

THE DAUGHTER OF MADAME ANGOT

Music by
Lecocq

English Version by
Donald Pippin
(year)

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San Francisco, California

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Angot	Clairette	daughter of Madame
	Ange Pitou	a popular balladeer
	Pomponnet	a hairdresser
	Angelique Lange	an actress
in government	Larivaudiere	an elderly financier, high
	Louchard	his chief of police
place	Amarinthe	a woman of the market

Servants and wedding guests

The Daughter of Madame Angot

Lecocq

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A funny thing happened on the way to the wedding ... a shy girl, who has grown up under the shadow of her flamboyant mother's reputation, proves that she is indeed her mother's daughter.

The scene: one of the most colorful, one of the most picturesque, one of the most Parisian corners in all of Paris, for many years a mecca for tourists, the bustling produce market in the heart of the city, Les Halles.

The year is 1795, shortly after the triumphant outcome of the French Revolution, a stunning victory for liberty and equality. Because of equally stunning, dramatic, unexpected political developments in other parts of Europe in recent months -- developments that have been so hard on a determined pessimist -- it is quite possible that an opportunistic, sensation-hungry director snatching at relevance, would shift the locale of tonight's operetta from Paris to Prague, Warsaw or Budapest, the year to 1990. Pocket Opera would never

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dream of depriving its audience of the pleasure of making its own connections. And besides, we have an uneasy feeling that the year 1995 might be a more realistic assessment.

When our story unfolds, the glow of freedom has chilled somewhat; the fire has started to give off smoke. Heady intoxication has yielded to the morning-after sensations that usually follow strong drink. The times are queasy and unsettled. Disarray has spawned a number of questionable characters who have managed to gravitate to the center of power: the predatory financier Larivaudiere; the dazzling though unscrupulous actress Angelique Lange, who has such a penchant for men of influence. Would that her acting ability were confined to the stage. Higher, mightier than both, the formidable Barras, director of the new government. Unlike the other two, he does not deign to appear in tonight's performance. One would as soon ask the Ayatollah to do a patter song. Leave that to the likes of Ange Pitou, a satirical songwriter who does not have to look far for material.

He is not alone in his discovery that the principal joy of Democracy is the pleasure of complaining about the government. Increasingly, one even hears a call for return to the bad old days when maybe things were not so bad after all. Understandably, new governments tend to be sensitive, touchy, easily upset. They don't like being criticized any more than you and I. The solution is obvious: lock up the critics. How else can freedom be preserved?

But let's not talk about politics. What is the theatre for if you can't get away from unpleasant realities for a couple of hours? And today there is much to celebrate. On the left, over a shop door, a sign reads: "Pomponnet, hairdresser. Closed for wedding." On the right, another sign: "Clairette, florist. Closed for wedding." Alert minds may form their own conclusions.

It is a glorious spring morning, a holiday for all. The crowded street is brightened with the smiling faces of the market folk, all out in their finest array, all of them overjoyed at the wedding that in fact is soon to take place. The bride is exquisite, the groom ecstatic. In short, it looks like the perfect *ending* of an operetta.

ACT I

Scene: Les Halles, Paris.

CHORUS OF MARKET FOLK

Happy and
Hand in hand,
We are heading
Down the street

To a sweet
Lovely wedding.

Full of pride,
Starry-eyed
For both the groom and bride.
Understand,
It has panned
Out just as we had planned.

Happy and
Hand in hand,
Now we head for the wedding,
Full of pride,
Starry-eyed
For both the groom and bride.

Yes, all has come about
Because of me and you.
True love is winning out
The way it's meant to do

Happy day!
Lucky, too!
They can thank
Me and you.

Hola! Pomponnet! Hola!

POMPONNET *the groom, enters*
Never late! Here I am!

CHORUS The very man we mean
 Arrives upon the scene.

POMPONNET On the mark! Flying high!

TENORS So very prompt!

BASSES I wonder why!

WOMEN Claret! Clairet! Clairette!

BADET *from Clairette's window*
 You'll have to wait till she is ready.

CHORUS How long she takes
 In getting ready!
 But that's what makes
 A leading lady.

BADET She must not be seen on display
 Till I've fixed her bridal bouquet.

CHORUS We cannot see her on display
 Without her bridal bouquet.

POMPONNET This ravishing bouquet
 Will be mine in an hour!
 My own! My own
 Dear little flower ...

