

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Music by
Gaetano Donizetti

English Version by
Donald Pippin
(1996)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lucrezia Borgia

Duke Alfonso, her fourth (and current) husband, Duke of Ferrara

Gennaro, a young soldier, in the service of the Venetian Republic

Orsini, an even younger soldier, Gennaro's close friend

Gazella, Petrucci, Liverotto, Vitellezo, and Gazella, young noblemen and fellow soldiers

Gubetta and Astolfo, in the service of Lucrezia

Rustighello, in the service of Duke Alfonso

(Maskers, police, servants)

Donizetti

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PROLOGUE

Venice -- city of magic and mystery, where days and nights seem shorter. A welcome stopover for Gennaro and his friends, fellow soldiers of fortune. Yesterday Verona, tomorrow on to Ferrara, city by the Po, domain of the Borgias, where Duke Alfonso, husband of the infamous Lucrezia Borgia, holds a tight grip on the reins of power. Her fourth husband, by the way. Ask not what became of the other three.

Orsini, youngest and sprightliest of the soldiers, whose close friendship with Gennaro has been forged out of shared dangers on the battlefield, foresees trouble in Ferrara. Ever prone to dramatize, he recalls an ominous warning, with eerie, supernatural overtones delivered at midnight mid wailing night winds by a spectral stranger in black: "Beware the Borgias! Deal with Lucrezia, you die!"

Although this theatrical nonsense is scornfully dismissed, it has touched a sensitive nerve, but not enough to put a damper on the usual jovial, boisterous mood. However, one person does seem oddly miscast. Evidently a newcomer, there is something shifty, something unsavory about the man. Purportedly a Spaniard by the name of Beverano, who knows who he really is? We would urge these happy-go-lucky soldiers to check his credentials.

As Gennaro sleeps on, a veiled woman enters and hovers about him, gazing tenderly, maternally – an uncharacteristic role for Lucrezia Borgia, whose life has been steeped in cruelty and violence, where she has been both victim and per-petrator. Born into a nest of scorpions and vipers, not unlike the ruthless, rapacious Mafioso dynasties of a later era, she has been subjected to rape and incest, to treachery and betrayal. She has witnessed, one after another, the murder of those dear to her. From this sordid, turbulent past she has emerged hardened, embittered and reckless, yet blessed by one single precious saving grace -- a son that she bore in secluded secrecy, whom she managed to rescue from the poisonous fangs of his predatory relatives only by secreting him away, by denying his very existence, and concealing his identity even from himself. And by keeping a watchful though distant eye on him for twenty anxious, lonely years, allowing herself not even the luxury of the briefest encounter. It is precisely this opportunity that has now drawn her to Venice, discreetly followed by her servant Gubetta, whom you may recognize as the purported Spaniard seen

earlier. Followed also, despite her precautions, by Duke Alfonso, her husband, jealous and suspicious as ever, quick to leap to the obvious conclusion: who would she be meeting so furtively at night, in hazardous territory, except a lover?

The meeting yields even more than Lucrezia dared hope for. Gennaro awakens and is instantly drawn to this warmly sympathetic unknown woman in whom he sees the idealized mother that he has always longed for. But their blissful rapport is rudely shattered by his returning friends, who know the mysterious woman's identity all too well.

Scene: the terrace of the Grimani palace in Venice

GAZELLA City of magic

PETRUCCI And mystery!

BOTH Here days and nights seem shorter.

ORSINI Here gliding by on a gondola,
While song floats out upon the water.

LIVEROTTO, VITELLOZZO, PETRUCCI, GAZELLA, and ORSINI

City of magic and mystery!
Here days and nights seem shorter,
While gliding by on a gondola
And song floats out upon the water.

Then off to fair Ferrara
We're on the march tomorrow,
There to discover
Charms by the river
We call the Po.

GUBETTA A court where Duke Alfonso reigns
In height of style and splendor.
His wife Lucrezia ...

ALL FIVE Speak not of her!
Or say it with a shudder.

VITELLOZZO Name I recoil to utter.

LIVEROTTO A Borgia! Tell me no more.

CHORUS None can recall her history
Without a blush of shame.

ORSINI Her name I fear,
And here is why ...
(all gather around him)
An omen ... an apparition ...

GENNARO Orsini, there you go again,
Weaving a bedtime story.

OTHERS Quiet.

GENNARO I've heard enough already
About that shameless lady.

OTHERS Quiet. And do not interrupt.
Give him the right of way.

GENNARO Then I shall sleep, but wake me up
When he has had his say.
(lies down, and eventually falls asleep)

ORSINI Two years ago ...
Left on the field of Remini,
Wounded and barely breathing,
Beyond the pursuit of victory,
Death itself I was fighting.

Except for my brave Gennaro,
There would my tale have ended;
Fearless in face of danger,
He lifted me from the dead.

OTHERS A true and honest soldier,
As one and all have said.

ORSINI Later the roles were turned around;
His was the life in peril.
Danger has forged our destiny,
Welded together as brothers.
“And you will perish together,”
Thundered a voice of warning.
Croaking this fateful message,
A man in black strode by.

OTHERS Eerie!

ORSINI “Beware the Borgias, oh come not near!”
Gravely these words he uttered.

OTHERS A premonition ...

ORSINI “Fear above all Lucrezia.
Deal with Lucrezia, you die.”

OTHERS Who can say how or why?

ORSINI After the stranger departed,
The wind continued wailing
The name so long detested.
Lucrezia! Lucrezia! Lucrezia!
Came the cry.

OTHERS Some otherworldly warning ...
Are we converted?
No, no, no, no!

CHORUS Listen ... Dancing and revelry ...
Banish, banish gloomy anxieties.
Tonight we're living for pleasure.
Time to ponder omens and prophesies,
If need be, later at leisure.

ALL Safe and secure from menace,
Enjoy the freedom of Venice,
Safe, secure from menace.
Here the Borgias have no jurisdiction;
Their scepter none need fear.
Safe and secure, nothing to fear.

 Come on! Come on!
For their tyranny none need fear.

ORSINI Though unfounded, I shudder uneasily,
Ever haunted by that message.
Whether awake or sleeping,
No, there is no escaping.
Waking or sleeping,
Over and over, that horrible omen
Daily and nightly I hear.
Over and over that gruesome prophecy
I seem to hear.
Brother Gennaro how I envy,
Who can sleep secure from fear,
Who lies asleep secure from fear.
(all exit except Gennaro)

(Lucrezia enters while Gennaro sleeps, Gubetta returns and watches)

LUCREZIA, *gazing at Gennaro*
The sleep I long for!

