

THE COUNT
(to Basilio)
What an outrage! This seducer
shall go back from whence he came!

BASILIO
I have come at a bad moment;
forgive me, sir, I'm not to blame!

SUSANNA
I am ruined, I am wretched!
(half fainting)
I could almost die for shame!

BASILIO & THE COUNT
(supporting her)
The poor girl is fainting!
Feel the beating of her heart!

BASILIO
(leading her to the chair to sit her down)
Let's take her over to the armchair.

SUSANNA
Where am I? (*reviving*) What do I see?
(she pushes them both away)
What a liberty! You get away!

BASILIO{
We are only here to help you;
and your virtue's safe with us!

THE COUNT{
We are only here to help you;
darling, do not make a fuss.

BASILIO
(to the Count)
All I told her of the pageboy
was only the merest guesswork.

SUSANNA
It's a slander, it's a falsehood!
Don't believe such outright lies!

THE COUNT
He must go, the little dandy!

SUSANNA AND BASILIO
The poor child!

THE COUNT
The poor child?
I have caught him once before.

SUSANNA AND BASILIO
What? When?

THE COUNT
Yesterday, at your cousin's. Finding the door was bolted, I
knocked; Barbarina opened more nervous than she usually is.
Something in her face made me suspicious; I looked around,
searched everywhere, and very slowly lifting the cloth from off the
table, I saw the Page... (*similarly lifting the robe, he uncovers the page*)
What? Not again!

SUSANNA
(It gets worse and worse!)

BASILIO
(It gets even better!)

THE COUNT{
Oh, you virtuous little madam!
Now I see your little game!

SUSANNA{
Nothing worse could ever happen!
I shall lose my honest name!

BASILIO{
Così fan tutte is the saying;
women always are the same!

Recitative

THE COUNT

Basilio, go at once and look for Figaro; I want him to see this...

(gestures to Cherubino that he must not move)

SUSANNA

And I want him to hear it! Go on!

THE COUNT

No, wait! What audacity! What excuse can you have when your sin is so evident?

SUSANNA

An innocent person needs no excuses.

THE COUNT

But when did the boy come in?

SUSANNA

He was with me when you arrived; he was asking me to beg the Countess to pardon him. Your arrival got him all confused, so he used the chair to hide.

THE COUNT

But I myself sat in the chair when I came into the room!

CHERUBINO

At that time, I was hiding behind it.

THE COUNT

And when I myself went behind?

CHERUBINO

Then I turned right around, and hid here.

THE COUNT
(to Susanna)

Heavens, he must have heard everything I was saying to you!

CHERUBINO

I did my very best not to listen.

THE COUNT

You traitor!

BASILIO

Stop! People are coming!

THE COUNT
(pulling Cherubino out of the chair)

And you can stay right here, you little serpent!

SCENE VIII

Figaro, peasant men and women, and the foregoing.
(Figaro with a white veil in his hand. The chorus of peasant men and women, all dressed in white, scatter flowers from little baskets in front of the Count while they sing the following.)

8. Chorus

CHORUS
Gratefully we scatter blossoms
in honor of our gracious lord.
Our maiden flowers remain unsullied,
spared the harvest of his sword.

Recitative

THE COUNT
(to Figaro)
What is this play-acting?

FIGARO
(quietly to Susanna)
Here we go! Darling, back me up.

SUSANNA
(I've no hope in this.)

FIGARO
My lord, do not disdain the well-deserved tribute of our affection. Now that you have abolished a custom so distasteful to all true lovers...

THE COUNT
That was abolished long since! What do you want?

FIGARO
The first fruits of your wisdom are now ours to gather in. Our wedding has been arranged. Now we ask you to honor her who through your graciousness still remains untouched, by crowning her with this white veil, symbol of purity.

THE COUNT
(How devilishly clever! I will have to pretend.) I am grateful, my friends, for your honest sentiments! But for this I deserve neither tributes nor praise; it is an unjust custom that I abolished on my estates out of duty and pure humanity.

ALL
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!!

SUSANNA
What virtue!

FIGARO
What justice!

THE COUNT
(to Figaro and Susanna)
I promise to complete the ceremony. I only ask your brief indulgence. I would like to have all my people round me, in lavish style, when I seal your happiness. (I must find Marcellina). Go now, my friends.

8a. Chorus

CHORUS
Gratefully we scatter blossoms
in honor of our gracious lord.
Our maiden flowers remain unsullied,
spared the harvest of his sword.
(they go out)

Recitative

FIGARO, SUSANNA & BASILIO
Hurrah!

FIGARO
(to Cherubino)
Why are you not cheering?

SUSANNA
The poor boy is upset because the Master has dismissed him from the castle!

FIGARO
Oh, on such a glorious day!

SUSANNA
On the day of our wedding!

FIGARO
When everybody so admires him!

CHERUBINO
(kneeling)
Pardon, my lord...

THE COUNT
You don't deserve it.

SUSANNA
He's still only a child!

THE COUNT
Less so than you think.

CHERUBINO
I may be young; but I *can* still talk...

THE COUNT
(getting him up)
All right, all right; I pardon you. I'll even go further: there's a post as ensign vacant in my regiment; I appoint you; you leave at once; good-bye!
(The Count makes to go; Susanna and Figaro stop him)

SUSANNA AND FIGARO
Please, just until tomorrow!

THE COUNT
No, he leaves at once.

CHERUBINO
My lord, I shall obey; I'm at your service.

THE COUNT
Come, for the last time you may embrace Susanna. (They weren't expecting *that!)*

FIGARO
Hey, Captain, give me your hand;
(quietly to Cherubino)
I want to speak with you before you go.
(aloud)
Good- bye, poor little Cherubino;
how your future has changed in one brief moment!

9. Aria

FIGARO
Flit no more like a butterfly flying,
day and night in an amorous spiral,
stirring up pretty girls with your sighing;
bid farewell, little Cupid, to love.

Strut no more in your fine silken ribbons,
fancy clothes, and your rosy complexion,
pretty locks with their curls like a woman's,
and this hat with its feathers above.

In the army, different story!
Short on pay, but big on glory!
Gun on shoulder, sword in scabbard,
shoulders back, but facing forward.
Heavy helmet, perhaps a turban;
lots of fame, but little earnings!

And instead of going dancing,
through the mud you'll be advancing.
Over mountains, deep in valleys,
freezing snow or broiling heat waves,
to the sound of martial trumpets,
mighty bombards, roaring cannons,
bullets, balls of many sizes,
whistling in every key!

Cherubino, off to glory,
off to fight for victory!
(All go out in military style.)

ACT TWO

Luxurious room, with an alcove and three doors

SCENE I

The Countess alone; later Susanna and then Figaro

10. Cavatina

THE COUNTESS

God of Love, bring consolation
for my sorrow, for my sighs!
Either give me back my husband,
or permit that I should die!

Recitative

THE COUNTESS

Come, dear Susanna, finish telling me the story.

SUSANNA

(coming in)

I've told you everything.

THE COUNTESS

So he wants to seduce you?

SUSANNA

Oh, the noble Count doesn't use such niceties with women of my kind; for him, it's a simple matter of money.

THE COUNTESS

Ah, the cruel man no longer loves me!

SUSANNA

Well, why is he then so jealous of you?

THE COUNTESS

That's the way with modern husbands: unfaithful as a matter of course, capricious by nature, and all jealous out of sheer pride. But if Figaro loves you...he should be able...

FIGARO

(singing offstage)

La la la...

SUSANNA

Here he is! Come in, dear; Madame is impatient...

FIGARO
(coming in; to the Countess)

You've no need to worry about any of this. After all, what's it all about? The Count happens to like my wife, and so he would secretly like to reinstate his feudal right. The thing is both possible and natural.

THE COUNTESS

Possible?!

SUSANNA

Natural?!

FIGARO

Very natural. And if Susanna's willing, very possible.

SUSANNA

Get on with it!

FIGARO

All right, I'm almost done. You know he's had this idea of appointing me his courier, and Susanna his ambassadress-in-secret? Well, because she stubbornly refuses to accept the particular position he has in mind, he is now threatening to favor Marcellina. That's all there is to it.

SUSANNA

How can you joke about something this serious?

FIGARO

Isn't it enough that I think while I'm joking? Here's my plan: I have sent him via Basilio an anonymous letter to warn him of a certain assignation...*(to the Countess)*...that you are supposed to have made with a lover during this evening's ball...

THE COUNTESS

Oh God! What are you saying? With someone as jealous as he is...!

FIGARO

All the better! That way, we can most quickly embarrass him, confuse him, entrap him, upset his little plans, fill him with suspicion, and get it into his head that other people can play this modern game as well as he can. My idea is to gain time by all of this, so that before you know it (and assuming that nothing happens to upset our plans), it's time for our wedding, and in your presence *(indicating the Countess)* there's no way he would dare oppose our vows.

SUSANNA

That's true, but if he doesn't, Marcellina will certainly object.