 Her bouquet, beyond all praising,
 Wasn't made to please a crowd.
 Go ahead, continue gazing —
 Touching, though, is not allowed.

 Other hands are not to snatch it;
 I alone shall claim the right
 As my own, when I detach it
 From her robe this very night.

 Ah! Palpitating,
 I am waiting
 In a fever, all on edge,
 Even now anticipating
 That delightful privilege.

 Her bouquet she will surrender
 With a soft and willing sigh,
 For its blossoms, fresh and tender,
 Promise blue and sunny sky.

 Since that lucky day I met her
 I have longed for this bouquet
 That will turn my sweet Clairette
 Into Madame Pomponnet.

 Ah! Palpitating,
 I am waiting
 A burning fever, all on edge,
 Even now anticipating
 At that delightful privilege.

BADET *(enters)*
 The bride I now present!

POMPONNET Oh, my darling!

CHORUS Be patient!

(as Clairette enters)
So fair and unaffected!
She comes to be inspected,
So naive! So demure!
With pride, we fondly savor
That beauty heaven gave her,
Spotless, unspoiled and pure,
Still innocent and pure.

WOMEN Child, come and kiss your mothers.

MEN Child, come and kiss your fathers.

POMPONNET You mustn't wrinkle her gown.
She kisses me and me alone.

CLAIRETTE No, no! That kiss
Could make a wrinkle, too.

CADET So much for you!

JAVOT Our dear Clairette!
What are your thoughts on getting married?

CLAIRETTE What do I think?

CHORUS Without reserve, speak and tell us.

CLAIRETTE Am I to say?

I am your child, ever sheltered and shielded;
You gave the word, it was time I should wed.
Eager to please, I bowed to you and yielded;
After my nod, nothing further was said.

Now that the cards have been laid on the table,
Marriage no longer a topic taboo,
I would reply, if only I were able,
Or even if I had one tiny clue.
I would reply,
But what to tell you I have not a clue.

Since I was three, as an orphan you have fed me,
Taught me to bend and obey without fail.
Along the path of knowledge you have led me,
Leaving out only that tiny detail.

Under your watchful though kindly dominion,
Secrets of marriage were kept on the shelf.

Now at a loss, groping for an opinion,
I'll have to wait till I know for myself.

CHORUS A simple child! Sheer joy to see!

POMPONNET Simple as a child! Just right for me!

BUTOR Let us be off! Why stand around and wait?

GODET Too early yet. Be patient, please!
At ten o'clock we congregate
Before the Justice of the Peace.

POMPONNET The happy moment now so near,
Each minute seems at least a year.
But there at ten we'll meet again
For duties sacred and sublime;
Till then, I'll have to bide my time.

CHORUS We meet again
Before too long,
So until then
You must be strong.

Happy and
Hand in hand,
Now we head for the wedding,
Full of pride,
Starry-eyed
For both the groom and bride.

Yes, all has come about
Because of me and you.
True love is winning out
The way it's meant to do

Happy day! Lucky, too!
They can thank
Me and you.

Hola! Pomponnet! Hola!

AMARINTHE *(entering)*
Stop! We cannot go on!

POMPONNET What's the matter?

AMARINTHE A most distressing development. Clairette, child, this is not for
your tender ears. It involves a delicate matter that you might not
understand. Go to your room. We will call you presently, when

it's all straightened out.

CLAIRETTE I'm not to get married?

AMARINTHE Now, now, you mustn't worry. Everything's going to be all right. (*Clairette is taken out.*) Oh, dear, dear! What a mess! Awkward and embarrassing! No, we mustn't get alarmed. We must keep our heads and stay calm!

POMPONNET Calm, when my future is going up in smoke?

AMARINTHE It's not as bad as that. Merely a temporary delay.

POMPONNET What's happened? Good heavens! I'm dancing around on pins and needles.

AMARINTHE It goes back a long way. You are familiar with part of the story. When our beloved Madame Angot departed from this life — in her usual flamboyant style, I might add — she left behind a small daughter, born in Constantinople. The child was without another, and so it seemed, without a father. We opened our hearts, had her brought home to Paris, and made her our own — the child of the market place, as it were. No, she has never lacked for mothers and fathers to look after her.

POMPONNET Yes, yes! But I thought you were all for our getting married.