Ever serene and tranquil
May his repose continue.
At peace, may his soul be shielded
From the remorse I suffer —
Dark nights of horror,
Haunted and tormented.

(noticing Gubetta)
You here?

GUBETTA A matter of duty.
You could be spotted.
The mighty arm of Venice
Guarantees your safety,
But provides no shield
From public insult, mockery and scorn.

LUCREZIA They despise and revile me;
They call me loathsome.
Yet ... I was not created
Such an evil monster.
Blindly embittered ...
If only I could undo the past!
Or in one person *(glancing at Gennaro)*
Inspire a spark of tender mercy,
Even of love,
I could endure
This universal loathing.
That young man sleeping ...

GUBETTA His footsteps
For many days I've followed
In hope of finding
The unrevealed but powerful attraction
That has drawn you to Venice,
Eager but anxious.

LUCREZIA Go! And question no further.
Safe is my secret. *(Gubetta leaves)*

LUCREZIA) Full of rapture, full of wonder,
I behold in tender adoration.
All I dared ever hope or imagine
I see imprinted upon his features.
Granted but one joyful moment,
Let me marvel and admire.

Tell him not my tale of horror;
His contempt I could not bear.
Take from me that bitter harvest:

His disdain and my despair.

Should I wake him? No, I dare not!
Nor reveal my covered face.
Still weeping for joy and sadness,
I must dry these many tears.
(she removes her mask to dry her tears)

DUKE ALFONSO *(lurking in the background, with Rustighello)*
There! Together!

RUSTIGHELLO Your wife! With her lover!

DUKE Do you know him?

RUSTIGHELLO A soldier of fortune.

DUKE No native country?

RUSTIGHELLO Nor relations.
Unconnected, but courageous.

DUKE You must lure him to Ferrara
Where my lightest word is law.

RUSTIGHELLO On the march at dawn tomorrow,
He's already on the way.
(they exit)

LUCREZIA Proud no longer, I pray to heaven:
From my tears may flowers open.
Sleep, my darling, serene in your slumber,
Dreaming only of joy tomorrow.

LUCREZIA Guarded by a host of angels,
Wake to breathe a sweeter air.
Nights of long and wakeful sorrow
Leave for me alone to bear.

Wake, my darling, after slumber
To a tender song of cheer.

(Lucrezia kisses his forehead. Gennaro awakes and grabs her hand)

LUCREZIA Lord!

GENNARO Am I dreaming?

LUCREZIA Let go of me!

GENNARO Stay, stay! Oh, gracious lady!

LUCREZIA Let go of me!

GENNARO Stay for a moment.

LUCREZIA Ah, let go of me.

GENNARO Stay for a moment,
 And let me gaze on your beauty.
 So powerful! Though ever soft and gentle.
 Forgive my rude audacity;
 I'd never hurt nor harm you.
 Although your beauty I revere,
 It stirs me to the core.
 Even though your beauty I revere,
 It stirs me all the more.

LUCREZIA Gennaro! Can it be possible?
 For me you feel some fondness?

GENNARO Far more than fondness.

LUCREZIA I want to hear.

GENNARO From out of nowhere, I love you.

LUCREZIA (Oh, joy!)
 GENNARO Yet, yet ... though still unclear to me,
 Let me confess sincerely:
 Yes, though I love you,
 In you I see another,
 A someone else that I adore.

LUCREZIA A love for whom you suffer?

GENNARO Yes.

LUCREZIA Her name?

GENNARO The mother I lost.

LUCREZIA Your mother?

GENNARO Yes.

LUCREZIA Your mother! My dearest Gennaro!
 You love her?

GENNARO With all my heart.

LUCREZIA So deeply ...

GENNARO Yes, more than life itself,
 Though I have never seen her.

LUCREZIA Where is she?
 GENNARO Painful is the story
 Till now I've told to no one.
 For reasons hard to fathom
 I want to break my silence.
 Not only gracious but lovely,

LUCREZIA (If he but knew!)

GENNARO You are a soul I can trust.

LUCREZIA Ah, speak freely! Speak freely!
 Open your heart to me.
 Ah, open, open, open, open,
 Your over burdened heart.

GENNARO Son of a simple fisherman —
 This I was raised believing.
 Swiftly my childhood years flew by,
 Happy, though means were meager.

GENNARO One day an unknown messenger
 Came to revise my history.
 Setting me up as a soldier,
 A letter he left as well.

LUCREZIA Go on.

GENNARO Sent by the mother I'd never known,
 Warning of deadly danger —
 Powerful foes above the law
 That watch and wait for her, for me.
 Urging the need for secrecy,
 Even her name she dared not say.
 I have obeyed till now
 This cry of a mother in fear.

LUCREZIA You have the letter?

GENNARO So dear to me,
 Close to my heart I keep it.

LUCREZIA Many a tear shed lovingly
 Fell on the page she was writing.

GENNARO And many are the tears
 That I have shed in reading.
 But now ... you're weeping also.

LUCREZIA You see.

GENNARO You're weeping?
LUCREZIA Not only for her.

GENNARO For me?

LUCREZIA For you.

GENNARO Your tears are for me?
Your tears are for me?
So warm and sympathetic!
The way I dream of her.

LUCREZIA Loss and despair I've also known;
Love and continue loving.
Pray for a kinder day to come
When out of reach of danger
She can embrace you fearlessly,
Close to a mother's heart,

LUCREZIA Dare to embrace you fearlessly
Close to a true mother's heart,
Ever closer to her loving heart.
Ever yet closer to her loving heart,
Closer to her loving heart.

 May she then hold you in her embrace,
Her loving embrace.

GENNARO Gone is the need to dream of her;
In you I see her smiling.
All that a mother means to me
In you I rediscover
Till I embrace her fearlessly
Close to my loving heart.
Till I embrace her fearlessly
Close to a son's loving heart
Ever close to a son's loving heart.

 Till I hold her in my embrace
My loving embrace.

LUCREZIA People are coming ... I must leave you.

GENNARO No! Stay longer, stay longer!

ORSINI (*entering*)
 (With Gennaro!)

LUCREZIA I must not be seen.

GENNARO Say at least, at least who you are.
Say at least, at least who you are.
Who are you?

LUCREZIA One who loves you
And would offer her life to prove it.

GENNARO Who are you?

ORSINI *(stepping forward)*
Shall I tell you?

