

FRA DIAVOLO

Music by
D. F. É. Auber

English Version by
Donald Pippin
(1985, 1995)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lorenzo	The Hero, in love with Zerlina
Matteo	An innkeeper
Zerlina	The innkeeper's pretty daughter
Lord Hardcash	An English lord, traveling in Italy
Lady Pamela	His disgruntled wife
The Marquis	Presumably a suave nobleman
Beppo and Giacomo	Fellow bandits

Scene: a tiny village in southern Italy, not far from Naples

Fra Diavolo

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The scene is a courtyard in front of a country inn, on a back road in Southern Italy, not far from Naples. Posted prominently in the foreground, a printed sign has galvanized the attention of the neighborhood. The wording is succinct: REWARD: Forty thousand lire for the capture of Fra Diavolo.

It was the practice of nineteenth century novelists to head their chapters with a title, followed by a brief resume of the contents. We have decided to adopt this procedure, and so we are calling Act One THE INN CROWD, in which a country inn fills up for the night, and we meet the following:

The innkeeper and his lovely daughter, at a uniquely poignant moment in her life when her future happiness would seem to depend upon the immediate acquisition of a goodly sum of money.

The young man that she is in love with, soon quite possibly to be cut out of her life forever.

Lord and Lady Hardcash, an English pair, whose precipitous entrance provides shocking evidence that the bandit is in the immediate vicinity.

A suave, amorous marquis, who hears tell of the elusive bandit with amused skepticism.

Two penniless, pious pilgrims, who reveal an astonishing versatility.

And finally, a bandit, whose capture gives every indication of bringing the opera to a premature conclusion, but instead merely concludes Act One.

ACT I

Scene: Courtyard in front of a country inn on a backroad in Southern Italy, where townspeople are fascinated with a posted notice.

CHORUS Forty thousand lira!
I understand it's for the bandit.
Now's the time to act.
Cash paid on the line,
Money that in fact
Could be yours or mine.

Land of milk and honey!
What I could do with all that money!
First he must be found,
Then to set a snare.
Surely he's around;
The only question's where.

Forty thousand lira!
Offered for the bandit.
Cash that could be mine
If only I could land it.

Ten feet tall,
He's got a gang behind him,
King of all,
The master of crime!
Why do they always fail to find him?

LORENZO Just give us time.

CHORUS Are you so sure?

LORENZO He's bound to fall.

CHORUS I could have a house and
A horse to boot with forty thousand.
Posted on the board,
Take a look and see.
Yes, sir, that reward
Could belong to me.

MATTEO Still no result,
Despite the offer posted ...
That's the youth of today —
No spunk, no enterprise.

LORENZO What can I say?
 On you my words are wasted.

CHORUS A man in love is seldom wise.

MATTEO Idle dreams, foolish fancies
 You must cast aside.
 I tell you once again:
 My daughter marries tomorrow!
 I've chosen a son-in-law;
 Who better can provide?
 Does that make it plain?

LORENZO For me, a day of bitter sorrow,
 A day of sorrow.

CHORUS She weds tomorrow.

 Forty thousand lira!
 Throughout the land, it's for the bandit.
 Money yet to come
 While he's on the loose.
 That's a tidy sum
 I could put to use.

ZERLINA Love, don't despair. Remember, I adore you.

LORENZO Ah, for your hand in vain I've implored.

ZERLINA Hope till the end — oh, I pray heaven for you.

LORENZO I pray to catch the bandit,
 And the rich reward.
 And when I'm poor no longer,
 Hope we can afford.

ZERLINA Ah, to the bandit
 We then would be indebted.

LORENZO Time's of the essence;
 We have but a day.

ZERLINA Would you and I
 By tomorrow were wedded.

LORENZO No longer to linger,
 I must away.
 No longer to linger,
 I'm on my way.

PAMELA and LORD (*from outside*) Hurry, help!

OTHERS What was that?

PAMELA and LORD (*entering*)
Hurry, help! An assault! An attack!
Forty thieves in a pack!

LORENZO You were robbed?
And here on the highway?

LORD Oh, Mister Signor!

LORENZO Welcome to Naples.

LORD We're far from home.

LORENZO I would bet my boots you're from England.

LORD And the sooner back the better.

PAMELA Where bandits aren't allowed.

LORD Dearest wife, do bear up.

PAMELA Are not allowed.

LORD We mustn't let down the Queen.
Stiff upper lip!
Our hearts are bloody, yet unbowed.

PAMELA Oh, would this ghastly trip were over!
My very words as we left Dover.
I had acute migraine
Through Holland, France and Spain,
But Southern Italy's the end.

 With travel long exhausted,
By a bandit I'm accosted,
And the monster then proceeded
To relieve me of my luggage —
Absolutely all I needed. (*turning upon her husband*)
And where were you, my friend?

 Purgatory past enduring!
No more foreign ways for me!
No more travel, no more touring,
All I want is a cup of tea.

 Gone, my gorgeous laces and linen,
Nothing did the villain spare.
I'm the wretchedest of women;
How can I come down for dinner?
What on earth am I to wear?

CHORUS Now every man upon his mettle;

Let him defy us if he dare.
The rogue's account we have to settle,
Expel the tiger from his lair.

LORD An abomination! An outrage! British subjects set upon, attacked, robbed! This would not have happened at Gretna Green.

PAMELA Nothing else would ever happen at Gretna Green either, dear. But it is a long distance to come for a little excitement. And such expensive excitement!

LORENZO This sounds like the work of Fra Diavolo and his men, the scourge of the countryside! Which way did they escape?

LORD I'm not exactly certain. I ... I was dozing at the time.

PAMELA My husband can sleep through almost anything, and usually does. Being a Lord is so exhausting.

LORENZO They could not have got far. Drink up, men! Let's hunt them down and give them a chase.

ZERLINA But these men are cutthroats. They are dangerous desperadoes. They will kill you without batting an eye.

LORENZO What does it matter? Why go on living, when hope is dead? Life and death are one and the same to me. Come!

(he exits, with men)

MATTEO Come, daughter. We have much to do to get ready for your wedding tomorrow.

ZERLINA Oh, heaven help me! Do something! *(she exits, with Matteo)*

PAMELA I suppose you know that this is entirely your own fault. Who was it that insisted on taking this wretched backroad instead of following the main highway?

LORD And you know perfectly well why. The only way to shake off that odious, smooth-talking Marquis who has been making such a pest of himself for an entire week. Hounding us morning, noon and night! You might almost think he was after something.

PAMELA Why look at me? Was I to blame if he happened to be staying at our hotel? Sheer coincidence!

LORD But three hotels in a row!

PAMELA I believe it's a free country.

LORD That does not mean that he's free to flirt with my wife.

PAMELA He didn't flirt ... He sang ... We sang together ... He's very musical ... Anything wrong with having talent?

LORD Oh, no! Nothing at all! But I've had enough! Here's where I put my foot down!

I go along, I let it pass
When dandies out and on the town
Proceed to look you up and down,
Or take your plate, refill your glass,
I go along, I let it pass.