FIGARO
(to Susanna)

But wait: I'd like you to tell the Count that you will meet him in the garden later this evening. Cherubino, who on my advice has not left yet, will be disguised as a girl to keep the assignation in your place. This is the only way by which Monsieur, caught red-handed by Madame, will be compelled to do whatever she wishes.

THE COUNTESS
(to Susanna)

What do you think?

SUSANNA

It's not bad.

THE COUNTESS

But in our situation...

SUSANNA

If Figaro thinks it will work... but do we have time?

FIGARO

The Count has gone out hunting, and won't return for several hours. I'll go and send Cherubino up; I'll leave the job of dressing him to you.

THE COUNTESS

And then?...

FIGARO

And then...

"I will be happy, dear lord and master,
to play the guitar if you want to dance..."

(he leaves)

SCENE II

The Countess, Susanna; later Cherubino

Recitative

THE COUNTESS

How it grieves me, Susanna, that this young man should have heard the Count's propositions. Ah, you little know...! But why ever didn't he come to see me himself...? Where is his *canzonetta*?

SUSANNA

Right here. As soon as he comes let's have him sing it. Ssh, someone's coming! It's him! Come in, come in, mister officer!

CHERUBINO
[*not seeing the Countess*]
Ah, don't call me by such a tragic title! It reminds me that I have to leave my Lady, who is so good...

SUSANNA
And so lovely!

CHERUBINO
Oh yes...certainly...

SUSANNA
Oh yes...certainly...You big hypocrite! Now quickly sing the song that you gave to me this morning; Madame would like to hear it.

THE COUNTESS
Who wrote it?

SUSANNA
(pointing to Cherubino)
Just look at him: he is blushing all over his face!

THE COUNTESS
Take my guitar, and accompany him.

CHERUBINO
I'm trembling all over... but if my Lady chooses...

SUSANNA
She chooses, yes she chooses. No more excuses!

11. Arietta

CHERUBINO
Ladies, who know what
the heart can reveal,
I beg you, show if
it's love that I feel.

All that I suffer
I shall explain.
Can you discover
what drives me insane?

Sensing a feeling
tense with desire,
with pleasure reeling,
tortured by fire,

Sometimes I shiver,
next I'm aflame,
then all a-quiver,
freezing with shame.

I seek some ideal
outside of me,
knowing not if it's real
or what it can be.

Without my wishing,
I sigh and I moan;
without any reason,
I tremble and groan.

It leaves me no leisure
by night or by day,
and yet I take pleasure
in feeling this way.

Ladies, who know what
the heart can reveal,
I beg you, show if
it's love that I feel.

Recitative

THE COUNTESS
Bravo! What a fine voice! I never knew that you sang so well!

SUSANNA
Oh, in truth everything he does he does well. Now to business, handsome soldier, Figaro has told you...?

CHERUBINO
He told me everything.

SUSANNA
(measuring herself against Cherubino)
Let me see... that will do fine! We're about the same height. take off your jacket.
(she removes his jacket)

THE COUNTESS
What are you doing?

SUSANNA
Don't worry.

THE COUNTESS
But what if somebody came in?

SUSANNA

Let him; what harm are we doing? All right, I'll lock the door.

(she locks the door)

But how ever can we hide his hair?

THE COUNTESS

Go fetch one of my caps from the closet. Hurry!

(Susanna goes into the closet to get a cap. Cherubino goes up to the Countess, and she notices the commission which had fallen on the floor. the Countess takes it, opens it, and sees that it lacks a formal seal.)

What is that document?

CHERUBINO

My commission.

THE COUNTESS

They've been quick about it!

CHERUBINO

I just got it from Basilio.

THE COUNTESS

(handing it back to him)

In their haste they've forgotten the seal.

SUSANNA

(returning)

What seal?

THE COUNTESS

The seal on his commission.

SUSANNA

Heavens! What urgency! Here is the cap.

THE COUNTESS

Hurry, take a brush and comb!
How terrible for us, if the Count came home!

12. Aria

SUSANNA

(taking Cherubino and making him kneel in front of her, a short distance from where the Countess is seated)

Come here, kneel down without delay,
and let me do your hair.

(she combs him on one side, then turns him by a hand under his chin)

And now turn round the other way;
be sure you stay right there.

(while she adjusts him, Cherubino turns to look tenderly at the Countess)

Now look at me directly,
and keep your head up high.
At me, I said, not at Madame;
you must not be so sly!

The neckline rather higher...
the hem a little lower...
your hands both folded neatly...
Be sure you walk discreetly;
come on—let's see you try.

(softly to the Countess)

Just watch the little creature!
Observe his handsome features!
His winsome ways, his posture—
So pretty one could die!

If women fall in love with him.
they have good reason why!

Recitative

THE COUNTESS
What silliness!

SUSANNA
You know, I think I'm even jealous of him myself! You little serpent, when are you going to stop being so handsome?

THE COUNTESS
Enough playing around. Now roll his sleeve up above the elbow so that we can fit on the dress more easily.

SUSANNA
(doing so)
There you are.

THE COUNTESS
Higher still. That's it. (*She sees the ribbon, which he has tied round his arm*) What is this ribbon?

SUSANNA
It's the one he stole from me.

THE COUNTESS
And this blood?

CHERUBINO
This blood... I don't know how... but a while ago I slipped... on a stone... I scratched the skin... and bound the cut with the ribbon.

SUSANNA
Show me. It's not too bad! Your arm is even whiter than mine! Like a girl's!...

THE COUNTESS
Are you still playing the fool? Go into my dressing-room, and fetch a piece of gauze; there's some on the jewel case.

(Susanna leaves quickly)

About that ribbon... actually... I rather like the color, and would be sad to lose it.

SUSANNA
(coming in with the gauze and some scissors)
Here you are! But how will we tie it to his arm?

THE COUNTESS
Fetch another ribbon, and my dress at the same time.

CHERUBINO
Ah, the other ribbon would have healed me faster!

(Susanna leaves by the door in the back, taking Cherubino's jacket)

THE COUNTESS
Why? this one is better!

CHERUBINO
But when a ribbon... has tied the hair... or touched the skin... of somebody...

THE COUNTESS
...somebody special... it's good for wounds! Is that it? It has qualities that I never suspected!

CHERUBINO
Madame is joking, while I must leave for ever...

THE COUNTESS
Poor boy! What a misfortune!

CHERUBINO
I'm so unhappy!

THE COUNTESS
You're crying!

CHERUBINO
Oh Heaven, I beg you let me die! Perhaps as I approach my final moment, this mouth would dare to...!

THE COUNTESS
Don't be silly! What's all this nonsense?

(a knocking is heard at the door)

Who is knocking on my door?

THE COUNT
(outside the door)

Why is this locked?

THE COUNTESS

Oh God, it's my husband! I'm done for! You here without a jacket, in such a state! the anonymous letter... his terrible jealousy...!

THE COUNT

Why this delay?

THE COUNTESS

I'm all alone... yes, quite alone...!

THE COUNT

To whom were you talking?

THE COUNTESS

To you... whom else? To you yourself!

CHERUBINO

After all that has happened... his rage... there's only one thing I can do!

(he runs into the closet and closes the door)

THE COUNTESS
(taking the closet key)

Heaven protect me in such danger!

(She runs to open the door for the Count)

SCENE III

The Countess and the Count, dressed for the hunt [*and carrying a letter*]

THE COUNT

This is new! It has not usually been your custom to lock yourself in your room!

THE COUNTESS

That's true; but I... I was here, trying on...

THE COUNT

Trying on...?

THE COUNTESS

...some clothes... and Susanna was with me... but she's now gone back to her own room.

THE COUNT
At any rate you seem to be nervous. Take a look at this paper.

THE COUNTESS
(Heavens! It's the letter that Figaro wrote to him...!)
(Cherubino knocks over a chair and small table in the closet, making a lot of noise.)

THE COUNT
What was that noise? Something fell over in the closet.

THE COUNTESS
I didn't hear anything.

THE COUNT
It seems you have much else on your mind.

THE COUNTESS
Whatever about?

THE COUNT
There is somebody in there.

THE COUNTESS
Who could it be?

THE COUNT
That's what I'm asking *you*. I only just came in.

THE COUNTESS
Ah yes, Susanna... of course...!

THE COUNT
But you said she went into her own room!

THE COUNTESS
To her room or to that one—I didn't notice...

THE COUNT
Susanna? And how is it then that you are so disturbed?

THE COUNTESS
Disturbed by my own chambermaid?

THE COUNT
I can't say; but you are definitely disturbed.

THE COUNTESS
Ah, my maid has disturbed *you a lot more than she* disturbs me!

THE COUNT
That's very true, as you shall shortly see.

(Susanna re-enters, and stops on seeing the Count, who is standing outside the closet, talking through the door. She remains out of sight.)

13. Trio

THE COUNT
Susanna, I command you,
come out now, come along!

THE COUNTESS
Wait a moment... listen...
to come out would be wrong.

SUSANNA
What is all this commotion?
Where can the Page have gone?

THE COUNT
And who would dare prevent her?

THE COUNTESS
Prevent her? Modesty.
She's trying on the costume
that she intends to wear.