LUCREZIA Kind heaven!
(she tries to leave)

OTHERS *(preventing her exit)*
Not so hasty!
Stay and listen.

LUCREZIA Gennaro!

GENNARO *(to his friends)*
I warn you!
Dare imply even one word against her,
From that moment you're no friend of mine.

OTHERS Let her hear who we are, if you'd rather.
Then we leave her, we leave her to you.

LUCREZIA (No escaping!
I'm surrounded.)

OTHERS Stay and listen.

GENNARO Friends, be careful!

ORSINI I'm Orsini, who daily remembers
How you slaughtered his brother while sleeping.

VITELLOZZO I'm Vitellozzo, beloved by an uncle
Who was slain for the key to his castle.

LIVEROTTO I'm the nephew of sturdy Appiano
Who succumbed while a guest at your table.

GENNARO (Idle rumor!
Cruel charges and vile accusations.)

PETRUCCI I was heir to the Count of Sienna

Whose domain you acquired by murder.

LUCREZIA (Oh, the crimes on my conscience!)

GAZELLA To a husband of yours I'm related,
Drowned in the Tiber, thus leaving you free.

CHORUS Guilty, guilty!

LUCREZIA (Where can I turn now?
I've no place to hide.)

GENNARO (Untrue! Untrue!
Are the lot of them insane?
Oh God! Untrue, untrue!)

ORSINI I'm Orsini, and daily remember.
I remember.

VITELLOZZO I'm Vitellozzo, beloved by an uncle.
Well do I remember.

LIVEROTTO I've an uncle you murdered.
I remember.

PETRUCCI and GUBETTA
We remember,
We remember.

CHORUS Murder.
We remember.

LUCREZIA (The crimes on my conscience!)

CHORUS Deadly viper!

GENNARO (Can she be guilty?)

LUCREZIA (The crimes on my conscience!)

CHORUS Off, you serpent! Go, go, go!

OTHERS Now that she knows to whom she is speaking,
Let her answer.

GENNARO and CHORUS
Answer, answer!

LUCREZIA Show some mercy! Show some mercy!

CHORUS Let her answer.

LUCREZIA No!

OTHERS Not the woman she seems, but a demon
Full of venom and void of scruple.
Diabolic, deceitful, degraded,
She's a monster beneath human nature,
Held in fear even more than she's hated,
Elevated to power and fame.

LUCREZIA Mercy, mercy! Ah, Gennaro!

GENNARO She, a monster?
Ah, say who is she?

LUCREZIA Do not listen, Gennaro.
For my sake, do not listen!

OTHERS Who? Shall we tell you?

GENNARO Say, who is she? Answer, answer!
Say her name. Tell me, tell me!
Oh, tell me, oh tell me.
Say her name.

LUCREZIA No, no, no, no!

OTHERS Lucrezia Borgia!

GENNARO Oh, no! No, no, no.

OTHERS Our deadly foe.
Lucrezia!

End of Prologue

ACT ONE

On to Ferrara, domain of Duke Alfonso, husband of Lucrezia, where Gennaro is quartered conveniently close to the Ducal palace, thanks to the deft maneuvering of Rustighello, the Duke's right-hand man. All-powerful, a favorite of fortune, above the laws that hamper lesser mortals, the Duke has played many roles -- lion, tiger, wolf, serpent. His present role is that of the dishonored husband, hungry for vengeance.

Utterly disenchanted on learning that the sympathetic stranger to whom he poured out his heart is none other than the loathed Lucrezia, Gennaro demonstrates his revulsion with a brash schoolboy prank that is nonetheless lethally

insulting. By removing the first letter from the name on her doorway, BORGIA becomes ORGIA. Laugh if you dare.

Scene: a piazza in Ferrara; on one side is Borgia's palace, on the other side is the house where Gennaro is staying

(Alfonso and Rustighello enter)

DUKE A soldier come from Venice
Her latest lover?

RUSTIGHELLO Bribery has its uses.
With my own methods,
I even found him lodging
Close by your own.
He's your next-door neighbor.

DUKE Soon will he enter.
There will death be waiting.

(sound of celebration within Gennaro's house)
Soldiers ...

CHORUS *(from within)*
Viva! Evviva!

DUKE Vengeance awaits the rival.
Honor and pride he's assaulted.
No man can challenge a Borgia
And hope to live for long,

DUKE Vengeance awaits the rival.
Honor and pride he's assaulted.
No man can challenge a Borgia
And hope to stay alive for long.

RUSTIGHELLO But is he not protected
By civil laws of Venice?

DUKE Here I am lord and master;
Here I define the law.
Holding the reins of power,
Here I define the law,
I! I!

A favorite of fortune,
I hold the reins of power.
My appetite I satisfy
When lesser mortals cringe and cower.

A fortress and a citadel,
My home is not a hovel.
No need have I to qualify
For popular approval. No!

An heir to rank and privilege,
No man has mounted higher.
By right divine, I claim as mine
The place that all desire.

By right divine I claim as mine
The royal purple
That all desire.

RUSTIGHELLO All of his friends are gathered.

DUKE To meet again no more.

RUSTIGHELLO Gathered to meet no more.

DUKE A favorite of fortune,
I hold the reins of power.
My appetite I satisfy
When lesser mortals cringe and cower.

A fortress and a citadel,
My home is not a hovel.
No need have I to qualify
For popular approval. No!

DUKE An heir to rank and privilege,
No man has mounted higher.
By right divine, I claim as mine
The place that all desire.

By right divine I claim as mine
The royal purple
That all desire.
Mine, mine!
The royal robe that all desire.

(they exit, as Gennaro and his friends come out of his house)

FRIENDS Goodnight, Gennaro.

GENNARO *(very seriously)*
Take care. Enjoy and be merry.

ORSINI Now, now! What heavy burden
Has got you down?

GENNARO Nothing at all.
 (My mother exposed to danger,
 And I've no way to reach her.)

ORSINI Dozens of tempting beauties
 Will be attending
 This evening's gala supper,
 Where we are also invited
 By the Princess Negroni.
 If any here have by chance been neglected,
 Speak out at once
 And I shall have the error
 Promptly corrected.

FRIENDS We have all been invited.

GUBETTA *(stepping forward)*
 Myself included.

FRIENDS Oh! If it's not Beverana!

GENNARO *(to Orsini)*
 No escape from the Spaniard.
 Something about him makes me wonder.

ORSINI Then shake it off.
 No reason for suspicion.
 Just another fellow.

VITELLOZZO Gennaro, what is the matter?
 News that the world is ending?