I go along,
Until a lusty libertine
Invites himself upon the scene,
A plague, a pest, a daily guest.
I draw the line, this I protest.
No, no, no, no, God damn!
I draw the line, this I protest.

I do not frown, I do not fret
Despite the way you find a thrill
In running up a shopping bill
That's bigger than the national debt.
I do not frown, I do not fret.

But I protest,
I draw the line, the word is no,
When you entice and entertain
A prowling wolf on my terrain
Who wants to play the Romeo.
I draw the line, the word is no.
No, no, no, God damn!
I draw the line, the word is no!

PAMELA

I go along with no complaint,
A lady not so hard to please.
Despite your eccentricities,
Your temper that would try a saint,
I go along with no complaint.

I hold my tongue,
I bow the head, but let me add,
If you continue talking rot,
What I can do, what I cannot,
I draw the line, you drive me mad.
I draw the line, this I'll not stand.
No, no, no, no, not I!
I draw the line, this I'll not stand.

LORD Well, there's one thing I can guarantee. We've seen the last of that obnoxious Marquis!

MATTEO (*entering in great excitement, followed by Zerlina*)
A carriage stops at the door!
See, oh see who's getting out!

Bless my soul, a noble Lord!
He comes to stay the night;
Be quick, prepare a place!

LORD Oh, the deuce! Again we meet!

PAMELA My amorous Marquis!

LORD Still hot upon the chase.

MARQUIS (*entering, to Pamela*)
An unexpected treat!

ZERLINA and MATTEO
I notice vibrations
That send a signal all too clear.
Her husband he brazens
To meet the lady here.

PAMELA
I notice vibrations
That send a signal all too clear.
My harmless flirtations
Have brought his Lordship here.

LORD
I notice vibrations
That send a signal all too clear.
On horseback he hastens
To meet my lady here.

MARQUIS
They notice vibrations
That send a signal not so clear.
No matter, have patience!
They'll find out why I'm here.

MATTEO My dear Marquis, I'm at your service.

MARQUIS
I require a bed for the night.
A simple quiet room will do,
And tomorrow early, give a knock;
I must be off by six o'clock.

LORD (*aside*)
He's got a nerve, I'll call his bluff.
Here for one reason only!
I see his purpose plain enough.
Does he believe me so naive?
The man has mischief up his sleeve.

MARQUIS
On the go and fearless,
I travel undaunted;
Though I confess I'm here less
For love than for gain.

PAMELA By my beauty dazzled,

He follows undaunted;
So many miles he's traveled
To enthrall me again.

ZERLINA Who's the flashy stranger
 That eyes her undaunted?
 The blush that signals danger
 She cannot contain.

LORD The bounder has found her;
 He hovers around her,
 His motive more than plain.

MATTEO A blackguard or bounder,
 My business will founder
 Unless they all remain. (*Pamela and Lord are shown out*)

Daughter, attend to his Lordship, the Marquis. Give him the front room on the ground floor, the best in the house.

MARQUIS And have you many other guests?

MATTEO Off-season ...

ZERLINA None but your Lordship, and the English couple that you just saw.

MARQUIS The lady is quite charming, though her husband seems to be rather a grouch.

MATTEO And for good reason! Just a short while ago, the two of them were attacked by bandits.

MARQUIS Incredible! Crime in this peaceful part of the world! I can't believe it!

MATTEO Then you can take my word for it.

MARQUIS But I have traveled these roads all my life, with no fear whatsoever. And I've never once met a bandit.

ZERLINA You've been very lucky if you have managed to stay clear of Fra Diavolo.

MARQUIS Fra Diavolo? An interesting name. I'll have to remember it.

ZERLINA A notorious outlaw! And invincible, too! He's never been caught.

MARQUIS And I suppose the story goes that he's in league with the devil.

ZERLINA On crags of lonely canyons
 He stands, alert and eagle-eyed;
 There he scans the countryside,
 Rifle and sword in tow.

Aloof, above companions,
He wields a staff of solid oak,
Wears a velvet cap and cloak
Black as the wintery crow.

Tremble!
Tremble, late wandering stranger.
You tread a path of danger
Near Fra Diavolo, Fra Diavolo, Fra Diavolo.
Poor fool, at night wayfaring,
Beware his swift and silent blow.
Of the fair he's also foe,
Though of a different kind.

Urbane, of courtly bearing,
His wound is worse than death to some.
Many a maid has stumbled home,
Leaving her heart behind.

Tremble!
Tremble, you gullible maiden.
With lies his lips are laden.
Oh, Diavolo! Fra Diavolo! Diavolo!

MARQUIS

Mere wild imagination!
I trust you don't believe a word.
Bandit heroes so absurd
Disappeared long ago.

His randy reputation
He owes to forty men or more.
Charge not him with hearts galore,
Broken, incognito.

Tremble!
Tremble, you rascals in hiding!
Slander not the law-abiding
Fra Diavolo, Fra Diavolo, Fra Diavolo.

(Beppo and Giacomo enter, dressed as pilgrims.)

ZERLINA Good heavens! How you startled me! My nerves seem to be on edge.

MATTEO Who are you? And what do you want?

GIACOMO Servants of the Lord, followers of the faith, midway on our arduous journey ...

BEPPO Visiting holy shrines ...

GIACOMO Penniless pilgrims ...

BEPPO Guided by the inner light ...

GIACOMO Seeking hospitality for the night ...

BEPPO And a crust of bread.

MATTEO Is this a shelter for vagabonds? Off with you!

MARQUIS Ah, sir, don't turn them away. They strike me as deserving and devout. I am touched by their naive piety. Allow me to pay for their supper as well as a room for the night.

MATTEO If you insist, we can put them up in the stable.

GIACOMO Too great a luxury!

BEPPO Again the Lord provides!

MATTEO *(to Zerlina)* The fact is, there's safety in numbers. I don't mind having a few more strong arms around, while Fra Diavolo and his men are prowling about the neighborhood. *(to Marquis)* As your Lordship wishes. Your room will be ready presently. Come.

(He exits with Zerlina)

GIACOMO Well, chief, you didn't expect me back so soon.

MARQUIS I had complete trust in your ingenuity. *(looking at Beppo)* And who's the little helper?

BEPPO Checking in, I'm at your service.

MARQUIS Who's the chum?

GIACOMO A recent recruit.

MARQUIS We'll try him out, but only on probation.

GIACOMO A little rough,
 A little raw,
 Nonetheless a lad who's got the stuff;
 He's even wanted by the law.

MARQUIS Aptitude is not enough;
 I look for drive and dedication.
 None but the boldest and the smartest
 Can make the grade as highway artist,
 For it takes maturity and time
 To master the finer points of crime.

 One thing for certain, do not doubt:
 However lofty your ambition,
 I'm the man in top position.
 Any problem? Let's have it out!

BEPPO There's a line we're not to cross:

GIACOMO and BEPPO
 We're the stooges, you're the boss.