THE COUNT{
It's clear the situation:
you have a lover there!

THE COUNTESS{
(A dreadful situation;
a desperate affair!)

SUSANNA{
(I see the situation,
and we had best take care!)
(Susanna hides in the alcove.)

THE COUNT
Susanna, if you're in there,
at least you can reply...

THE COUNTESS
No, do not speak, I tell you:
not so much as a sigh!

THE COUNT{
My Lady, please think carefully;
you would not want a scandal
or disaster to result!

THE COUNTESS{
My Lord, think very carefully;
you would not want a scandal
or disaster to result!

SUSANNA{
Oh heavens, a calamity!
Some scandal or disaster
will certainly result!

Recitative

THE COUNT
Then you won't open the door?

THE COUNTESS
Why should I open my own rooms?

THE COUNT
All right, have it your way. We'll open it without a key. Ho, servants!

THE COUNTESS
What? Would you question a lady's honor in public?

THE COUNT
You're right; I made a mistake. But I can avoid all rumors, or any kind of scandal with the servants; I will fetch the tools myself. You may wait for me here. But first, to put my doubts to rest completely, I shall lock all the doors.
(The Count locks the door which leads to the maid's room.)

THE COUNTESS
(What rashness!)

THE COUNT
Would you do me the honor of accompanying me? Madame, here is my arm; let's go.

THE COUNTESS
Let's go.

THE COUNT
Susanna will stay there till we return.
(They leave, locking the door behind them.)

SCENE IV

Susanna and Cherubino

14. Duet

SUSANNA
(rushing from the alcove to the closet door)

Open, quickly, hurry!
Come out; it's just Susanna!
Cherubino, quickly,
come out—you cannot stay!

CHERUBINO

Oh, what a dreadful flurry!
How will I get away?

SUSANNA

Go on, don't wait!
Try here, try there!
(they both run from one door to the other)

SUSANNA & CHERUBINO

He locked the doors behind him!
We do not have a prayer!

CHERUBINO

There's no point wasting time here!

SUSANNA

He'll kill you if he finds you!

CHERUBINO
(moving towards the window)

Let's take a look outside here:
it looks onto the garden.

SUSANNA
(holding him back from jumping)

Don't do it, Cherubino!
Don't jump—it's far too high!

CHERUBINO
(looking out of the window)

I'd only break some flower-pots;
it's not like I would die!

SUSANNA
(still holding him back)

It's much too far for jumping!
Hold back—it's far too high!

CHERUBINO{
(tearing himself free)

Let me go!
Before I'd harm my Lady,
I'd leap into the fire!
Give her this hug to show it.
Addio—and so good-bye!

(he jumps out; there is a crash)

SUSANNA{

He'll kill himself, I know it!
Stop! Stop! Don't jump!

Recitative

SUSANNA

Oh, look how the little devil can run! He's a mile away already! But there's no time for wasting! I'll slip into the closet, and when that bully comes, I shall be waiting!

(she goes into the closet and closes the door)

SCENE V

The Countess and the Count with a hammer and crowbar in his hand; he checks all the doors.

THE COUNT

Everything is as I left it. Will you open the door yourself, or must I...?

THE COUNTESS

No, stop; just listen to me a moment. Do you really think me capable of failing in my duty?

THE COUNT

Have it your own way. I am going into that closet, and will see whoever is hiding there.

THE COUNTESS

Yes, you will see him... But listen to me quietly.

THE COUNT

So it's not Susanna?

THE COUNTESS

No, but it is somebody whom you could not possibly have any reason to suspect. For this evening... we were planning... just an innocent game... and I swear to you... that my honor... my fidelity...

THE COUNT

Who is he then? Out with it! I shall kill him!

THE COUNTESS
Listen! Ah, I dare not!

THE COUNT
Say it!

THE COUNTESS
It's a boy....

THE COUNT
A boy?!...

THE COUNTESS
Yes... Cherubino...

THE COUNT
(Is it to be my destiny to find this Page everywhere I go?) What?
He hasn't left yet? Scoundrels! I see my doubts were justified! This
is the affair of which they warned me in that letter!

SCENE VI
The Countess and the Count

15. Finale

THE COUNT
(at the closet door)
Out you come, you ill-bred puppy!
Out you come, accursed page!

THE COUNTESS
Ah, my Lord, please calm your anger;
you might kill him in your rage!

THE COUNT
And you still would dare oppose me?

THE COUNTESS
No, listen...

THE COUNT
Then speak.

THE COUNTESS
I swear to God that he is blameless...
and the state in which you find him...
clothes disordered... hanging open...

THE COUNT
Clothes disordered? Hanging open?
Pray continue!

THE COUNTESS
Just to dress him as a woman...

THE COUNT{
Ah my Lady, you are shameless;
I'll avenge what has occurred.

THE COUNTESS{
You demean me with this outrage;
you are wrong to doubt my word.

THE COUNT
Give me the key!

THE COUNTESS
He is blameless!
(she gives him the key)
You know well...

THE COUNT
I know nothing!
Get out of my sight!
You're a wanton, evil woman,
and a blot upon my name!

THE COUNTESS
I'll go... yes... but...

THE COUNT
I will not listen.

THE COUNTESS
I am not guilty.

THE COUNT{
Your face betrays you!
He shall die, confounded pageboy,
bumptious rival to my bed.

THE COUNTESS{
He is blind with rage and fury;
jealousy has turned his head.

SCENE VII

Susanna and the foregoing

(The Count opens the closet and Susanna emerges; she curtsies in the doorway and remains there.)

THE COUNT
Susanna!

THE COUNTESS
Susanna!

SUSANNA
My Lord.
Why so astounded?
With sword in your hand,
just do as you planned,
and kill that damned pageboy:
you see him right here.

THE COUNT{
(This lesson's a hard one!
My head's in a spin!)

THE COUNTESS{
(Susanna was in there?
How could she get in?)

SUSANNA{
(They're trying to grasp it,
but can't even begin!)

THE COUNT
You're alone?

SUSANNA
Look closely;
he might be within.

THE COUNT
I'll look; he might still be within.
(he goes into the closet)

SCENE VIII

Susanna, the Countess, and later the Count

THE COUNTESS
Susanna, I'm dying;
I hardly can breathe.

SUSANNA
(pointing to the window from which Cherubino jumped)
I'm glad to relieve you:
he jumped and got clear!

THE COUNT
(comes out from the closet)
It seems I'm mistaken;

I can't understand it.
If I've wrongly accused you,
I beg you excuse me—
but such cruel tricks
go too far to conceive.

THE COUNTESS & SUSANNA
Your idiotic jealousy
deserves no reprieve.

THE COUNT
I love you!

THE COUNTESS
Don't say that!

THE COUNT
I swear it.

THE COUNTESS
You're lying!
I'm the wanton, evil woman;
I'm that blot upon your name!

THE COUNT
Please help me, Susanna,
to calm her upset.

SUSANNA
A man so suspicious
deserves all he gets!

THE COUNTESS
Why does the fidelity
of the wife you adored
deserve such indignity
as her loving reward?

SUSANNA
My Lady!

THE COUNT
Rosina!

THE COUNTESS
How dare you? I'm Rosina no longer,
but the miserable creature
that you have abandoned,
now taking your pleasure
to make her despair.

THE COUNT{
You've confused and surprised me,
you've roundly chastised me;
I beg you, forgive.

SUSANNA{
Confused and surprised,
he's been too much chastised;
I beg you, forgive.

THE COUNTESS{
May I never suffer such injustice
again for as long as I live.

THE COUNT
But the page in the closet?

THE COUNTESS
That was only a test.

THE COUNT
And your nervous trembling?

THE COUNTESS
Was only in jest.

THE COUNT
But so monstrous a letter?

THE COUNTESS & SUSANNA
Was written by Figaro,
and sent via Basilio.

THE COUNT
The traitors! I'll...

THE COUNTESS & SUSANNA
If you want forgiveness,
you must first forgive.

THE COUNT
All right, if you're willing,
let us make peace now;
Rosina, I beg you,
you too must forgive!

THE COUNTESS
Susanna, I realize
I'm far too soft-hearted!
We women find anger
so hard to sustain!

SUSANNA
It's the song of the sexes:
however you start it,
You'll find the verse ends
with the same old refrain!

THE COUNT
Please look at me!...

THE COUNTESS
You're heartless!

THE COUNT
I was wrong, and I repent it.

THE COUNTESS, SUSANNA & THE COUNT
From this moment onwards,
we will seek understanding
and compassion again.

SCENE IX

The foregoing, with Figaro

FIGARO
My Lord, the musicians
are all in position:
the trumpets are braying,
the oboes are playing.
In singing and dancing,
the hour is advancing;
let's hurry—it's time
for our wedding to start.
(he takes Susanna by the arm)

THE COUNT
Slow down; take it steady.

FIGARO
The people are ready!

THE COUNT
Just one little detail
before we can go.

THE COUNTESS, SUSANNA & FIGARO{
(We're not yet out of danger;
all could still end in woe!)

THE COUNT{
(I still hold some cards,
but I must play them slow.)