LIVEROTTO I believe you're bewitched
 By a certain Borgia.

GENNARO No, simply bored
 With endless babble.
 Let's drop the subject.
 That woman's vile and malignant.
 No man alive
 Loathes her more than I. So there!

PETRUCCI Be careful.
 Her palace stands before you.

GENNARO A brothel!
 Her evil nature I'd have imprinted
 Plainly upon her forehead
 As on the door
 That bears the name of Borgia.

(Gennaro strikes off the first letter from the name of Borgia on the palace)

FRIENDS Detested!

GENNARO But now amended.

FRIENDS From Borgia, Orgia.

GUBETTA Hardly a laughing matter.
Tomorrow one of you will pay for it dearly.

ENNARO Only the guilty party.
If someone is to pay,
My purse I'll offer.

ORSINI *(noticing two men in black)*
The secret service ...
See you later.

FRIENDS Addio!

Rustighello, employed by the Duke, and an unnamed employee of the Duchess, both out to grab Gennaro, albeit for opposite purposes, engage in a waiting contest. Which contender will make off with the prize?

(Gennaro goes back into his house, the others exit as Astolfo and Rustighello enter)

RUSTIGHELLO You are waiting?

ASTOLFO Till your departure, here I'm posted.
You're also waiting?

RUSTIGHELLO Posted here till your departure,
Duty is duty.

ASTOLFO Who's your target?

RUSTIGHELLO That young soldier come from Venice,
Here residing.
You're out to grab ...

ASTOLFO That young soldier come from Venice.

RUSTIGHELLO Which one?

ASTOLFO That Venetian soldier
Seen residing here.

RUSTIGHELLO Where will you take him?

ASTOLFO There to Lucrezia.

Who's your employer?

RUSTIGHELLO The Duke, her husband.

ASTOLFO Than we pull in two directions.

RUSTIGHELLO Two opposing destinations.

ASTOLFO Mine is festive.

RUSTIGHELLO Mine is fatal.

BOTH Which contender will prevail?
 Crafty fox or mighty lion —
 One to prosper, one to fail.

(at a sign from Rustighello, police enter and surround Astolfo)

RUSTIGHELLO and CHORUS
 No protesting, no resisting,
 Come, surrender to the stronger.
 You will suffer, you'll be sorry
 If you try my patience longer.
 One man only is lord and ruler;
 When he orders, the rest obey.
 One alone is lord and ruler;
 When he orders, the rest obey.

ASTOLFO Of course. Of course.

ASTOLFO Ah, but the Duchess, scorned and slighted,
 Will explode, seething with anger.

RUSTIGHELLO and CHORUS
 Fear not the Duchess.
 He has the say.

Honor, pride and reputation
 This disdainful man has flouted.
 Now the Duke, no Christian martyr,
 Cries for vengeance all the louder.

Show discretion. To hell with valor!
 Bow to wisdom, and leave on the sly.

ASTOLFO Right you are. No fool am I.
 You command; I but comply.

RUSTIGHELLO and CHORUS
 Hurry! Hurry!
 Be off at once, and on the sly.

Use your head, to hell with valor.
Hurry! Leave on the sly.

(Astolfo exits, as Rustighello and the police crash in the door of Gennaro's house)

Rustighello, prompt in the execution of duty, reports back to the Duke inside the palace. Gennaro is under arrest for the desecration inflicted on the name of Borgia. Lucrezia, already stung to the quick, humiliated in front of Gennaro by his friends, then learning that humiliation has been followed by mockery, presumably by one of these friends, storms in to demand punishment for the prankster, whoever he may be. The death penalty, no less. Alfonso, pleasantly surprised, is only too willing to oblige. With rare docility, he vows to give his insulted wife exactly what she asks for.

Scene: inside the Borgia Palace

DUKE You followed orders?

RUSTIGHELLO Promptly. I have the culprit
Already captive.

DUKE Listen closely:
Behind the statue of my grandfather
In a secret chamber
There is a cupboard
That long has stayed unopened.
This key unlocks it.
Look for a vase of silver
And one of gold.
Into the adjoining chamber
Bring both the vases.
But be very careful
With the vase of gold —
Special vintage of Borgia.

SERVANT *(at the door)*
Sir, the Duchess.

DUKE Remember.

(Rustighello exits)

(Lucrezia enters)

DUKE And why so troubled?

LUCREZIA I come demanding vengeance.
Humiliated in public,
Your very wife insulted!
Here in Ferrara,
Boldly in open daylight,
The name of Borgia

Was jeered and hooted,
Its letters mutilated.

DUKE A scandal!

LUCREZIA Can desecration
Be allowed to go unpunished?

DUKE He has been arrested,
Brought to the palace.

LUCREZIA No matter who,
I want him put to death
Where I can watch.
I ask in the name of love
Your sacred, solemn oath.

DUKE My word of honor.
(to usher)
Go, bring him in.

Lucrezia is soon to find out that by unwittingly demanding the death of the son she adores, she has walked into her own trap. Quickly changing course, she now pleads with Alfonso to relent, to dismiss her previous raving as a passing caprice, April weather. Alfonso is not to be swayed. Proudly standing on principle, he refuses to go back on his oath. Death he promised, death he will deliver. In fact, he is inspired to an added refinement. Since Lucrezia was so eager to see the culprit die, it is only fitting that she herself administer the fatal potion: wine from the vase of gold, special vintage of Borgia.

(Gennaro is brought in)

LUCREZIA Gennaro!

DUKE *(with a smile)*
You are acquainted?

LUCREZIA (My God! Gennaro! By me condemned to die!)

GENNARO Your Grace ... Alfonso ...
Your armed police came knocking at my humble door,
Forced me to follow.
Kindly tell me the reason
I've been allotted
This heavy-handed treatment.

DUKE Bold captain ... step forward.

LUCREZIA (I tremble ... I shudder.)

DUKE Some lawless fellow,

Destructive, debased and spiteful,
Dared deface my doorway
Today in public,
Sporting with the name of Borgia
Obscenely.

GENNARO

I never stoop to lie.
Now as before, I value
My honor more than life.
Duke Alfonso, I confess:
I only am guilty.

LUCREZIA

(Had I but known!)

DUKE

(softly, to Lucrezia)
Remember,
I swore an oath of honor.

LUCREZIA

Give me a moment,
Just a moment in private.
Alfonso, I beg you ...
(Heaven, soften his heart!)

(Gennaro is led out)

DUKE

So, here we are ...
What's the issue?