MARQUIS There's a line you're not to cross;
 You're the stooges, I'm the boss.
 I advise you to remember,
 You're the stooges, I alone am the boss.

GIACOMO and BEPPO
 There's a line, a line not to cross;
 We're the stooges and you are the boss.
 I trust we'll remember,
 We're the stooges, you alone are the boss.

MARQUIS I require a man of steel with a heart of stone.

GIACOMO For a model, we need but look to you alone.

MARQUIS You are to listen,
 And follow orders.

GIACOMO A team, we are no longer on our own.

MARQUIS So if you aspire to be a bandit,
 Stay on your toes and wide awake,
 Need I remind you,
 The laws I make you are not to break.

 Never question the why and wherefore;
 When the stage is set, the show is on.
 Second fiddle is what you are there for;
 It's the man in front that waves the baton.
 Tra la la, la la la, ...

MARQUIS When the job is done, when work is over,
 Then comes feasting, music, laughter and wine.
 A fool that slaves forever
 I would call no friend of mine.

So you're back from the job. Let's have the report.

GIACOMO Simple. Nothing to it.

BEPPO The lady gave us some trouble.

GIACOMO You know. A little screaming, carrying on ... the usual. But we got her under control. His Lordship didn't even wake up. Not till we were off with the trunks ...

BEPPO And the jewelry.

GIACOMO Your information was just what we needed.

MARQUIS As it should have been. I took pains enough to acquire it — following my Lord and Lady for an entire week, checking into their hotels, latching on to them, singing barcaroles with the Lady.

GIACOMO Good work.

MARQUIS Tedious, but it paid off. And what about the casket with the five hundred thousand gold francs?

BEPPO Well, chief, there we had a little problem ...

GIACOMO That's the one thing ...

MARQUIS What! You didn't go off without it! That was the crux of the operation! The rest was just trinkets. Idiots! Don't tell me you couldn't find it?

GIACOMO Oh, we found it all right ...

BEPPO No problem at all finding it.

MARQUIS Then where's the snag? What went wrong?

BEPPO It was empty.

MARQUIS Oh, those British double-crossers! Never trust a foreigner. Fine friends they turned out to be. After telling me in strictest confidence! I suppose it means more duets. (This is what happens when you have to depend on underlings). Aha! And here comes the lady now. You two clowns can just stay out of the way this time. Let me handle it.

PAMELA (*addressing offstage servants as she enters, and Beppo and Giacomo slink off*) Do be so kind, and bring Milord a glass of punch.

MARQUIS My dear, surprise, surprise!

PAMELA Again, so soon! For shame!
I fear it most unwise ...
My husband, just above,
A jealous man —
Othello is the name.

MARQUIS But a harmless duet is all I propose:
A simple song of true and tender love.
Let's see how it goes,
The tune we could only start yesterday.

PAMELA If just a song, I'll stay.

MARQUIS A gallant gondolier by trade
Sang to his Queen a serenade.
Love, be mine! Give but a sign,

A smile, or yet a sigh
Floating soft on the air.

Answer my prayer;
To my love, reply!
To my love, to my love,
To my love and my despair.

To you I bare
My heart ablaze with fire.
Oh, ecstasy! Explore with me
The land of sweet desire.

PAMELA Enough! You must end this pursuit!

MARQUIS Not a word more. I shall be mute.
Yes, in silent grief,
A soundless sigh my lips will send you.
The fire inside
Will stay tongue-tied,
And thus cannot offend you.

PAMELA (My face and form he thinks divine;
The fault, of course, is none of mine.) Fast asleep ...

MARQUIS Speak I must! My heart you have captured!
Give the command! I'll die on the spot.
Beauty rare! I'm stunned and enraptured.
Ah, what glows? A diamond, is it not?

PAMELA A sad tale! My one remaining jewel!
This only the thieves couldn't find.

MARQUIS (The nincompoops!) Misfortune cruel!
Thank God, they left at least one behind.
Ah, what a rare medallion!
Superb, one of a kind!
And within, it contains the prize.

PAMELA A gift from my husband ... Italian ...
A recent portrait some would praise.
Does it capture my eyes?

MARQUIS So bright! I'm in a daze!
Ah, who would believe
A reflection could render
Your face so fair, your lovely hair,
And the smile so sweet and tender?
My soul, my soul wants to fly
And soar into the air.
Never shall this belong
To another! An Othello!

PAMELA What are you doing?

MARQUIS This I must have!

PAMELA But sir!

MARQUIS *(taking the locket)*
This I must have, and wear upon my heart.

PAMELA But sir!

MARQUIS With such a prize, I cannot, cannot part!

PAMELA My husband's here!

MARQUIS A gallant gondolier by trade
Sang to his Queen a serenade.
Love, be mine! Give but a sign,
A smile, or yet a sigh
Floating soft on the air.

 Answer my prayer;
To my love, reply!
To my love, to my love,
To my love and my despair.

LORD *(enters)*
Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

PAMELA How well he sings.

LORD Too well for me.

PAMELA Such a waste, he belongs at La Scala!

LORD The farther off from me the better.

PAMELA A child about music,
I'm wild about music,
A ravishing tenor,
A bass now and then, or
A lyric soprano
With flute and piano;
But he and I never agree.

 I'm mad about music,
But Bach and Scarlatti
Can drive the man dotty;
Beethoven and Haydn
He cannot abide'n
He hates Figaro and Cosi.

MARQUIS Agreed upon music,

I feed upon music,
A ravishing tenor,
A bass now and then, or
A lyric soprano
With flute and piano;
You see how as one we agree.

I'm mad about music:
Rameau, Cherubini,
Rossini, Bellini,
Beethoven and Haydn
I take in my stride'n
Adore Figaro and Cosi.

LORD Too bad about music!
I've had it with music,
The earsplitting tenor,
The bass yet again, or
The screechy soprano
With flute or piano —
That racket does nothing for me.

To hell with your music!
Old Bach and Scarlatti
Can drive a man dotty;
Beethoven and Haydn
I cannot abide'n
I hate Figaro and Cosi.

MARQUIS and PAMELA
The melodies of dear Mozart —
I know and sing them all by heart.

LORD On the matter of music they seem to agree;
But that racket in rhythm does nothing for me.

MARQUIS and PAMELA
The melodies of dear Mozart!
I know and can sing them by heart.

LORD The melodies of dear Mozart —
I cannot tell those tunes apart.

MARQUIS and PAMELA
On the matter of music and melody how we agree!
Only a racket in rhythm — for him, nothing more can it be.
You and I! On music we completely, completely agree!

LORD On matters of music and melody how they agree.
Only a racket in rhythm — a din that does nothing for me.
No, not a thing for me. No, not for me.

PAMELA Darling, we were just trying out a new barcarole.

LORD I thought you had exhausted the repertoire by now.

MARQUIS Milord is obviously in no mood for music. Understandable, after the harrowing ordeal you went through this afternoon. The surprise, the shock, the terror! I marvel at your recovery.

LORD Oh, I managed to stay calm.

PAMELA Yes, didn't you? Fast asleep ...