THE COUNT
(showing Figaro the letter)
Can you tell me, my dear Figaro,
what this document might be?

FIGARO
Never seen it!

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & THE COUNT
Never seen it?

FIGARO
No, no, no!

SUSANNA
Never gave it to Basilo...

THE COUNTESS
To deliver...

THE COUNT
Now you get it?...

FIGARO
Oh no, oh no!

SUSANNA
You know nothing of the lover...?

THE COUNTESS
Who this evening in the garden...?

THE COUNT
Don't you see it...?

FIGARO
No, not at all.

THE COUNT
It's in vain you make excuses.
I know well when you are lying;
I can see it in your face.

FIGARO
Then my face may lie, but I don't.

THE COUNTESS & SUSANNA
Your evasions are quite useless.

He already knows our secret,
and your talent's out of place.

THE COUNT
So, your answer?

FIGARO
I don't have one.

THE COUNT
You admit it?

FIGARO
I admit nothing.

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
Hold your tongue, you stupid idiot!
Time to end this foolish chase!

FIGARO
Then let's end it in elation,
like an opera finale,
with a wedding celebration,
full of frolic and good cheer.

THE COUNTESS, SUSANNA & FIGARO{
Please, my Lord, do not oppose us;
bless this union we hold dear.

THE COUNT{
(Marcellina, Marcellina!
Why so tardy to appear?)

SCENE X

The foregoing with the gardener Antonio, carrying a broken pot of carnations.

ANTONIO
Ah, my Lord... my Lord...!

THE COUNT
What's the matter?

ANTONIO
Such insolence! Who did it? I want to know!

THE COUNTESS, SUSANNA, THE COUNT & FIGARO
What are you saying? What has happened?

ANTONIO
Listen...

THE COUNTESS, SUSANNA, THE COUNT & FIGARO
Go on then, speak up!

ANTONIO
From the balconies over the garden
people throw away stuff very often;
but this time I swear it's the limit,
for today they have thrown down a man!

THE COUNT
From the window?

ANTONIO
(showing him the flower-pot)
See my carnations!

THE COUNT
Into the garden?

ANTONIO
Yes!

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
(softly to Figaro)
Figaro, help us!

THE COUNT
What am I hearing?

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
This man is raving!
How dare he come here when he's drunk?

THE COUNT
(to Antonio)
But this man... where did he alight?

ANTONIO
Quick as lightning, the rascal got running;
in a flash he'd gone far out of sight.

SUSANNA
(softly to Figaro)
It's Cherubino...

FIGARO
(softly to Susanna)
I know, for I saw him.
[*laughing out loud*] Ah, ah, ah!

THE COUNT
Quiet there!

ANTONIO
(to Figaro)
You laughing at me?

FIGARO
(to Antonio)
You are plastered from morning to night!

THE COUNT
(to Antonio)
Now repeat that: a man from the balcony...?

ANTONIO
From the balcony.

THE COUNT
Into the garden...?

ANTONIO
To the garden.

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
But, my Lord, this is all drunken nonsense!

THE COUNT
(to Antonio)
Go on: did you not see his features?

ANTONIO
No, didn't see him.

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
(softly to Figaro)
Hey, Figaro, hear that?

FIGARO
(to Antonio)
Stupid fool, must you make such a riot,
shedding tears over one broken flower-pot?
There's no reason to keep the facts quiet:
I myself was the man that you saw.

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
What a brain! What invention!

THE COUNT
You? Oh really!

FIGARO
(to the Count)
You're surprised?

ANTONIO
(to Figaro)
You? Oh really!

THE COUNT
I cannot believe it.

ANTONIO
(to Figaro)
How have you gotten so big then?
When you jumped, you looked very small.

FIGARO
Right; when you jump you *get* very small.

ANTONIO
Oh, says who?

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
(to Figaro)
Will this fool not be quiet?

THE COUNT
(to Antonio)
What do *you* say?

ANTONIO
Seemed like a boy!

THE COUNT
Cherubino!

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
(Curse it!)

FIGARO
Right, exactly:
he returned from Seville on horseback,
for he rode on his horse into town.

ANTONIO
That's not so—don't you think you can fool me,
for I didn't see no horse jump down!

THE COUNT
Give me patience! Enough of this fooling!

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
We have had quite enough of this clown!

THE COUNT
(to Figaro)
And so you...?

FIGARO
Jumped out there.

THE COUNT
Tell me why?

FIGARO
I was scared...

THE COUNT
You were scared?

FIGARO
(pointing to the room which he shares with Susanna)
Scared of you.
I was there, waiting for my Susanna...
I heard footsteps... the sounds of a quarrel...
you were shouting... I thought of the letter...
so I jumped in confusion and terror...
(pretending to have sprained his ankle)
...and I twisted my foot as I fell!

ANTONIO
(showing Figaro some folded documents)
And so these papers are yours
that you dropped...?

THE COUNT
(taking them from him)
Here, give them to me.

FIGARO
(quietly to the Countess and Susanna)
Now I'm in trouble.

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS
(softly to Figaro)
Figaro, do something!

THE COUNT
(opening a document and closing it quickly)
Can you say what this paper could be?

FIGARO
(searching his pockets for various papers)
Just a moment... I have so many...

ANTONIO
Perhaps it's a list of the pawn shops!

FIGARO
Of your wine shops, more likely!

THE COUNT
Say something.
(to Antonio) You can go; off with you!

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
Leave us now; off with you!

ANTONIO
I will go, but I'll come back to catch you...

FIGARO
Off you go; I'm not frightened of you.
[*Antonio leaves*]

THE COUNT
(opening the paper once more to check it quickly)
Well then...

THE COUNTESS
(who has glimpsed the paper, softly to Susanna)
Ah! It's the page's commission!

SUSANNA
(softly to Figaro)
It's the page's commission!

THE COUNT
(to Figaro)
I'm waiting...

FIGARO
Oh, my head!... That is the commission
that the youngster entrusted to me.

THE COUNT
And what for?

FIGARO
It was lacking...

THE COUNT
Was lacking...?

THE COUNTESS
(as before)
The seal.

SUSANNA
The seal.

THE COUNT
Your answer?

FIGARO
It is usual...

THE COUNT
You sound confused.

FIGARO
It is usual to seal a commission!

THE COUNT{
(looking and seeing that it indeed lacks a seal, he throws the paper away)
(This scoundrel will make me go crazy!
It is all a deep mystery to me.)

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS{
(If I ever escape from this shipwreck,
I will never again put to sea.)

FIGARO{
(He can thunder and storm all he wants to;
poor man, he knows far less than me.)

SCENE XI

The foregoing, with Marcellina, Bartolo and Basilio

MARCELLINA, BASILIO & BARTOLO
You, my Lord, the soul of justice,
pray you hear our humble suit.

THE COUNT{
(They have come to bring me vengeance,
and their timing is astute.)

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO{
(They have come to sow confusion,
bringing up an old dispute.)

FIGARO
(to the Count)
They are idiots, and crazy!
Shady folk of ill repute!

THE COUNT
Quietly, in proper order,
everyone shall have his say!

MARCELLINA
I submit this marriage contract
that this man has signed with me;
and I claim a binding compact
that your Lordship must enforce!

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
What's this?! What's this?!!

THE COUNT
You there, be silent! I'm the judge and jury here!

BARTOLO
I appear as her attorney,
primed with cases and citations
for this legalistic tourney,
precedents from every source.

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
He's a humbug!

THE COUNT
You there, be silent! I'm the judge and jury here!

BASILIO
As a man of known morality,
I shall swear on oath before you
that her loan, in due legality
must be repaid, as I endorse.

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO
They're all crazy!

THE COUNT
You there, be silent! This proceeding,
starting with a careful reading,
must maintain its ordered course.

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO{
We're confused and we're confounded,
desperate, and quite astounded!
Some foul fiend from the inferno
must have sent them up our way!

MARCELLINA, BASILIO, BARTOLO & THE COUNT{
We shall haunt them, we shall flaunt them!
We have got them where we want them!
Some fair angel out of heaven
must be on our side today!

ACT THREE

Lavish hall with two thrones, prepared for a wedding

SCENE I

The Count alone

Recitative

THE COUNT

What a tangle it all is! An anonymous letter... the chamber-maid locked in the closet... her mistress confused... a man who jumps from the balcony into the garden... another claiming that it was he... I don't know what to make of it. Perhaps one of my vassals... people of that class often become too bold... but the Countess...? It would be an offence to doubt her; she has too much respect for herself. And what about my honor? My honor! Where have I been led by simple human error?

SCENE II

The Count, with the Countess and Susanna, at first in the background where the Count cannot see them.

THE COUNTESS
(to Susanna)

Go on, take heart: say that you will meet him in the garden.

THE COUNT

I must know if Cherubino arrived in Seville. I have sent Basilio to find out...

SUSANNA
(to the Countess)

Heavens! And if Figaro finds out?

THE COUNTESS

You had better not tell him anything. I myself will go in your place.

THE COUNT

He should get back before evening...

SUSANNA

Oh Lord... I don't dare!