LUCREZIA

Be lenient, rise above it;
Spare the life of that naive, misguided soldier.

DUKE

What! So quickly your fury has faded.
Till this minute, your demand was for death.

LUCREZIA

(with charm)
April weather!
And the cloudburst is over.
For a trifle,
He's too young to die.

DUKE

Swearing vengeance,
I gave you my promise,
And I never go back on my word.

LUCREZIA

Consider ... an exception ...

DUKE

Never! Never!

LUCREZIA

Don Alfonso ... I am asking a favor.
I'm your wife, not a beggar.
Yet I beg of you.

DUKE His impertinence cannot go unpunished.
Your demand for death
I'm sworn to honor.

LUCREZIA We shall both plead to heaven for pardon.
Show the mercy you hope to receive
From above, from above ...

DUKE No, I have sworn!

LUCREZIA Ah! Show the mercy
That you hope to receive.

DUKE No! No! I have sworn it.
No, no, no, no, no!
He dies this day, this day.
No, he'll get from me no pardon.

LUCREZIA Who has poisoned your mind
That you hate poor Gennaro?

DUKE (*erupting*)
Who? You!

LUCREZIA I? But how?
DUKE I've found you out!

LUCREZIA (So jealous!)

DUKE And you followed your lover to Venice.

LUCREZIA (Ah! So mistaken!)

DUKE Close behind, I also followed.

LUCREZIA You?

DUKE In your eyes, all revealing,
I can read signs of guilt,
Signs of lust.

LUCREZIA I deny it.

DUKE Be silent.

LUCREZIA I swear it. I swear it.

DUKE Further lies only drive home the point.

LUCREZIA No.

DUKE I saw you together in Venice.
 And the time's come to lash out
 With revenge for this mortification,
 A revenge that will rain down destruction
 Both on you and your partner in shame.

LUCREZIA Mercy! You wrong me!
 Alfonso! No more!
 Judge me not.

DUKE On death I'm determined.
 I shall hear no appeal,
 No cry from the heart.

LUCREZIA You will not relent? No?

DUKE No.

LUCREZIA No?
 Husband Alfonso, you need but remember
 The fate that befell your three predecessors.
 Am I to weep and run for cover,
 Nursing a heart too long lacerated?
 Anger seasoned by years of sorrow
 Breeds a monster the wise beware.

Heed a warning, Alfonso;
 Anger breeds an monster
 The wise would beware.

DUKE (*with irony*)
 Your past record I've noted.
 Could such talents be easily forgotten?
 Need I remind you that I rule Ferrara?
 Over you as well I hold the reins of power.
 And his death you yourself are to order:
 Sword or poison, either will do.
 Sword or poison, either one,
 You yourself will decide.

DUKE Choose!

LUCREZIA What torture!

DUKE Choose!

LUCREZIA Calculated!
 Husband Alfonso, you need but remember
 The fate that befell your three predecessors.
 Am I to weep and run for cover,

Nursing a heart too long lacerated?
Anger seasoned by years of sorrow
Breeds a monster the wise beware.

Heed a warning, Alfonso;
Anger breeds an monster
The wise would beware.
Heed a warning;
Years of anger are not swept aside.

DUKE
Your past record I've noted.
Could such talents be easily forgotten?
Come, choose the way he is to die.
Ponder, ponder; sword or poison.
Yes, either will do;
Either one, either one.
Sword or poison, either one.
You yourself will decide.
Either one, either one, as you decide.

(as he is about to leave)
My sword will serve the purpose.

LUCREZIA Reconsider.

DUKE ALFONSO He dies.

LUCREZIA Add no more to the crimes on your ledger.

DUKE ALFONSO Sword or poison?

LUCREZIA Not the sword, but the other ...

DUKE ALFONSO You will pour,
But I shall be watching;
Cast aside any last ray of hope.

LUCREZIA In defeat, I shall do as commanded.
Cold and cruel,
You kill me as well.

(Gennaro is brought back in)

DUKE *(to Gennaro)*
Stirred by Milady's pleading
On your behalf for mercy,
I yield to her in granting
Pardon along with freedom.

LUCREZIA (Oh, what an actor!)

DUKE ALFONSO A soldier,
 You're needed by the nation.
 Can we afford to squander
 So fine and brave a man?

LUCREZIA (Hypocrite!)

GENNARO Basking in the freedom
 I owe to you,
 I now can say it openly
 And not appear to grovel.
 A seed has come to harvest,
 Bread cast upon the water.

DUKE How so?

GENNARO Lately, your honored father
 Fought on a field surrounded.
 But for a soldier that came to the rescue
 He'd there have died.

DUKE Were you the soldier?

LUCREZIA We owe you his preservation?

GENNARO I was.

LUCREZIA (Husband!)

DUKE (The noble hero!)

LUCREZIA (He now must waver.)

DUKE (No matter.)
 A soldier so courageous
 Belongs in my own army.

GENNARO To Venice I am bound by oath.
 Signing, I swore allegiance.
 An oath is sacred.

DUKE I agree.

LUCREZIA (Hopeless!)

DUKE I agree. But if I might ... No?
 (offering him a purse)

GENNARO An easy conscience is my reward.

DUKE At least observe a custom

Honored throughout the ages,
A friendly glass between us,
Dousing the fire of anger.

GENNARO This I accept with pleasure;
Your words of praise I welcome.

DUKE My caring wife is eager
To pour the cup of cheer.

LUCREZIA (He knows the art of torture.)

DUKE *(to Lucrezia)*
Your wish will be granted.

(Beckoning to Rustighello, who brings in two flasks of wine)
Ola!

(to Lucrezia)
No word are you to utter;
No hint or silent signal.
He's not to leave this chamber
Till borne out on his back.

LUCREZIA Knowing the pain inflicted
Pain that will last forever,
Even the wolf or tiger
Would hesitate to strike.

LUCREZIA Knowing the pain inflicted,
Knowing, knowing the pain everlasting,
The hungry wolf or tiger
Would hesitate to strike.

DUKE Quiet! Quiet!
No word are you to utter.
Not a hint or silent signal.
He's not to leave this chamber
Till borne out on his back.

GENNARO Kindness can go no further;
Friendly affection they offer,
The pair ready to pardon —
Am I asleep or awake?

LUCREZIA Do not go on! Do not go on!
Ah, no, no! Have a heart.
No predatory beast
Would feed upon despair.
No, none would feed upon despair.

DUKE ALFONSO You are to pour. You are to pour.
 Be careful!
 Water it not with tears.
 He's not to leave this chamber
 Till borne away.