MARQUIS You were heroic!

LORD The important thing is to avoid panic.

MARQUIS I am sure I would have been beside myself. I would have gone berserk and acted like a fool. To lose so much! Heartbreaking! It hurts me to think about it.

PAMELA A heavy loss, indeed. My valuables, wardrobe, jewelry ...

MARQUIS But not, I hope, the five hundred thousand francs that you drew from the bank in Naples? Why, that is no less than a fortune!

LORD No, thank God! They didn't touch that.

MARQUIS Divine providence! What a relief! I breathe again! Thank God, you held on to your money.

PAMELA And thank God, we've found someone in this remote part of the world who really cares.

MARQUIS So you still have your money! But how did you manage to be so clever? How did you succeed in outwitting those unscrupulous thieves?

LORD Oh, I have my ways.

MARQUIS Some little stroke of ingenuity, I wager, that would never occur to a dreamer like myself. You men of the world! How I admire you!

LORD Well, just between me and you, James Jeremy George Hardcash, Sixth Earl of Worcestershire, is no nincompoop. He knows how to look after himself.

MARQUIS But how? I rack my brain! I'm baffled!

PAMELA It was perfectly simple. At my suggestion, we had the gold changed into banknotes ...

LORD And with her own little hands, my wife sewed them up ... You'll never guess where.

MARQUIS Oh, you'll have to tell me. I give up.

LORD Inside my vest ...

PAMELA And ... (*indicates her bosom*)

MARQUIS No! What a charming treasure chest!

PAMELA Is it not?

LORD Ha, ha, ha! And I daresay, for once, you might call me a stuffed shirt.

PAMELA and LORD Hear the horn!

MARQUIS Tramping feet, the approach of an army.

BEPPPO and GIACOMO (*returning*)
Danger at hand,
Better not stay.
Here come the troops.
Come, let's away. Away!

MARQUIS For shame! No, no! Enough!

BEPPPO We're far outnumbered.

MARQUIS Of course we stay!
Be bold and bluff.

CHORUS (*the men returning with a bandit in tow, presumably
Fra Diavolo*)
We've got him!
The hard job completed! Completed!
He that roamed the land,
Leader of a band,
Totally defeated!
Fra Diavolo and his men
Shall never swagger again.
A triumph! The hard job completed!

ZERLINA (*to Lorenzo*)
My love, I knew all along ...

PAMELA and LORD
With bated breath we wait ...

ZERLINA So brave, noble and strong ...

PAMELA and LORD
Explain, elucidate ...

LORENZO
On a mountain path deserted,
Where fogs and vapors rise,
Wary, our eyes alerted,
There we took them by surprise.

MARQUIS (And I was far away.)

LORENZO Though long the struggle lasted,
Vainly they fought to defend;
Their energies all were wasted,
For they merely delayed the end.

MARQUIS (They led you astray.)

LORENZO But their leader we wanted,
The head that provides the brains.
Though up till now undaunted,
You see him before you in chains.
(producing Roberto, a walk on.)
Fra Diavolo!

CHORUS We've got him!
The hard job completed! Completed!
He that roamed the land,
Leader of a band,
Totally defeated!
Fra Diavolo and his men
Shall never go free again.
Fra Diavolo, Fra Diavolo defeated!

LORENZO *(to Pamela)*
These trunks, I'm told, are yours;
I hope no worse for wear.
But check it out. Make sure all is there.

PAMELA Safe and sound! Neatly packed!
My attire still intact!

LORD Neatly packed!
Her attire still intact.

MARQUIS Snatched away ...

ZERLINA From the hands ...

PAMELA Of the brute!

MARQUIS (Oh, the devil! Which is worse,
The loss of my men, or my loot?)

LORENZO I trust you're reconciled
With our Italian manners.

PAMELA You have made my joy complete!
Our thanks I wish to offer ...

LORD Yes, of course. Thanks a million ...

PAMELA In manner more concrete.
My Lord would show his thanks ...
A token for my sake —
Here's twenty thousand francs
He begs that you will take.
A fit reward!

LORENZO No, no! I merely did my duty.

PAMELA Consider it a dowry
Intended for your bride.
Yes, a treasure that will purchase
More than kingdoms can provide.

ZERLINA I accept your gift for him!
Oh, happy day! We now are rich,
The future not so grim.

LORENZO Now I can ...

ZERLINA Go to father ...

LORENZO As a man ...

ZERLINA Well-to-do ...

LORENZO See him and ...

ZERLINA Beg my hand ...

LORENZO So then tomorrow ...

ZERLINA I marry you!

ZERLINA and LORENZO
Now he cannot deny permission;
Tomorrow for sure we shall wed.
At last we start our life together;
What delight lies ahead!

PAMELA and LORD
All is returned in good condition,
No harm to the least little thread.
I must admit I'm feeling better,
Despite the foolish tears I shed.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO
When they're asleep, without suspicion,
We'll make a tour from bed to bed;
Then from the goose we'll pluck the feather
And leave the bird alive or dead.

MARQUIS *(to Beppo and Giacomo)*

But first of all we have to rescue
The prisoner taken for me.

BEPPO & GIACOMO Get him away?

MARQUIS Easily done! Question not. Simply obey.

LORENZO Lead him off.
(indicating Marquis, Beppo and Giacomo)
Hey, lend a hand, you three!

MARQUIS *(volunteering)* Glad to oblige. (He shall go free!)

LORENZO Take him out. Have him shot.

ZERLINA Now he cannot deny us permission
And tomorrow morn we shall wed.
At last we start our life together;
What delight lies ahead!

PAMELA All returned in good condition,
No harm to the smallest thread.
I must admit I'm feeling better,
After all the tears I shed.

LORD All returned in good condition,
No harm to the smallest thread.
Come admit you're feeling better,
After all the tears you shed.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO
As they sleep without suspicion,
We shall tour from bed to bed;
From the goose we'll pluck the feather,
Leave the bird alive or dead.

CHORUS All returned in good condition,
No harm to the smallest thread.
Granted, I'll feel even better
When the bandit chief is dead.

ZERLINA Now for certain my father will grant us permission.

LORENZO Now for certain your father will grant us permission.

MARQUIS They will sleep unsuspecting
While I am directing
My revenge on the lot.

ZERLINA and LORENZO
You and I shall wed;
Sheer delight ahead.
Paradise enchanted!

All our dreams are granted.

Tomorrow morning we wed;
Delight and rapture ahead.
Tomorrow you and I shall wed;
Sheer delight lies ahead.

PAMELA

Eyes no longer red, no more tears to shed.
Evermore your debtor
I am feeling better.
My eyes no longer so red,
Forget the tears I have shed.
No longer shall my watered eyes be red.
No more, I've no more tears to shed.
No harm or damage to a thread;
No more tears have I to shed.

LORD

Eyes no longer red, no more tears to shed.
Evermore your debtor
She is feeling better.
Her eyes no longer so red,
Forget the tears that were shed.
No longer shall her watered eyes be red.
No more, she's no more tears to shed.
No harm or damage to a thread;
So dry the eyes, no tears to shed.