THE COUNTESS

Just remember this: my happiness rests in your hands.
(the Countess leaves)

THE COUNT
And Susanna? Who knows if she has already betrayed my secret?
If she has spoken, I'll make him marry the old woman!

SUSANNA
(Marcellina!)
[*to the Count*] My Lord...

THE COUNT
What do you want?

SUSANNA
You seem angry!

THE COUNT
Do you need something?

SUSANNA
[*improvising*]
My Lord... your wife is having her vapors, and would like the bottle of smelling salts.

THE COUNT
Take it.

SUSANNA
I'll bring it back.

THE COUNT
Oh no, you can keep it for yourself.

SUSANNA
For me? We working women have no time for such ailments.

THE COUNT
But a lover, who loses her fiancé almost at the altar...?

SUSANNA
But we're paying Marcellina with the dowry you promised me.

THE COUNT
That I promised you? When?

SUSANNA
That's what I understood.

THE COUNT
Well, yes—*if* you had been willing to understand me better...

SUSANNA
It is my duty; and Your Lordship's wish shall be my pleasure.

16. Duet*

THE COUNT
Cruel! Why keep me waiting,
and cause me such distress?

SUSANNA
My Lord, a woman always
needs time to answer yes.

THE COUNT
You'll meet me in the garden?

SUSANNA
You ask, and I'll be there.

THE COUNT
You will not let me down?

SUSANNA
No, no, I would not dare.

THE COUNT{
I feel a surge of fervor
that fills my heart with joy.

SUSANNA{
(Excuse these little falsehoods
we women must employ!)

Recitative

THE COUNT
So why were you so cold with me this morning?

SUSANNA
Because the Page could overhear.

THE COUNT
And with Basilio, who was speaking for me?

SUSANNA
What need do we have now, for a Basilio?

THE COUNT
You're right... and you have promised.... Darling, if you let me
down... But the Countess will be wanting her smelling salts.

---

* Mozart extends this duet to double its length by having the Count repeat his questions and Susanna get confused in her answers.

SUSANNA
Oh, that was just a pretext; I could not have spoken to you without an excuse.

THE COUNT
(taking her hand)
Dearest!

SUSANNA
(pulling back)
Somebody's coming!

THE COUNT
(She's mine; I've made the catch!)

SUSANNA
(Don't count your chickens before they hatch!)

SCENE III
Figaro, Susanna & the Count

FIGARO
Hey, Susanna, where are you going?

SUSANNA
Ssh! Without even a lawyer you have won your case!
(she goes)

FIGARO
What has happened?
(he follows her)

SCENE IV
The Count alone

17. Recitative and Aria

THE COUNT
"You have won your case?" What did she mean? Have I walked into a trap? Villains! I'll punish you in any way I can. I'll base my verdict on my whims alone!

But what if he could pay off the old woman plaintiff?... Pay her? Using what for money?... And then there's Antonio, who might refuse to let his niece marry a nobody like Figaro... I'll cultivate the pride of that puffed-up drunkard... All will work in my favor... It's as good as done!

Must I, in my frustration,
see my contented servant
win one whose passion fervent
I helplessly desire?

And must I see this Goddess
joined to the merest peasant,
who wakes in her those pleasant
feelings I can't inspire?

Ah no, I won't admit you
a moment's satisfaction.
You think I would permit you
to drive me to distraction,
and then perhaps to ridicule
my all-consuming fire?

Even the expectation
of my approaching vengeance
fills me with jubilation
and gratifies my ire.

SCENE V*

The Count, Marcellina, Curzio, Figaro & Bartolo; later Susanna

Recitative

DON CURZIO
The case has been decided: either marry her or pay her; no more arguments.

MARCELLINA
I breathe more easily.

FIGARO
And I'm as good as dead.

MARCELLINA
(Finally I shall marry the man I adore.)

FIGARO
Your Excellency, I appeal.

---

* There is reason to believe that Mozart and Da Ponte originally planned that Scene VIII (the Countess' aria) should precede Scene V. Also, with the scene placed here, the offstage trial, whose results are announced by Don Curzio, would have been taking place without the Count or even Figaro, which seems unlikely. See the footnote on page 58.

THE COUNT
The verdict is a just one: either pay up or get married. Bravo, Don Curzio!

DON CURZIO
Your Lordship is too gracious!

BARTOLO
What a superb decision!

FIGARO
In what way superb?

BARTOLO
We are completely vindicated!

FIGARO
I will not marry her.

BARTOLO
You'll marry her!

DON CURZIO
Either pay her or marry her. She lent you two thousand ducats.

FIGARO
I am a gentleman, and cannot marry without the assent of my distinguished parents...

THE COUNT
Where are they? *Who* are they?

FIGARO
Let's look for them! I've been trying to find them for ten years.

BARTOLO
So you're some kind of foundling?

FIGARO
No, doctor, I was lost—or rather kidnapped.

THE COUNT
What?

MARCELLINA
How?

BARTOLO
Your proof?

DON CURZIO
The evidence?

FIGARO
The gold, the jewels, and the embroidered clothes that the robbers found on me even at that tender age are the true proof of my illustrious parentage—and above all, this birthmark blazoned on my arm...

MARCELLINA
A sword emblazoned on your right arm?

FIGARO
Who told *you* about it?

MARCELLINA
Oh God, it's him!

FIGARO
Of course it's me.

DON CURZIO, THE COUNT & BARTOLO
Who?

MARCELLINA
Raffaello.

BARTOLO
And robbers kidnapped you...?

FIGARO
Near a castle.

BARTOLO
This is your mother!

FIGARO
My wet nurse?

BARTOLO
No, your mother.

THE COUNT & DON CURZIO
His mother?!

FIGARO
What are you saying?

MARCELLINA
This is your father!

18. Sextet

MARCELLINA
(embracing Figaro)

In a mother's fond embraces,
let me greet my son again!

FIGARO
(to Bartolo)

Father, won't you be as gracious?
Do not make me blush for shame.

BARTOLO
(embracing Figaro)

I cannot escape my conscience;
I acknowledge your just claim.

DON CURZIO{

If he's his father, she's his mother;
this won't be her wedding day!

THE COUNT{

I'm bewildered; I'm confounded!
I must try to get away.

MARCELLINA & BARTOLO{

Beloved son!

FIGARO{

Beloved parents!

(The Count makes to leave, but Susanna enters quickly with a purse in her hand.)

SUSANNA

Wait a moment please, your Lordship!
Here I have two thousand pieces,
all the money owed by Figaro,
paying it to set him free.

THE COUNT & DON CURZIO

You must draw your own conclusions;
look, and work out what you see!

SUSANNA
(turns round to see Figaro embracing Marcellina)

Now the two are in collusion!
Heavens above, so false to me!

Leave her, scoundrel!

(Susanna makes to go)

FIGARO
(holding Susanna back)
No, wait!
Hear me, darling!

SUSANNA
(giving Figaro a blow)
You hear *this!*

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO{
It's her love that results in such fury,
a good heart that still knows how to feel.

THE COUNT{
I am boiling with anger and fury
at the hand fate has chosen to deal.

DON CURZIO{
He is boiling with anger and fury
at the hand fate has chosen to deal.

SUSANNA{
I am boiling with anger and fury
at this hag who my husband would steal!

MARCELLINA
(runs to embrace Susanna)
Come to my bosom
my dearest daughter,
for I am his mother,
and would be yours too.

SUSANNA
His mother?

BARTOLO, THE COUNT, DON CURZIO & MARCELLINA
His mother!

SUSANNA
(to Figaro)
Your mother?

FIGARO
(to Susanna)
And this is my father,
who'll tell you himself.

SUSANNA
His father?

BARTOLO, THE COUNT, DON CURZIO & MARCELLINA
His father!

SUSANNA
(to Figaro)
Your father?

FIGARO
(to Susanna)
And this is my mother,
as I have just said.

SUSANNA, MARCELLINA, BARTOLO & FIGARO{
(all four running to embrace one another)
In such sweet contentment
this magical moment
has given my spirit
no power to resist.

DON CURZIO & THE COUNT{
In searing resentment
this virulent torment
has given my spirit
no power to resist.
(The Count and Don Curzio leave)

SCENE VIII*
The Countess alone

19. Recitative and Aria

THE COUNTESS
Susanna's not back! I am anxious to know how the Count received her proposal. The plan does seem rather daring, especially with a husband so jealous and quick to anger. But what's the harm in it? I'm merely changing clothes with Susanna, and she with me, under cover of darkness...

Oh heavens! To what humiliating state have I been reduced by my cruel husband, who not content with treating me with a mixture

---

* R. B. Moberley and Christopher Raeburn have suggested [*Music & Letters*, 46 (1965), 134–7] that this scene originally preceded the sextet (Scene V), but was moved to permit the same singer to double Bartolo and Antonio. This explains why the Countess is still wondering how Susanna got on with the Count *after* she gave her the money to pay off Marcellina.

of infidelity, jealousy, and scorn—first loved, then offended, and finally betrayed—now makes me beg assistance from my servant!