GENNARO Miracle from my mother,
 For God has heard her prayer,
 Has heard her prayer.

DUKE *(pours from the silver vase)*
 We drink together.

GENNARO Your courtesy
 And kindness leave me speechless.

DUKE To you, Milady ...

LUCREZIA (Barbarian!)

DUKE The vase of gold.

LUCREZIA *(she pours from the gold vase)*
 (So lethal!)

DUKE To health and lasting pleasure.

GENNARO I wish the same to you, sir.

(they all drink)

LUCREZIA (Monster! A freak of nature!
 None so malign as you.)

GENNARO (Dear ever-present mother!
 All this I owe to you.)

DUKE ALFONSO (Weep not for his departure;
 He paves the way for you.)

 Now I've finished, you can do as you please.
 He is yours for a few final moments.
 (he leaves with Rustighello)

LUCREZIA (Ah, salvation!)

GENNARO Believe me, for your kindness
 And indulgence
 I'll always be grateful.

LUCREZIA Haste is crucial, for the wine was poison

From the man who believes you his rival.

GENNARO

Ah! Poison!

LUCREZIA

I can save you
With a drop from the vial.
Take a swallow and life will prevail.
Time is urgent;
The wine was lethal.
God be with you, but do not delay.
Forever, forever goodbye.

GENNARO

Why believe you?
With your past I'm acquainted.
In your halls there is death ever lurking.
Blindly trusting, I sported with serpents.
From my eyes you have lifted the seal.

LUCREZIA

Take the vial. Drink it, drink it!

GENNARO

True to custom, when embarking on murder,
Sweetly you lead me along with a lie.

LUCREZIA

Flee from Ferrara.
Ah! Yes, forever, forever goodbye.

LUCREZIA

This will save you. But hurry.
To encounter the Duke would be fatal.

GENNARO

Trust you? Viper!
Why believe you?

LUCREZIA

You must leave Ferrara.
Wait no longer.

GENNARO

Why believe you?
With your past I'm acquainted.

LUCREZIA

Wait no longer, but take what I've handed.
For the sake of your mother I am pleading.
Hurry, hurry! For the sake of your mother.
Take a swallow and life will prevail.
Time is urgent. Flee Ferrara.
Go, and God be with you,
But do not delay.
Oh, forever, forever goodbye.

GENNARO

Why believe you?
With your past I'm acquainted.
In your halls there is death ever lurking
Blindly trusting, I sported with serpents.
From my eyes you have lifted the seal.

True to custom, when embarking on murder
Sweetly you lead me along with a lie.
You sweetly lead me along with a lie.

(Gennaro drinks the antidote)

LUCREZIA Heaven heard me!
 You are saved from the poison.
 Now to fly from here!
 Be off, linger not.
 Go far away from here.

GENNARO If again you deceive or betray me,
 Walk alone with the burden you bear.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Gennaro has survived a sampling of the special vintage Borgia wine, thanks to the frantic intervention of Lucrezia with an antidote. Knowing full well that it is only a matter of time before the Duke learns that he has been outsmarted, she has begged, insisted that Gennaro get out of Ferrara as fast as possible -- a warning that he is not inclined to dismiss lightly.

But his friend Orsini, forgetting his own previous warnings, sees the matter differently: theatrics on the part of Lucrezia, the absurd bid for attention of a woman no longer in the springtime of youth, casting herself in the role of heroine rushing to the rescue. Gullible Genaro! To fall for such a transparent ruse! Why on earth would the Duke want to do away with a lowly soldier of fortune like himself? Danger indeed! And pass up the party at the Princess Negroni's? If need be, he can leave town afterwards. Better yet, at dawn they can leave together.

Scene: a small courtyard facing Gennaro's house

RUSTIGHELLO and CHORUS

On the left see the window lighted.
So not yet has the rogue departed.
Though the Duke has for once been outsmarted,
Out for blood, tonight is the night.
Revenge tonight!

Plans are ripe, the hour well-suited;
Dark and murky, and none about.
No one, no one.

Dark and murky, none about.

But be silent and stay alerted.
Though the scene appears deserted
Stealthy steps are coming closer.
We will not have long to wait.
Stealthily closer,
We will not have long to wait.

Lurk in the shadow, there to discover
Who is roaming the street so late.
We are soon, we are soon to discover
Who would roam the street so late,
Would dare to roam the street so late,
What fool would roam the street so late?
Out so late ...

(Rustighello and the brigands leave. Orsini arrives and knocks; Gennaro comes out.)

GENNARO My friend!

ORSINI And escort.
I come to take you along to Princess Negroni.
Pleasure is not a pleasure
Unless enjoyed with you.

GENNARO Trust me, tonight it's out of the question.
I am headed for Venice,
And time is pressing.

ORSINI Abandon me?
I thought we both made a promise:
Standing by each other,
Brothers in life or death.

GENNARO We did.

ORSINI Oh, would that you kept your word
As I do mine.

GENNARO Then come with me.

ORSINI Delay till dawn;
I'll join you.
But such a genial party
Is too inviting.

GENNARO Your fascinating Princess
Gives me a queasy feeling.

ORSINI Your sudden journey

Gives me the same:
At night, like someone hunted,
A fugitive from justice.
Stay here, stay, dear Gennaro.

GENNARO Hear first.
Then your counsel I'll follow.

If I stay, my days are numbered;
Death will cast a growing shadow.

ORSINI Who's behind it? Who deals in murder?
Name the killer.

GENNARO Lower your voice.
(Gennaro whispers in Orsini's ear, who bursts out laughing)

RUSTIGHELLO and CHORUS *(eavesdropping)*
Now's the time ...
Don't be hasty.
Wait until the friend is gone.

ORSINI Ha! Ha!

GENNARO Quiet, quiet! Caution is crucial.

ORSINI You believe in hocus-pocus?
You would fall for such a ruse?

GENNARO Quiet! Careful!

ORSINI Dear Gennaro!
Still a baby! So naive!

GENNARO Quiet, quiet! Be careful.

ORSINI Still a baby!
You would fall for such a ruse.
Don't you know the ways of women?

Hoping for a smile more tender,
This old-fashioned melodrama she's invented:
Poison brings the leading lady to the rescue.
On this make-believe you base your foolish fear.

Poor excuse to forego some fun.
The Duke is a man of honor
And a ruler all revere.

GENNARO Have you ever seen me quaver?
On the field I stride undaunted.