MARQUIS

When they're off to bed,
While the lot are sleeping,
Watch shall I be keeping.
They think the bandit is dead,
And so go calmly to bed.
Tomorrow they'll know in fact
The bandit's far from dead.
Tonight, yes indeed tonight
They'll calmly go to bed.
They'll soon know who's alive or dead.
Fra Diavolo's far from dead!

BEPPPO and GIACOMO

Here is what's ahead:
They go off to bed.
While the lot are sleeping,
Watch we shall be keeping.
They think the bandit is dead,
And so go calmly to bed.
Tomorrow they'll know in fact
The bandit's far from dead.
Tonight, yes indeed tonight
They'll calmly go to bed.
They'll soon know who's alive or dead.
Fra Diavolo's far from dead!

CHORUS

Sky serene ahead
When the brute is dead.
Call today red letter;
Sooner dead the better.
We'll sleep more soundly in bed
Because the bandit is dead.
No longer to fear his sly and stealthy tread.
The bandit chief will soon be dead.
Fra Diavolo will be dead.

End of Act I

ACT II

In choosing a title for Act Two, we are faced with an embarrassment of riches: INN WITH OUTLAWS, or HEAVY TRAFFIC IN A BEDROOM, or CLOSET DRAMA. However, with a bow to the other company in town -- our elder sister -- we are calling it THE RING, wherein the guests of the inn settle down for the night under the erroneous impression that the activities of the day are over.

Wherein the Marquis, weary of barcaroles, decides upon a less genteel method of extracting Lady Pamela's fortune.

Wherein a normally modest young lady, disrobing for the night, plays to a captive audience, Standing Room Only, and

Wherein the Virgin Mary indeed seems to play a decisive role as divine interceptor, but stops short of preventing a wedding ring from exchanging hands.

Scene: Zerlina's bedroom and the adjacent corridor

ZERLINA

(at her bedside)
No chance of getting bored!
Such a crowd of events!
The Marquis, the captured bandit,
And the odd English pair! ...
The marvelous reward! ...

So close inside my room!
I shall open the window
And smell the night's perfume.

How full the moon!
And there's Milord still in the garden,
The middle of the night!
Till he comes, I must wait,
For his room is on the right.

Light of heart and like a feather,
I'm floating on air.
Darling, for a lifelong trip together
We have the fare.

Sweet the path that opens ahead,
The goal so long I've prayed for.
Sunrise tomorrow I shall wed
The man my soul was made for.
To him my fancies fly;
No need to wonder why
I breathe a melting sigh.

(spoken) Thank Goodness! At last the night owls are ready to fold their wings for the night.

(Lord and Pamela appear in the corridor)

LORD Frankly, dear, my eyes grow bleary.

PAMELA You're off to bed so early?

LORD Time to sleep, for it's well after one.

PAMELA How absurd! Night has barely begun.
The garden's warm, the moon is out;
A perfect hour to stroll about.

LORD A moonlit garden's not for me,
But there, coincidentally,
I caught a glimpse of your Marquis.

ZERLINA God be thanked, his eyes grow bleary;
At least, Milord feels weary.

LORD Up so late, my eyes grow bleary;
Of Latins I am leery.

PAMELA Even moonlight makes him weary;
His ways I do find dreary.

LORD Is your friend out so late just for air?

PAMELA How should I know, and why should I care?

PAMELA and LORD
One year only we've been wedded —
What a change has come about.
Had I known where we were headed,
I may not have started out.

ZERLINA One year only they've been wedded —
See the change that's come about.

Were I bound where they are headed,
I might question starting out.

LORD We rise at dawn and hit the highway;
At six o'clock the road is best.

PAMELA Dismiss the thought. We'll do it my way.
I'm staying for a week of rest.

ZERLINA The nice Marquis is staying also.

PAMELA I do recall he said as much;
His secret passion is collecting —
Certain stones found only here,
His very life he'd give to touch.

LORD Frankly, dear, my eyes grow bleary.

ZERLINA Your Lordship, can I be of service?

LORD Ah, water's all that I require.

PAMELA Then come along and tend to my attire.

ZERLINA Of course, but first the glass of water.

LORD Oh, by the way, where is your locket?
The one the cutthroats didn't pocket?
That one you managed to conceal
Where even thieves daren't feel.

PAMELA The gift from you?

LORD Yes, the gift from me.

PAMELA I set it down.

LORD Yes, but where?

PAMELA Frankly, dear, my eyes grow bleary.
You also appear worn and weary.
And as tomorrow we're off and away,
I think it high time we call it a day.

(they exit)

MARQUIS So everyone is tucked away for the night. All's quiet, and nobody saw me come up the stairs. So far, so good. I was told that Lord and Lady Britannia are in the second room. But which door? Hm! My mistake. Only a closet. I can see, this is not a one-man job. I'd better signal the boys in the barn. But how, without signaling the entire neighborhood? What the hell? In Italy, you can sing anytime, day or night, and pass for local color.

The wakeful, watchful Nina

Peered from her darkened balcony.
Has ever mortal man seen a
Lovelier lass than she?

She cried, why so long delay?
Time is short. Come, my own!
I'm here, grandmother's gone away;
Have you a heart made of stone?
Tomorrow I'm sixteen, a-
Las! I lie alone!
Here I lie alone!

The dear though doleful Nina
Languished as the night grew long;
Our rueful, rustic queen a-
Gain poured out her song:

The moon up, the stars aglow,
Lovers all celebrate.
My prince, why torment me so?
How much more am I to wait?
Already turned sixteen! A-
Las! For love too late!
Ah, for love too late!

(Beppo and Giacomo enter)

MARQUIS Hush! Be quiet!

BEPPO (Look who's talking! You would think he was singing sotto voce.)

GIACOMO This is an improvement over that smelly stable. What do you mean, chief, putting us up with the horses and goats?

BEPPO Not to mention the rats.

MARQUIS Quiet. You boys are getting spoiled. We have work to do. Five hundred thousand, remember? On the other side of the door. This time we don't let it slip out of our fingers, understand?

BEPPO Come on, let's go get it.

MARQUIS Not so fast. Our Lord and Lady are still awake. No need to do it the hard way. And besides, the servant girl is in there with them.

BEPPO That pretty little pigeon!

GIACOMO We have an account to settle with her, too. Let's not get sentimental. Twenty thousand francs she got from them, as a reward. Out of our money! It's a steal.

MARQUIS Only a short-time loan.

ZERLINA (*outside*) Good night, my Lord, my Lady. Call when you need me. Sleep well. Pleasant dreams.

MARQUIS The girl! She's coming back! Into the closet! Quick! Behind the curtains!

ZERLINA To bed at last! After such a long day. Tonight I am sure to sleep soundly.

GIACOMO Good God, this is her bedroom!

BEPPPO What do you think we oughta do?

MARQUIS You might look the other way.

ZERLINA And when I wake up, a new life begins. Tomorrow I'm getting married to my darling Lorenzo. My darling rich Lorenzo! These lovely twenty thousand francs! Who ever would have thought that money could buy happiness?