Are they gone, those happy moments,
gone the joys I knew before?
All forgot, those fond endearments
that with lying lips he swore?

And when all has turned to weeping,
and my heart knows only pain,
must the memory of loving
mock my foolish soul again?

Ah, if only my devotion,
constant even when apart,
might offer me some distant notion
of changing his ungrateful heart!
(she goes out)

SCENE IX

The Count and Antonio, with a hat in his hand

Recitative

ANTONIO
I tell you, Sir, that Cherubino is still here in the castle, and here's his hat to prove it.

THE COUNT
But how could that be, if he's already supposed to be in Seville?

ANTONIO
Excuse me, but Seville is at my house today. They dressed Cherubino up as a woman and left his own clothes sitting there.

THE COUNT
The scoundrels!

ANTONIO
Come and see for yourself.
(they go out)

SCENE X

The Countess and Susanna

THE COUNTESS
This is unbelievable! What did the Count say to that?

SUSANNA
He had rage and confusion written all over his face.

THE COUNTESS
Wonderful! That will make it easier to trap him. Where is the rendezvous that you arranged with him?

SUSANNA
In the garden.

THE COUNTESS
Fix a spot. Write to him.

SUSANNA
I write?... but, my Lady...

THE COUNTESS
Go on, write; I'll be responsible for everything. (*Susanna sits and prepares to write*). Let's call it: "An Ode on the Breeze."

20. Duet*

THE COUNTESS & SUSANNA
Where the gentle evening breezes
Fan the fragrant summer land,
'Neath the little grove of pine trees...
— And the rest he'll understand.

Recitative

SUSANNA
(folding the letter)
I've folded the letter. How shall we seal it?

THE COUNTESS
(pulling out a pin to give to her)
Here... take this pin to use as a seal. Wait—write on the back of the letter: "Please return the seal."

SUSANNA
It's even funnier than the seal on the commission!

THE COUNTESS
Hide it quickly; I hear some people coming.
(Susanna puts the letter into her bodice)

---

* This is another number which is considerably extended by Mozart, first by having the Countess dictate a phrase at a time, echoed by Susanna, and then showing the women reading the completed letter together.

SCENE XI

Cherubino dressed as a peasant girl, Barbarina and some similarly dressed country girls carrying bouquets; the Countess and Susanna.

21. Chorus

COUNTRY GIRLS

Dearest mistress, take these flowers,
token of our love for you;
we have picked them just this morning,
glistening with morning dew.

We are only humble peasants,
our possessions very few,
but the little we can bring you
comes from hearts for ever true.

Recitative

BARBARINA

These are some local girls, my Lady, who come to offer you what little they have, and beg your to excuse their boldness.

THE COUNTESS

Wonderful! I thank you all.

SUSANNA

How lovely they are!

THE COUNTESS

Tell me, who is that pretty girl there with the downcast eyes?

BARBARINA

She's my cousin, who came yesterday for the wedding.

THE COUNTESS

Let's welcome the pretty stranger! Come here... give me your flowers. *(She takes Cherubino's flowers and kisses his forehead.)* How she's blushing! Susanna, doesn't she remind you of someone?

SUSANNA

The spitting image!

SCENE XII

The foregoing, with the Count and Antonio

ANTONIO

(tiptoes behind Cherubino, takes off his woman's cap, and puts on the hat.)

Hey, dammit! Here is the little officer!

THE COUNTESS
Heavens!

SUSANNA
(Scoundrel!)

THE COUNT
Well, Madam?

THE COUNTESS
My Lord, I'm as surprised and annoyed as you are.

THE COUNT
But this morning...

THE COUNTESS
This morning... we had indeed planned to dress him in a similar manner to what you see, but for the festivities this evening.

THE COUNT
(to Cherubino)
And why have you not left?

CHERUBINO
My Lord—!

THE COUNT
I will punish you for your disobedience!

BARBARINA
Please, your Excellency, you have so often told me when you were fondling me, and kissing me... "Barbarina, if you love me, I'll give you anything you ask"...

THE COUNT
I really said that?

BARBARINA
Yes, you did. Now, master, if you give me Cherubino as my husband, I *will* love you... just like I love my kitten.

THE COUNTESS
(to the Count)
The ball, I think, is in your court.

ANTONIO
Well done; you've been well taught, to know what's what!

THE COUNT
(I don't know what man, devil, or god has turned everything against me today!)

SCENE XIII

The foregoing and Figaro

FIGARO

Sir, if you keep these girls here any longer, no more party, no more dancing!

THE COUNT

And how, may I ask, can you dance with a sprained ankle?

FIGARO

(pretends to stretch his foot and test it for dancing on)

Eh, it doesn't hurt much any more. Let's go, lovely ladies!

(he makes to go, but the Count calls him back)

THE COUNTESS

(to Susanna)

How will he get out of this?

SUSANNA

(to the Countess)

Just leave it to him.

THE COUNT

It's lucky the flower-pots were only made of clay.

FIGARO

No question. Come on, girls; let's go!

ANTONIO

And meanwhile the page mounted his horse and galloped off to Seville?

FIGARO

Galloped or walked... good riddance! Come, ladies; time to go.

THE COUNT

And his commission was still in your pocket?

FIGARO

Certainly! What a bunch of questions!

ANTONIO

(to Susanna, who is making signs at Figaro)

No point making signs; he doesn't understand. (*He pulls Cherubino forward and shows him to Figaro.)* And here's someone who can prove that my nephew-to-be is a liar!

FIGARO

Cherubino?

ANTONIO
Here he is.

FIGARO
(to the Count)
What does he mean by that?

THE COUNT
Nothing... merely that *Cherubino* was the one who jumped this morning into the carnations.

FIGARO
So he says! But if I jumped myself, isn't it always possible that he might have done the same thing?

THE COUNT
Cherubino too?

FIGARO
And why not? I never draw conclusions when I don't have all the facts.
(A march is heard in the distance)

22. Finale

FIGARO
You hear the march? Let's go!
To your places, ladies, to your places..
Susanna, give me your arm.

SUSANNA
Here it is!
(All go out except the Count and Countess)

THE COUNT
(The audacity!)

THE COUNTESS
(I'm freezing all over!)

THE COUNT
Countess—

THE COUNTESS
We won't talk now.
Here come the two couples; we need to receive them.
After all, your protegée is getting married.
Let's sit down.

THE COUNT
Let's sit down (and think of vengeance).

SCENE XIV

The foregoing, with Figaro, Susanna, Marcellina, Bartolo, Antonio, Barbarina, huntsmen, peasant men and women.

(Two girls carry a virginal cap with white feathers, two others a white veil, two more the gloves and bouquet, Figaro enters with Marcellina. Other girls carry a similar cap &c. for Susanna, who enters with Bartolo. Two girls begin the chorus, which concludes with all singing. Bartolo leads Susanna to the Count, and she kneels to receive the cap &c. Figaro leads Marcellina to the Countess, where the same procedure takes place.)

TWO GIRLS

All virginal lovers
who value their honor,
now sing to the master
who freed you from dread.

A custom now ended
that virtue offended,
he renders you chaste
to the marital bed.

ALL

Let's sing of his goodness,
heap praise on his head!

(The various characters dance. Susanna, kneeling before the Count during the duo, pulls his hem and shows him the note, then pretends to adjust her hair in order to conceal passing it to him. The Count hides it under his vest; Susanna rises and curtsies. Figaro comes to receive her, and all dance a fandango. Marcellina rises a little later, Bartolo coming similarly to receive her from the Countess.)

THE COUNT

(secretly taking out the note and pricking his finger on the pin)

The usual nonsense! Women are always sticking pins everywhere!
Ah, now I get the point!

FIGARO

(seeing the Count and commenting to Susanna)

It's another little love-note,
that some woman has slipped to him in passing.
It seems she sealed it with a hat-pin
and he has pricked his finger.

(The Count reads the note and kisses it. Then he drops the pin and has to bend down to look for it before hiding the letter in his sleeve.)

Now the Great Lover has lost it; what an idiot!

THE COUNT

Come, my friends! This whole evening
is set aside for the wedding celebration
in most splendid style. You shall enjoy
a magnificent feast, with dinner and dancing,
singing, and fireworks. I want you all to know
how I treat those that are most dear to me.

CHORUS

All virginal lovers
  who value their honor,
now sing to the master
  who freed you from dread.

A custom now ended
  that virtue offended,
he renders you chaste
  to the marital bed.

Let's sing of his goodness,
  heap praise on his head!
  (All go out.)

ACT FOUR

*Small room**

SCENE I

Barbarina alone

23. Cavatina

BARBARINA
(searching for something on the ground)

I have lost it! I am done for!
Ah, the pin has gone astray!
I can't find it... but my cousin...
and my Lord... what will he say?

SCENE II

Barbarina, Figaro and Marcellina

Recitative

FIGARO
Barbarina, what's the matter?

BARBARINA
I have lost it, cousin.

FIGARO
What?

MARCELLINA
What?

BARBARINA
The pin, that his Lordship gave me to return to Susanna.

FIGARO
To Susanna?... Return the pin? How come, little madam, you learn so quickly to play the go-between?