Yet within this marble palace
I have seen and tasted fear.

ORSINI To forego a night of pleasure
For a Duke we all revere.

GENNARO Yet within this marble palace
I have felt and tasted fear,
Naked fear.

ORSINI Go if you wish but I am staying,
Starved for beauty, song and laughter.

GENNARO Goodby, my brother ...

ORSINI Take care, Gennaro.

GENNARO Be alert.

ORSINI Stay out of danger.

GENNARO No! I cannot leave without you.

ORSINI No! I'll not remain alone.

BOTH No, no!

GENNARO To the feast, and I shall follow.

ORSINI Then we'll both depart at dawn.

BOTH Into danger, or into pleasure,
Into fair or filthy weather,

ORSINI My Gennaro!

GENNARO Dear Orsini!

BOTH We have vowed either live or die together.
From the same stem, a double blossoming;
Two leaves upon a single bough.

ORSINI Giving and caring, confiding and sharing.

GENNARO Rising or falling, we honor the vow.

BOTH Ah! Into danger, into pleasure,
Come what may, we honor the vow.
My {Gennaro/Orsini},
We shall live or die together.

ORSINI On together!
Live together or die together,
Come what may.

GENNARO Always, always
Together,
Come what may.

BOTH Live or die,
Come what may,
On together!

(they exit)

As one might expect, Alfonso's capable spies are lurking in the shadows, eager to pounce. But why hurry? The fish has already taken the bait. The situation is under control.

RUSTIGHELLO Do not follow.

CHORUS But he's escaping.

RUSTIGHELLO Do not follow.
Fools! He goes to feast and revel.

CHORUS Out of our clutches ...

RUSTIGHELLO Wrong! His rival is ready.

CHORUS Also the Duchess.

CHORUS For that fish the hook is baited;
We can land it when we like.
Though in ambush we have waited,
Now is not the time to strike.
Though we can land it when we like
No, now is not the time to strike.
Later, later we strike.

(they exit)

Primed for the gala party at the Princess Negroni's, the six friends are taken aback on arriving to discover that they apparently are the only guests. Even the hostess is nowhere to be seen. But if disappointed, they don't show it. They have come to have a good time, and a good time they intend to have. But there are disturbing signs, especially to those who may recall that the friends have recently incurred the wrath of Lucrezia.

What is Beverano the two faced Spaniard doing there, off-putting as ever? Why does he seem to make a point of goading on poor Orsini to the verge of

violence? So what if the hot-headed young soldier is not the world's greatest song writer? Is Beverano deliberately trying to stir up a scene the better to take the friends offguard? And why is he not drinking the wine that is being passed around so generously? From outside, a faintly heard chorus of god-fearing monks sounds bizarrely incongruous. Suddenly the torches are extinguished. In the dark, it is discovered that the doors are locked and bolted from outside. Weapons have already been quietly confiscated. What's going on? What weird set-up have they stumbled into? They are soon to find out.

But meanwhile, back to the party. The night is young. Drink up!

Scene: a festive banquet room in the Negroni palace

LIVEROTTO Cheers for Madeira! Viva! Viva!

VITELLOZZO One more for the riesling.
So lift up your glasses.

GAZELLA King of them all is port.

PETRUCCI You sell the others short.
Each one surpasses.

LIVEROTTO Cheers for Madeira!

VITELLOZZO Lift up your glasses.

ALL FOUR Viva viva!

GAZELLA I say port.

ALL FOUR Each wine surpasses.
Viva! Viva!

ORSINI The wine I rate as peerless
Turns shy men bold and fearless,
Aspiring all the while
To steal a special smile
From our hostess
Princess Negroni.

OTHERS Viva Negroni, viva!
Viva Madeira, viva!

OTHERS Not to stand on ceremony,
We toast the fair Negroni;
With glass in hand, we rise up,
With glass in hand we rise.
To praise her lovely eyes.
Charming and gifted,

To her we turn with glasses lifted.
Another! Another viva! Viva!
For Negroni!

GUBETTA (All heated up! And now's my cue to stir up trouble.)

GENNARO (I feel uneasy.)

ORSINI So moody? Gennaro, are you leaving?
Stay to applaud a song of mine
That I composed this morning.

GUBETTA Ha ha!

ORSINI You're laughing?

GUBETTA While I am laughing, the rest are groaning.

ORSINI Groaning?

GUBETTA Ha ha ha! The squeaky Orpheus ...

ORSINI Making a fool of me?

GUBETTA Your parents did it perfectly;
No helping hand is needed.
Ha ha ha ha ha!

ORSINI How dare you!
You Barcelona bastard!

GUBETTA You plastered Roman hothead!

LADIES Two on the verge of violence!
Away! Away at once!

(they hurry out)

OTHERS Control yourself, Orsini. Ignore it, ignore it.

ORSINI You bastard!

GUBETTA You plastered Roman.

OTHERS Ignore it.

ORSINI You drunken ignoramus!
Some day when I am famous
You'll hang your head for slandering
A man of my renown.
My talent, my talent
Someday will bring renown.

GUBETTA You strutting ignoramus!
A fool already famous.
To God, not me, you should complain
For making you a clown.
No talent, no talent
When all is said and done.

LIVEROTTO and VITELLOZZO
Your feathers he would ruffle,
But let's avoid a scuffle.
This rowdy pandemonium
Will summon half the town.
Cool it, be careful.
Or this ungodly pandemonium
Will summon half the town.

PETRUCCI and GAZELLA
Your feathers he would ruffle,
But let's avoid a scuffle.
This rowdy pandemonium
Will summon half the town.
Cool it, be careful.
Quarrel later.
You two can quarrel later on.

GENNARO Oh let's avoid a scuffle. Ola!
This rowdy pandemonium
Will summon half the town.
Cool it, be careful.
This ungodly pandemonium
Will summon half the town.
You two can quarrel later on.

LIVEROTTO Later. Why spoil the party?

VITELLOZZO There's time tomorrow
To meet and fight it out like manly soldiers.
Not like a pair
Of rough and rowdy hoodlums.

OTHERS He's right.

GENNARO Not that it greatly matters,
Our swords are gone.

ORSINI We left them in the hallway.

OTHERS Don't give a second thought.

GUBETTA Drink up, my trusties.

GAZELLA Too bad we've lost the ladies,
Running off in a panic.

GUBETTA Any minute
They will return and we can say we're sorry.

SERVANT *(dressed in black)*
Wine to cheer the party.

OTHERS Here nothing but the best.