What a fortune! Luck is ours!
From ashes, hope reflowers.
No more hurdles bar the way;
Tomorrow comes our wedding day!

Free at last, light and airy,
With money I can marry,
And fulfill my very heart's desire,
And thus fulfill my heart's desire,
My heart's desire.

Thank God, Lorenzo caught the bandit!
Otherwise, awake, alone so late,
So much at stake, I couldn't stand it.
No good can come of tempting fate.
Ah! Oh! Now I've pricked my finger.
Pernicious pin!

BEPPPO (*concealed*)
She's taken off the ring!
And there it lies, by her pillow.

MARQUIS Lie low! When she's asleep,
Our revelries begin.

ZERLINA Where to hide so much money
Safe and sound — Let me see.
Of course, beneath my pillow!
I'll keep it there until — oh,
My beloved! Luck is ours!
From ashes, hope reflowers.
No more hurdles bar the way;
Tomorrow comes our wedding day!

Free at last, light and airy,
With money I can marry,
And fulfill my very heart's desire,
And thus fulfill my heart's desire,
My heart's desire.

ZERLINA

I'll lay out finery and laces,
Like the Princess of a fairy tale,
Ready, my love, for your embraces,
When I remove the bridal veil,
When I take off the bridal veil.

(before the mirror)

For a country girl and a peasant,
You could hardly call me plain.
Yes, my face in fact is quite pleasant;
Some girls with my hair would be vain.
'Twould be injustice not to add
My other features are not so bad.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

Ha, ha! She can say that again!

ZERLINA

A noise! Was it a whisper?
I could have sworn I heard a laugh ...
Who? Possibly next door ...
Or in my head ... Who knows?
With money I can marry,
And fulfill my very heart's desire,
And thus fulfill my heart's desire,
My heart's desire.

To bed ... to bed ...
It's been a day ...

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

And a half!

ZERLINA

Before I sleep ...
(kneels)
Oh, holy virgin, I pray to thee:
Watch over him, watch over me.
My heart is yours, my beloved ...
Good night ... I am yours ...
Oh, holy virgin, I pray to thee:
Watch over him, watch over ... *(she falls asleep)*

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

Quietly tip-toe,
Soft as a mouse;
Stay button-lipped, oh
Rouse not the house.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

Breathe not a whisper,
Keep wide awake,
Each out for his per-
Cent of the take.

GIACOMO Asleep ...

BEPPO And now for Milord.

MARQUIS Keep him quiet.

GIACOMO I'm game to silence him forever.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

Silent and stealthy,
We're on the job.
What are the wealthy
For but to rob?

Sly like the reptile,
Bold like the boar;
Men, watch your step till
Safe out the door.
(the Marquis takes Zerlina's ring)

GIACOMO The ring!

BEPPO Wait ... Before we tackle this assignment ...
It's the girl. She could wreck the deal
If she wakes up and starts to squeal.

MARQUIS Our dainty Beppo shows refinement.

GIACOMO What's the answer?

BEPPO First we bump her off.

GIACOMO Good idea.

MARQUIS Ah, careless youth!

BEPPO You're backing down?
And has our leader lost his appetite for action?

MARQUIS Not at all. You're out of your mind.
Come! Strike!
And don't take forever!

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO

Waste not a gesture,
Take deadly aim.

Time now to test your
Skill at the game.

Sting like the adder,
Hit like a rock;
They'll wake up sadder
Come six o'clock.

ZERLINA Oh, holy virgin! I pray to thee:
Watch over him, watch over me.

BEPPO She prays ...

GIACOMO Don't be a coward. Strike!

MARQUIS Be quick! ... So go ahead. *(A knock!)*

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO
Did someone knock?
It's from the outer gate,
Loud enough to wake the dead. *(more knocking)*

ZERLINA Did the dawn come so soon?
Who's raising such a ruckus
To rouse me out of bed?

CHORUS Wake up in there, come down and open.
The night patrol is at the door.
Wake up in there, come down and open.
Say, what on earth are you waiting for?

BEPPO *(trembling)* Will they tie us up? Lead us off to jail?

MARQUIS You're not afraid?

BEPPO No, just pale.

LORENZO Zerlina, Zerlina, come let us in.
How can you sleep through this hell-raising din?

ZERLINA Ah, Lorenzo! I'll throw you the key.

MARQUIS, BEPPO and GIACOMO
We made a blunder,
It would appear;
They well may wonder
What we're doing here.
One of those cases,
Take it from me.
There are lots of places
I had rather be.

LORENZO (*entering*) Zerlina! The rascal got away! Fra Diavolo slipped right out of our fingers. Most likely the work of an accomplice. Or the devil. We've spent the entire night thrashing about the mountainside, searching. No luck. My men are half dead with exhaustion. Be a dear. Go down and open up the cellar. A half-hours rest, a little something cold and wet, and we'll be all set to go again.

ZERLINA But dearest, haven't you done enough looking for one night? You'll be in even better condition after a few hours sleep.

LORENZO Delay will make it all the more difficult. Be a good girl. Do as I say. Don't argue.

ZERLINA One would think we were married already. You really shouldn't start ordering me around until tomorrow. (*she exits*)

LORD (*entering, yawning*) What's the trouble out here? Don't people in Italy ever settle down for the night?

LORENZO Hush! I don't want to alarm the ladies, but we have reason to believe that Fra Diavolo is in the vicinity. For all we know, he could be hiding in this very house. (*noise*)

LORD Good God! What was that?

LORENZO You heard it, too? Your Ladyship, perhaps.

LORD But my wife is in there. The noise was in here.

There's a prowler at large,
But we are on his trail;
So the beast is brought to bay.

LORENZO We shall not fail.

LORD Search the room.

BEPPPO We've not a chance.

MARQUIS Relax! Leave it to me!
A scene that I can play.
(*he steps out*)

LORD & LORENZO You here!

MARQUIS Not a whisper!

LORD (Again that blasted Marquis!)

LORENZO We have met, I believe,
But this I did not foresee.

MARQUIS Delighted.

LORD & LORENZO Go on, speak out.
I refuse to play a game;
Resolve this deadly doubt;
Go ahead, say the name.

MARQUIS (They fear that I have scored
In English and Italian.)

 (*aside to Lord*)
It's the old tale, Milord.
I trust you'll be discreet ...
Your lady's charm ... her looks ...
Have swept me off my feet.
As token of her love,
She gave me this medallion.

LORD We shall settle by the sword.

MARQUIS You name the time, Milord.
 (*to Lorenzo*)
It's the old tale, they say ...
My words you'll not repeat ...
Zerlina's charm ... her youth ...
Have swept me off my feet.
And this ring might convey ...

LORENZO Her ring!

MARQUIS That my hopes are not unfounded.

LORENZO The ring I gave to her!
That's proof enough for me. Sir!

MARQUIS I hear the house
By thieves is surrounded.

LORENZO Honor I demand!

MARQUIS Give it back ... don't let it leave her hand.