BARBARINA
Why are you getting cross with me?

---

* The small room setting is designated in the libretto, but modern productions place the entire act in the garden setting in which it ends.

FIGARO

Don't you realize I'm joking? Look... (*He pretends to look on the ground for a moment, then, after deftly removing a pin from Marcellina's cap, he gives it to Barbarina.)* Here is the pin that the Count told you to return to Susanna; it was used to seal a little letter.... You see, I'm already in on it.

BARBARINA

So why do you ask when you know already?

FIGARO

I wanted to know what the Count told *you.*

BARBARINA

Is that all? He said: "Here, child, take this pin to the lovely Susanna, and tell her: 'This is the seal to the pine grove!'"

FIGARO

Aha, the pine grove!

BARBARINA

It's true that he warned me: "Take care that nobody sees you." But you won't tell.

FIGARO

Absolutely.

BARBARINA

Anyway, you're not affected.

FIGARO

Not affected at all!

BARBARINA

Bye-bye, fine cousin. I'm off to find Susanna, and then Cherubino.
(she skips off)

SCENE III

Marcellina and Figaro

FIGARO

Mother!

MARCELLINA

My son!

FIGARO

I'm dying!

MARCELLINA

Calm yourself, son.

FIGARO
I'm dying, I tell you!

MARCELLINA
Calm and caution; don't get upset. It seems serious, and we must think it through—but we don't know who is the object of the joke.

FIGARO
But that pin, mother, was the one that he picked up a while ago.

MARCELLINA
That's true, and you have a right to be on your guard, even to be a bit suspicious. But you don't really *know*...

FIGARO
On guard, then. I already know their place of assignation.

MARCELLINA
Where are you going, son?

FIGARO
To avenge all husbands! Farewell!
(he leaves)

SCENE IV*

Marcellina alone

Recitative

MARCELLINA
I must quickly warn Susanna. I think she's innocent: her honest face... her modest manner.... But even if she isn't, when it's not a matter of one's personal interests, every woman must come to the defence of her poor sex against our male oppressors!

24. Aria

MARCELLINA
The billy and the nanny-goat
can always live as friends;
and with the sheep among his flock
the ram seldom contends.

And even wilder animals,
in woods or desert canyons,
support their dear companions
and come to their defense.

———

* The arias for Marcellina and Basilio are seldom performed.

It's only we poor womenkind,
enchained to men by love so blind,
that get mistreated and maligned,
and used to cruel ends!
(she goes out)

SCENE V

Luxuriant garden with practical niches on either side. Barbarina alone, carrying various fruits and pastries.

Recitative

BARBARINA

He said the left-hand pavillion... here it is!... but what if he doesn't come? Oh, what generous people! They would barely let me have an orange, and pear, and a pastry. "Who are they for, little miss?" "Oh, just for someone... you know." "Ah yes, we know! All right then!" The master hates him, but I adore him. True, it cost me a kiss, but what does that matter? I'm sure I'll get another in return... [*hearing voices*] Help! I'll be caught!
(she flees in fear and hides in the left-hand niche)

SCENE VI

Figaro with a cloak and lantern, then Basilio, Bartolo, and a group of workmen.

FIGARO

That's Barbarina.... Who goes there?

BASILIO

Just the people you asked to be here.

BARTOLO
(to Figaro)

How sinister you look, like some conspirator! What the devil are all these grim accoutrements?

FIGARO

You will see very shortly. Right here, we shall celebrate the union of my chaste wife and her feudal lord...

BASILIO

Ah, I get the picture. (But how did they arrange it without me?)

FIGARO

Hide in the bushes and wait. I'm going to take care of a few things but will be back shortly. When I whistle, run out quickly.
(All go off, except Bartolo and Basilio.)

SCENE VII

Basilio and Bartolo

BASILIO
He's all on tenterhooks.

BARTOLO
But what has happened?

BASILIO
Nothing unusual. The Count desires Susanna, and she in return has given him an appointment that Figaro does not like.

BARTOLO
What, you expect him to put up with it quietly?

BASILIO
Why can't he put up with what so many others have to endure? Besides, what remedy can he take? In this world, my friend, getting mixed up with powerful people is danger enough, and ninety percent are beaten before they even start.

25. Aria

BASILIO
In the headstrong years of April
when no lad has common sense,
I quite lacked my present wisdom,
and my passions were intense.

But through time and many dangers,
Lady Caution reigned instead,
and those whims and sudden angers
she uprooted from my head.

One day to a little cottage
she took me with her by her side,
where she showed me in the rafters,
hanging there, a donkey's hide.
"With this," she said, "all cares are banished;
take it, son!" And then she vanished—
left me there, my mouth agape.

While I was standing there
gazing in wonder,
the sky clouded over,
booming with thunder;
rain mixed with hailstones
fell helter-skelter,
till in an impulse

I found some shelter,
wearing the asses' skin
just like a cape.

Bare seconds after
the rain had stopped pouring,
some dreadful beast appeared
ferociously roaring!
Its teeth almost touched me,
fangs almost clutched me,
there was no hope on earth
I could escape.

But the foul donkey's hide
that I was wearing
took from the creature
all fierceness and daring,
that losing its appetite
it gave me a pass.

So from this precedent,
taught by a master,
I learned that danger,
dishonor, disaster
can all be avoided
by seeming an ass.
(Basilio and Bartolo go off)

SCENE VIII
Figaro alone

26. Recitative and Aria

FIGARO

Everything is ready; it must be almost time. I hear somebody! It's she! No, no one's there. The night is dark, and I already play the wretched trade of cuckold. How could she? In the midst of our wedding, I watched him read the note with rising pleasure, and I laughed too, in total ignorance. Oh Susanna, what heartache you bring me! With that innocent face... those angelic eyes... who would ever believe it? Any man who trusts a woman must be crazy!

You men, wake up and use your eyes
to see past their disguise!
Forget your dreams of womankind;
how can you be so blind?

You call these women Goddesses,
deceived by your emotion;
you pay them deep devotion
from an enfeebled mind.

They're witches who cling to us
dragging us down.
They're sirens who sing to us
making us drown.
Coquettes with designs on us
who make us their mark;
comets who shine on us
to plunge us into dark.

They're roses that prick us.
They're vixens that trick us.
Benevolent bears,
malevolent doves,
deceiving, ill-treating,
they're masters of cheating,
who cry to you, lie to you,
but never sigh for you
as true lovers or friends!
no, no, no, no!

The rest I'll not tell you,
for everyone knows how it ends.
(he moves into hiding)

SCENE IX

Susanna and the Countess, each disguised as the other; Marcellina

Recitative

SUSANNA
She told me, my Lady, that Figaro would soon be here.

MARCELLINA
He's here already! Keep your voice down.

SUSANNA
So then: one man spying, the other coming for a tryst. Let the comedy begin!

MARCELLINA
(going into the pavilion where Barbarina had gone)
I'll go and hide.

SCENE X

Susanna and the Countess; Figaro hiding

SUSANNA

Madame, you're shivering! Are you cold?

THE COUNTESS

The night seems damp; I'll go inside.

FIGARO

(Now we come to the decisive moment!)

SUSANNA

If Madame will allow me, I'll wait here in this grove for half an hour to enjoy the fresh air.

FIGARO

(Fresh, fresh indeed!)

THE COUNTESS

(going back into the grove)

Stay as long as you like.

SUSANNA

The rascal is watching... Let's have some fun by giving him some food for his jealousy!

27. Recitative and Aria

SUSANNA

Now comes the time when without inhibition
I give myself to my beloved!
No foolish fears shall disturb the delight
that already throbs in my breast!
As though to fuel our amorous fire,
the romance of this glade, its perfumes, its shade...
the shadowy night hides my secret desire.

Come, do not delay, my darling lover!
Come where true love is ours to discover;

While the night is young and the moon yet hidden.
while the world is still and nothing forbidden.

The murmuring stream, the play of the breezes,
the whispering leaves, the perfume that pleases,

The cool of the grass, the laughter of daisies,
invite us to love and sing hymns in its praises.

Come, my beloved, here where the garden encloses;
and I shall encircle your forehead with roses.

SCENE XI

The foregoing, with Cherubino

Recitative

FIGARO

Betrayer! So this is how she deceives me! I don't know if I'm awake or dreaming.

CHERUBINO

La la la ...

THE COUNTESS

(The little page!)

CHERUBINO

People are coming! I'll go inside with Barbarina. No, wait—I see a woman!

THE COUNTESS

(Oh, what bad timing!)

CHERUBINO

I was wrong; that hat and cape are surely Susanna's.

THE COUNTESS

(What will happen if the Count comes now?)

28. Finale

CHERUBINO

(Now's my chance: I'll tiptoe closer;
there will be no time to waste!)

THE COUNTESS

(If the Count arrives this moment,
there will be some deep disgrace!)

CHERUBINO
(to the Countess)

Susanetta...? There's no answer,
and she tries to hide her face...
I'll play with her, in any case.
(he takes her hand and caresses it)

THE COUNTESS{
(trying to get free)

Oh, you cheeky little rascal,
get away and leave this place!