(All drink except Gubetta, who discreetly discards his glass)

GENNARO (Orsini, you notice
That the Spaniard's not drinking?)

ORSINI (What of it? A simple reason:
Already blotto.)

GUBETTA Even Orsini, I'll wager,
Now could produce a song
Up to my standard.
They say that wine
Makes every man a poet.

ORSINI Yes, with one exception.

OTHERS Boasting of talent,
Now show it.

ORSINI Fellow soldiers, all birds of a feather,
Bear in mind when bemoaning the hours
That regardless of change in the weather,
Our garden is bursting with flowers.

ORSINI So drink up, and with friendship and laughter
Celebrate the delights of today;
Time enough for lamenting hereafter,
When December is somber and gray.

VOICES *(from outside)*
The life of godless pleasure
Is but a brief mirage ...

GENNARO These monks!

ORSINI Some people poking fun as they pass.

OTHERS Of course, a joke.

ORSINI I'll wager, a bit of mischief
Concocted by the ladies.

OTHERS Let's hear another stanza.

ORSINI Performance continued!

Heated lovers, why wait for tomorrow
When the sputter and sparkle have dwindled?
In the ash, you may find to your sorrow
That the fire cannot be rekindled.

So drink up, and with friendship and laughter
Celebrate the delights of today;
Time enough for lamenting hereafter,
When December is somber and gray.

VOICES The life of godless pleasure
Is but a mere mirage ...

(the lights go out)

ORSINI Gennaro!

GENNARO Maffio! The torches!
The dark foreshadows danger.

ORSINI If just a joke,
I am no longer laughing.

ALL Let's go!
The doors are all locked and bolted!
What's going on? Where are we?

LUCREZIA *(appears, in black)*
Guests of Lucrezia Borgia.

FRIENDS Ah! Taken captive.

LUCREZIA Yes, by a Borgia.
You gave me
An unforgettable reception in Venice,
Which I repay with a feast in Ferrara.

FRIENDS Lured by the devil.

LUCREZIA Insulted and berated,
'Tis not my custom
To smile and overlook it.
No, I demand revenge!
Outside are waiting

Five open coffins
To receive your corpses,
Because the poison you have swallowed is rapid.

GENNARO *(stepping forth)*
Send for another coffin. Five are insufficient.

LUCREZIA Gennaro! Oh, God!

GENNARO If need be, I can die with my friends.

LUCREZIA *(to guards)*
Hurry! With him I must speak in private.
See that the doors are guarded,
And no one is to enter,
No matter what.

OTHERS Gennaro!

GENNARO Together! Together!

LUCREZIA Now leave us.

FRIENDS Soon only silence.

(they leave)

LUCREZIA So you stayed despite my warning?
Why, oh why did you not listen?

GENNARO Apprehension ... a voice inside me ...

LUCREZIA Deadly poison again you've swallowed.

GENNARO *(pulls out the vial)* This you gave me.

LUCREZIA Praise be to heaven, ah!
The antidote will let you live.

GENNARO What about my fellow soldiers?
Either all survive, or together, together we die.

LUCREZIA Here is barely enough for you alone.
Oh, hurry, hurry! Leave behind the others.

GENNARO Together!

LUCREZIA No!

GENNARO Together!

LUCREZIA No!

GENNARO We live or we shall die together.

LUCREZIA But time is short!

GENNARO First, by my own hand,
By my own hand,
Prepare to lead the way.
(he grabs a knife from the table)

LUCREZIA I? Unknowing,
You act unknowing.

GENNARO Yes! Final justice!

LUCREZIA (Oh, where to turn?)

GENNARO You shall die with me.

LUCREZIA I implore you!
By your hand am I to perish?

GENNARO Yes. Driven onward by desperation.
All I cherish you have taken.
Are you ready?

LUCREZIA Wait! Hear me, hear me!

GENNARO Impossible! Impossible!

LUCREZIA Gennaro! You yourself are also a Borgia ...

GENNARO I? *(the knife falls from his fingers)*

LUCREZIA Very closely we're related.
Spare yourself this deed of horror,
Spilling blood that flows in you.

GENNARO I, a Borgia? A breed of vipers!

LUCREZIA Ask no more, seek not to know.
Do believe me. I plead no longer
To preserve my own life so barren.
Daily, hourly, I've died already,
Died already from a heart too gravely wounded.
To your own self I pray be kinder, ah!
Still so young, be strong, live on.
Hurry, hurry! Oh, yield, surrender!
Though my life is over, yours is just begun.

GENNARO I, a Borgia?

LUCREZIA The bell is tolling, the dark encroaches,
Yet the battle for your life can still be won.

GENNARO I, a Borgia?

LUCREZIA To hope and promise,
Oh, yield, surrender!
Beyond despair, I plead, I plead for you alone.
Yield! Hurry! Hurry!
Ah, the unequal fight with death can still be won.
Oh, Gennaro! Yield! Hurry!
Now beyond despair, I plead for you alone.

GENNARO *(as if listening)*
Orsini! Murdered! ...

LUCREZIA Live on ... for your mother.

GENNARO Go! For you alone have torn her life to pieces ...

LUCREZIA No, no! Gennaro!

GENNARO You've destroyed her.

LUCREZIA So mistaken!

GENNARO Her heart you've broken.

LUCREZIA No! She lives! And now in terror,
Now in tears, she pleads with you.

GENNARO Lord! Are you then? ...

LUCREZIA I am ... your mother.

GENNARO You, my mother! My grieving mother.

LUCREZIA Darling! Darling!
Oh, someone! Hurry!
Lend assistance!
Oh, help me to save him!
No response. The doors are guarded.
God of mercy, let him live.

GENNARO Mother, it's over. The poison is working.

LUCREZIA My Gennaro!

GENNARO Soon darkness ... and silence ...

LUCREZIA Oh, my darling! My son, forgive me.

GENNARO Mother, so long I've waited
Now only in death to find you.
Oh, kindly father eternal,
From heaven bestow a blessing.
Mother, I have but one parting wish —
To die in your embrace.

GENNARO How long, how long I have waited,
In death at last to find you.
My only parting wish
To die in your embrace.
Oh, mother! Oh, mother! It is over.

LUCREZIA Oh, my darling! My Gennaro! Dearest!
Let me save you! Oh let me save you!

GENNARO In your embrace I die in peace.
Hold me, hold me closer.
Oh, my mother ...
(he dies)

LUCREZIA Ah! Beloved! Lost forever!
My darling son ...
(she falls upon his body)

The End