LORENZO When a cad of high degree
Stoops to corrupt and disgrace,
We soldiers act!

MARQUIS Quite right, of course!
At six o'clock ... You name the place.

LORENZO Off the road.

MARQUIS The road to Napoli.
(Death he deserves for my men that have died,
But his life I shall spare, thanks to that charming bride.)

When the call is for action,
I am glad to comply.
They demand satisfaction,
So an eye for an eye.

LORENZO & LORD Goaded on to distraction,
On my sword I rely.
We demand satisfaction;
Like a dog he must die.

MARQUIS When the call is for action,
I am glad to comply.
They demand satisfaction,
So an eye for an eye.

BEPPPO & GIACOMO` When the call is for action
Someone else can apply.
I can find satisfaction
Other ways than to die.

PAMELA *(entering from her room, in a negligee)*
Never have I slept in such a noisy hotel!
An all-night party going on?

ZERLINA *(returning)* A mob of people in my room?
(to Lorenzo)
What is wrong? Why the look of gloom?

LORD & LORENZO Ah, the serpent!

PAMELA *(to Lord)* Is it not late?

LORD (For his step she was listening
As she lay in wait.)

PAMELA No reply?

LORD (The deceit!)

ZERLINA *(to Lorenzo)*
Are you ill, oh my dear?

LORENZO (Not a blush! ... Remorseless! ...
Sarcastic! ... Insincere!)

PAMELA and ZERLINA
Whatever is the matter?
Your hands begin to tremble.

LORENZO How skillfully a woman
Can lie and dissemble.

ZERLINA You're upset?

LORENZO Never mind!

ZERLINA What is wrong?

LORENZO Not a thing.

ZERLINA Do confide.

LORENZO *(to Marquis)*
Is it clear? The duel is on.
The time and place agreed.

MARQUIS Where one of us shall die.

PAMELA and ZERLINA
 What's this of death?

LORD It comes to that.

PAMELA Are others crazy, or am I?

PAMELA and ZERLINA
 Very odd, his reaction;
Is he mad, or am I?
Have I lost my attraction?
If indeed, how and why?

MARQUIS When the call is for action
I am glad to comply.
They demand satisfaction,
So an eye for an eye.

LORD & LORENZO Goaded on to distraction,
On my sword I rely.
We demand satisfaction:
Like a dog he must die.

BEPPPO and GIACOMO
 When the call is for action
Someone else can apply.
I can find satisfaction
Other ways than to die.

End of Act II

ACT III

Act Three is entitled CATCH OF THE DAY, or THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY,

Wherein we finally meet Fra Diavolo face to face, and discover the face to be not unfamiliar.

Wherein several people have second thoughts about dueling, Lady Pamela apparently loses a husband, and a young tenor apparently rises from the dead.

Wherein a song provides the vital clue to the resolution of a bedroom mystery, an English lord turns bandit, and a large reward continues to go unclaimed.

Scene: in front of the inn

MARQUIS

I'm master of my fate!
But the outcome depends
On a little help from my friends.
Though sterling all, with hearts of steel,
I stand alone at the wheel.

Outlaws united,
Men to the marrow,
Lift up your heads
In manly pride.

(to audience)

You there that tread the path
Straight and narrow
Our daily bread and butter provide.

Lords all leap when I command it,
For like a mighty king I reign.
Sovereigns bow unto the bandit,
For all the world is my domain.
For all the world here is my domain.

Outlaws united,
Men to the marrow,
Lift up your heads
In manly pride.

You there that tread the path
Straight and narrow
Our daily bread and butter provide.

Comes a judge, bought with gold:
You're on my list, the next in line.
A banker I behold —
Your purse, my friend. What's yours is mine.
A lawyer comes from court,
A man of justice for a fee —
The gold you got now goes to me.

Here's a pilgrim underfed:
"I've only rags,
I starve for bread."
"Be of cheer, tremble not;
Here's a purse, take the lot."

Ah, see this timid, tearful daughter.
Upon her knees despair has brought her.
"Sir, have a heart!
Spare me, spare me, I pray!
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
All that I ask
Is to go on my way.
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
You are a bandit, a powerful male;
I but a child, unbefriended and frail.
Here you have caught me alone in the wild,
I but an orphan, a fatherless child."

Never rough and rude toward the tender,
We yield unto these tears of woe,
Though the favors they would freely surrender
'Twould be a crime to decline or forgo.

Ah, what a life!
Free and ever on the wing!
Sheer joy and delight,
Roaming as bandit king
Who lives above the law.
Yet ... yet ...
Here is the fatal flaw.

Barely started, the ball is over,
And the fiddles are packed away.
The clown, the knave, the lover
Lead the dance for but a day.

My vocation you know full well, oh
But I beg you begrudge me not,
For time, the thievish fellow,
Comes at last for all you've got.

So, here on the run,
Take in the town
And soak in the sun.

Pour out the champagne,
Reach for the moon,
And sing in the rain.
Throw care and caution to the wind
Before time takes you from behind.

So, here on the run,
Take in the town
And soak in the sun.

Pour out the champagne,
Reach for the moon,
And sing in the rain.

Enjoy the fun,
For soon the sun is down.
Throw care and caution to the wind,
Before time creeps up from behind.

PAMELA (*rushing in*) Oh, my dear Marquis! My husband, Zerlina's fiancé — you must bring them to their senses! This dreadful duel! She and I have both been wringing our hands in vain. Poor thing, she has finally fallen asleep, but neither Lorenzo nor my husband is any place to be found.

MARQUIS No need to worry about Lorenzo, my Lady. I have taken care of him, in my own fashion.

PAMELA Not d-d-d-d-dead?

MARQUIS Dead! No, merely bewildered. But your husband is another matter, a more serious problem. Frankly I am at a loss. I see no remedy. It seems, the idea of a duel grew upon him to such an extent that he took the first coach to Naples half an hour ago.

PAMELA Fled! Oh, sir, what is to be done? I have no money. I am stranded, helpless, at anyone's mercy! Who can I turn to?

MARQUIS Look no further. Perhaps I can be of assistance. With your permission, I shall order a special coach. Together, we can overtake your husband before he reaches Naples. Meanwhile, return to your room. Be prepared to set off instantly. When you hear the bell from the church tower, meet me here, ready to go.

PAMELA How can I ever thank you?

MARQUIS We'll discuss that later. Remember, at the sound of the church bell. (*she goes*) And now instructions for Giacomo. (*He slips a note into a hiding place.*) Here's where I told him he would find a message.

LORD (*rushing in*) Ah, there you are! I have been looking all over!

MARQUIS Good morning, my Lord! Eager for a duel, I see. And I've had

one already to warm up on. It should be an exciting match. I like to keep in practice, and it's not always easy to find opponents so willing to give their blood for my benefit.

LORD I hear that you are expert in the art.

MARQUIS Oh, there's always room for improvement. Lorenzo's life I have spared. Zerlina shall have him. But you, my Lord, must not hope for such consideration. Sir, I am mad about your wife. I have already ordered a special coach to carry the two of us to Naples, after I have settled my account with you.