CHERUBINO{
Oh you flirt, you can't deceive me;
you are here for some embrace!

SCENE XII

The foregoing, with the Count

THE COUNT
There's Susanna, my beloved!

SUSANNA & FIGARO
(Here's the hunter on the scent!)

CHERUBINO
Don't pretend you are above it!

SUSANNA, THE COUNT & FIGARO
(Ah, my heart is beating wildly;
someone else seeks her consent....
by his voice, it's Cherubino.)

THE COUNTESS
If you don't go, I'll call assistance!

CHERUBINO
(still holding her by the hand)
You will not, until I kiss you.

THE COUNTESS
Insolent! A kiss, you say?

CHERUBINO
Tell me why I may not sample
what the Count gets every day?

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS, THE COUNT & FIGARO
(How insulting!)

CHERUBINO
Who are you fooling?
Remember me behind that chair?

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS, THE COUNT & FIGARO
(If the rascal won't get going,
he will spoil the whole affair!)

CHERUBINO
(attempting to kiss the Countess)
Take a kiss, then...
(The Count, coming between the Countess and the page, gets the kiss)

THE COUNTESS & CHERUBINO
Oh lord, the Count!
(Cherubino exits where Barbarina was hiding)

FIGARO
(getting closer to the Count)
(I must see what's going on.)

THE COUNT
(meaning to strike Cherubino, but instead hitting Figaro)
It is time you learned a lesson;
you take *this*, you young Don Juan!

THE COUNT, SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS{
(He has earned a fair repayment
for his meddlesome concern!)

FIGARO{
(I have earned a fair repayment
for my meddlesome concern!)
(Figaro retreats)

THE COUNT
(to the Countess)
He's gone at last, my treasure;
come sit here at my side.

THE COUNTESS
I know my Lordship's pleasure,
shall never be denied.

FIGARO
(Oh what a gracious wife I have!
What a compliant bride!)

THE COUNT
Give me your hand to hold in mine!

THE COUNTESS
Sir, here it is.

THE COUNT
My dearest!

FIGARO
(His dearest!)

THE COUNT{
Your fingers soft and delicate,
your skin so smooth and temperate,

entice me, excite me,
arouse me to amorous fire!

SUSANNA, THE COUNTESS & FIGARO{
(See lust commit its treason
against deluded reason,
and blind it by desire!)

THE COUNT
Dearest, besides your dowry,
accept this little token
of the passion you've awoken
and of my love's reward.
(he gives her a ring)

THE COUNTESS
Susanna takes it willingly
from her most loving Lord.

SUSANNA, THE COUNT & FIGARO
(Although the game goes splendidly,
the goal must yet be scored.)

THE COUNTESS
(to the Count)
My Lord, I see the lightening
of torches drawing near!

THE COUNT
Let's go, fair Aphrodite;
we'd better slip in here!

SUSANNA & FIGARO
(Now learn, you wretched husbands;
the lesson is severe!)

THE COUNTESS
It's dark, my Lord, without a light!

THE COUNT
So much the better, my delight!
You surely know we don't intend
to read in there, my dear.

SUSANNA & THE COUNTESS{
(We've caught the devils in our trap,
and put the plot in gear.)

FIGARO{
(Now that Susanna follows him,
her perfidy is clear.)
(he crosses the stage)

THE COUNT
Who goes there?

FIGARO
People passing!

THE COUNTESS
It's Figaro; I'd better hide!
(she goes into the right-hand pavilion)

THE COUNT
I'll join you later; go on inside.
(he disappears into the trees)

SCENE XIII

Figaro and Susanna

FIGARO
All is serene and peaceful yet . . .
As Venus keeps her rendezvous
with handsome Mars to play untrue;
while I, like Vulcan, will pursue,
and catch them in my net!

SUSANNA
Eh, Figaro, be quiet!

FIGARO
(That's the Countess!)
You come in time, my Lady,
to see it for yourself:
the Count will go inside
to meet with my new bride
for reasons you may guess!

SUSANNA
Speak a little softer!
I will not leave this garden
until I've had redress!

FIGARO
(It's Susanna!) Redress?

SUSANNA
Yes.

FIGARO
But how will you obtain it?

SUSANNA{
(I have this neat surprise for him,
to put him in the wrong.)

FIGARO{
(She's planning a surprise for me,
but I will play along.)
[*making love to her*]
Ah, if my Lady wishes...!

SUSANNA
(This is not propitious!)

FIGARO
Here on my knees before you,
I swear that I adore you!
Repay your husband's treachery
here on this very spot!

SUSANNA{
(My anger sets my hand on fire,
to give him all I've got!)

FIGARO{
(Her anger quickens my desire
and makes my blood run hot!)

SUSANNA
But if there's no affection?

FIGARO
Just think of his rejection!
We're wasting time by talking;
give me your hand a moment...

SUSANNA
(giving him a slap)
My hand? So here it is!

FIGARO
You hit me!

SUSANNA
(another blow)
Take this one!

(hitting him in time with her words)
And this one, and this one, and this one too,
don't think that it's the last!

FIGARO
Please, please, don't hit so fast!

SUSANNA
And this one, mister insolent,
and this, just for a start!

FIGARO{
Her blows bring only joy to me,
and comfort to my heart!

SUSANNA{
To learn the wage of treachery,
play the seducer's part!

SCENE XIV
The foregoing; later the Count

FIGARO
Let's make peace now, my dearest, my treasure;
I could tell it was you from the pleasure
that your voice always brings to my heart.

SUSANNA
You knew my voice?

FIGARO
The voice that I worship.

SUSANNA & FIGARO
Let's make peace now, my dearest, my treasure;
let's end the quarrel that kept us apart.

THE COUNT
[*from offstage*]
I can't find her, in all of the garden....

SUSANNA & FIGARO
Here comes the Count, with his usual ardor!

THE COUNT
(entering and going towards the niche where the Countess was)
Hey, Susanna, are you deaf? Are you in there?

SUSANNA
Wonderful! He didn't even know her!

FIGARO
Who?

SUSANNA
The Countess!

FIGARO
The Countess?

SUSANNA
The Countess!

SUSANNA & FIGARO
In this play to repay the seducer,
it is time for the last act to start!

FIGARO
(kneeling at Susanna's feet)
Ah, my Lady, my mistress adored!

THE COUNT
It's my wife! And I haven't a sword!

FIGARO
One reward would bring joy beyond measure!

SUSANNA
Take my all; I am here for your pleasure!

THE COUNT
Ah, the scoundrels!

SUSANNA & FIGARO
Let us hurry, my darling, let's hurry,
to the pleasures of passionate love!
(Susanna goes into the niche)

FINAL SCENE
The foregoing, with Antonio, Basilio, servants with torches; later Susanna, Marcellina, Cherubino, Barbarina; finally the Countess

THE COUNT
(grabbing Figaro)
Come here quickly, and bring weapons!

FIGARO
It's the master!

THE COUNT
Come and help me, quickly, quickly!

FIGARO
I am done for!

BASILIO & ANTONIO
What has happened?

THE COUNT
This vile seducer
has betrayed me, has defamed me—
his behavior is obscene!

BASILIO & ANTONIO{
I'm bowled over, I'm confounded;
how can such a thing have been?

FIGARO{
(They're bowled over, they're confounded;
what a priceless little scene!)

THE COUNT
(pulling out from the pavilion in turn: Cherubino, Barbarina, Marcellina, and finally Susanna)
It's no use resisting!
Come out now, my Lady,
and pay the just price
for your deceit!

THE COUNT
[*as Cherubino emerges*]
The page!

ANTONIO
[*as Barbarina emerges*]
My daughter!

FIGARO
[*as Marcellina emerges*]
My mother!

BASILIO, ANTONIO & FIGARO
[*as Susanna emerges*]
My Lady!

THE COUNT
Her guilt is uncovered;
the case is complete!

SUSANNA
(kneeling at the Count's feet)
Have mercy! Have mercy!

THE COUNT
No, no; no forgiveness!

FIGARO
(kneeling)
Have mercy! Have mercy!

THE COUNT
No, no; I won't give it!

BARTOLO, CHERUBINO, MARCELLINA, BASILIO, ANTONIO, SUSANNA & FIGARO
(all kneeling)
Have mercy! Have mercy!

THE COUNT
No, no, no!

THE COUNTESS
(emerging from the other pavilion)
Won't you even have mercy if *I* intercede?

BASILIO, THE COUNT & ANTONIO
(Oh heavens, what is this?
I'm mad, or I'm dreaming!
I cannot believe what I see!)

THE COUNT
[*kneeling*]
My Lady, forgive me;
I beg you, forgive me.

THE COUNTESS
My heart is more tender,
and so I say "yes."

ALL
May all find contentment
in this moment of bliss.

After such a day of madness
wild emotions all askew,
Love alone can banish sadness
and give happiness its voice.

Lovers, friends, with merry dancing,
food and drink and fireworks too,
to the festive music prancing,
let us hasten to rejoice!
[*Curtain*]