LORD Good Lord! Couldn't we settle the account some other way? We are living in the nineteenth century, not the twelfth. Dear Marquis, now please don't take it amiss, but you know, I happen to be very fond of my wife also — not to mention my life. Wouldn't this be enough to purchase both? *(takes out a purse)*

MARQUIS How can I stand in the way of young love? Very well, I accept. The duel we will consider a draw. But you put me in a rather awkward position. A promise to a lady, after all. Suppose she disapproves of the change of plan? I've got it! Here's your chance to play the dashing hero and elope with your own wife.

LORD Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one! The shock might be just what she needs.

MARQUIS Come along. Time is short. I'll sketch out the plan.

LORD My, my! To think how I misunderstood you! As one Lord to another, I've got to hand it to you!

(they exit)

(Strolling townspeople enter; among them, Beppo and Giacomo)

CHORUS Ever on Sunday,
 Mass barely over,
 'Tis our routine
 To congregate
 Upon the green.

 Some in a cluster
 Huddle and hover,
 While others choose
 To stroll about
 And spread the news.

 We get together
 To talk of taxes,
 Discuss the weather,
 Display the latest thing in clothes.

 Good friends and neighbors,
 We leave our labors
 To gab and gossip

And gather how the world goes.

To see and be seen,
We stroll upon the green.

GIACOMO *(to Beppo)*
Up so early! Well, this is news!

BEPPO In church, throughout the service,
I had a quiet snooze.

GIACOMO Young Beppo at the altar?
Afraid of hell?
Have you a chill?
Are you not well?

BEPPO Today's called Palm Sunday ...
A fool knows that!
You heathen! Have you no sprig to wear?
No greenery for your hat?
Look around ... You're the only one without.

GIACOMO I'll steal my neighbor's ... Turnabout!
Now am I also one of the devout.

CHORUS Ever on Sunday,
Mass barely over,
'Tis our routine
To congregate
Upon the green.

Some in a cluster
Huddle and hover,
While others choose
To stroll about
And spread the news.

We get together
To talk of taxes,
Discuss the weather,
Display the latest thing in clothes.

Good friends and neighbors,
We leave our labors
To gab and gossip
And gather how the world goes.

To see and be seen,
We stroll upon the green.

BEPPO But where's the chief?

GIACOMO He's got business to take care of. Here's where we are to pick up instructions. The private mailbox we agreed on.

BEPPO There's a letter in it!

GIACOMO Hand it over, let me read it.

BEPPO Do you suppose that I am illiterate? (*reads*) "One duel down, and the English Lord will no doubt suggest tennis ..."

GIACOMO (*looking over his shoulder*) "Will no doubt suggest terms."

BEPPO "I must stay out of sight. As soon as the square is empty, sing like hell ... "

GIACOMO "Ring the bell ... "

BEPPO "Ring the bell in the church tower. I can then come out and meet your infant ... "

GIACOMO "And meet you in front."

BEPPO "Be ready to lunch on asparagus."

GIACOMO "Be ready to launch an escape."

BEPPO It's signed "Death Valley."

GIACOMO That's "Diavolo!" Idiot! Lie low! Here comes that young lieutenant. He's supposed to be dead by now! (*they exit*)

LORENZO (*entering*) Although he had me right where he wanted,
My foe gave up the fight.
But I'm compelled to persevere undaunted
Till truth is brought to light.

To the end, I'll not surrender;
No truce and no reprieve.
That she betray,
Toss away
A devotion true and tender —
No! This I cannot even for a moment conceive!
Despite the ring
I shall cling
To a hope, however slender:
Hope that I shall and must believe.

Amused, and with a careless chortle,
He ground my life to dust;
A love that I believed immortal
He slew to feed his lust.

It's a lie! I'll not surrender;
No truce and no reprieve.

That she betray,
Toss away
A devotion true and tender —
No! This I cannot even for a moment conceive!

(Lorenzo's men return, followed by Zerlina)

CHORUS Again we go to get the bandit;
The trap is set, the net is spread;
Although to him I have to hand it:
He always stays a jump ahead.

ZERLINA *(to Lorenzo)*
You're back at last, thank God!
My dear Lorenzo! I worried so!
You left in such a rush.
Is something wrong?

LORENZO Play acting!

ZERLINA Are you ill?

LORENZO So you wonder?
I don't suppose you know
The man who called on you last night
When all was still.

ZERLINA Who called on me? Did I hear you right?
I do not understand; do explain.

Beppo and Giacomo enter

BEPPO The patrol!

GIACOMO Keep it cool.

ZERLINA *(He's not himself; it sounds insane.)*

BEPPO *(sitting)*
Ola! Some wine!
(sees Zerlina)
The one ... the same
Who stood before her mirror,
Who sighed and sang,
Not knowing we could hear her.

GIACOMO Yes, sir, we saw her at her best,
As she got undressed.

BEPPO Wait till we tell the gang
(They start to sing Zerlina's song)
For a country girl and a peasant,
You could hardly call me plain
Yes, my face in fact is quite pleasant;

Some girls with my hair would be vain.
'Twould be injustice not to add
My other features are not so bad.

ZERLINA (My chamber! Why, yes, of course!
As clear as day! No other way!)

(*spoken*) Lorenzo, I have something to tell you, something most serious. You say that a man shared my room with me last night. You are wrong. There were two men, and here they are! This pious pair, these pilgrims, came to spy on me, and now they give themselves away.

LORENZO Arrest them, the sneaky hounds!
For pilgrims, lady's bedrooms
Are strictly out of bounds.
Make a search, check them out ...
Their cloaks ... inside their belts ...
Lift up their hoods ...
A knife, a dirk, a dagger,
If nothing else.

SERGEANT (*spoken*) No weapons.

BEPPO & GIACOMO (On us they've got the goods.)

LORENZO (They'd stop at nothing for a price.)

SERGEANT Aside from rosary beads,
There is only a piece of paper, folded twice.

LORENZO I'll read. "One duel down, the English Lord no doubt will suggest terms. I must stay out of sight. As soon as the square is empty, ring the bell in the church tower. I can then come out and meet you in front. Be ready to launch an escape. Fra Diavolo!"

ALL Fra Diavolo!

LORENZO We'll carry out the orders
At his own request.
(*to Giacomo*)
You! Go inside the church, ring the bell;
Give the signal, he comes on cue,
And we perform the rest.
(*to soldiers*)
Stay well concealed;
Unseen and silent,
We mustn't give the fox a clue.
(*to Beppo*)
And you! ... Don't move a muscle, keep your station.
When he appears, a sign,
A wink, the smallest indication,
Your head is on the line!
Clear enough?

OTHERS & CHORUS Tremble!

FRA DIAVOLO Tremble, late wandering stranger.
You tread a path of danger

ALL Near Diavolo! Fra Diavolo! Fra Diavolo!
Tremble! Near Diavolo! Fra Diavolo! Fra Diavolo!

End of the Opera