AMARINTHE So we are. But I fear we have made a blunder. The marriage license naturally claims that Clairette is the daughter of Monsieur and Madame Angot. But today, out of nowhere, a document turns up showing that when the child was born, Monsieur Angot had been dead for three years.

POMPONNET I'm marrying Clairette, not her father. What does it matter to me who her father was?

AMARINTHE It matters a good deal to the bureaucracy. New forms will have to be filled out. Heaven knows how long it will take. We may even have to locate her real father and get his consent.

POMPONNET And who was her real father?

AMARINTHE Ah, there we get into deep water. I mention that she was born in Constantinople. Her mother was a particular favorite of the Grand Turk. I say no more.

POMPONNET Are you telling me that the Grand Turk has to say that it's all right for me to get married?

AMARINTHE That is a possibility. On the other hand, perhaps it can be settled with no more than your own signature.

POMPONNET That will take less than five seconds.

AMARINTHE Dear little Clairette! Let us hope that none of this reaches her.
So carefully brought up! A model of innocence!

POMPONNET Almost too innocent.

AMARINTHE So unlike her dear mother!

POMPONNET Madame Angot! Who was this Madame Angot?

AMARINTHE A merchant of the market,
She rose to lasting fame,
A legendary target
Of popular acclaim.

 On holidays and galas
 The public she would greet
 With language learned from sailors
 Whose words I can't repeat.

 Of the gutter,
 Some would mutter
 As they saw her fortune grow.
 Superhuman,
 What a woman
 Was the fair Madame Angot!

 A big balloon she mounted,
 Serene and debonair,
 Then found herself surrounded
 By desert sand and air.

 In Zanzibar they took her,
 And tears were not enough.
 Alive, they tried to cook her,
 But found her rather tough.

 Rough, but very
 Mad and merry,
 Catapulted to and fro;
 People blunder
 When they under-
 Estimate Madam Angot.

 Her travels unimpeded,
 With confidence supreme,
 In Turkey she succeeded
 Beyond her wildest dream.

 Five hundred in the harem —

AMARINTHE No, no, no, nothing! Nothing that concerns you in the least.
Merely a wedding.

ANGE PITOU Anybody I know?

AMARINTHE I believe you are acquainted with the bride. Our lovely daughter
Clairette is getting married to Pomponnet, a distinguished
hairdresser.

ANGE PITOU Clairette marrying that imbecile? Oh, hello, Pomponnet.

POMPONNET So I'm not a genius like yourself ...

ANGE PITOU I know. You can't help it. Congratulations.

AMARINTHE Come! We mustn't interrupt the divine flow of his
inspiration. Let us go. *(Amarinthe and Pomponnet leave)*

ANGE PITOU *(alone)* Clairette getting married, and not a word to me about it!
And to a bumpkin like that! So, am I to crawl into a cave and
lick my wounds? Not Ange Pitou. Providence is looking out for
me. This note, mysteriously placed in my hands just this
morning, as I was emerging from the dungeon. An invitation
from an unknown admirer. Perfumed paper, a delicate hand ...
No, life is not yet over.

 No question that I love Clairette,
 But should I pine and waste away
 When I can stage my own vendetta,
 And for her mischief make her pay?

 The letter's language is exquisite —
 A lady's hand is evident.
 And I am drawn to pay a visit
 By this rare and subtle scent.

 No question I shall love Clairette
 Until the stars from heaven fall,
 But to the author of this letter
 I'll simply make a friendly call.

 I would gather that she has power,
 And beauty therefore is implied.
 If I could pluck this charming flower,
 And so avenge the faithless bride!

 No question that ... I loved Clairette,
 But as my hope is not to be,
 Why should I treat her any better
 Than the way she's treated me?

ANGE PITOU And you know why. A penniless poet? A jailbird? A member of the permanent underclass? You deserve better than that — and better than that grubby half-wit.

CLAIRETTE That's unfair. He's not grubby.

ANGE PITOU Clairette, why did you do it?

CLAIRETTE I wish I knew. In fact, I decided a long time ago that if I couldn't marry you, I was never going to marry anyone. But then it happened. I don't even remember saying yes. All of a sudden, everybody assumed that we were engaged, and I didn't see how to get out of it. My fathers and mothers were so pleased. I couldn't stand the idea of letting them down. They've been so good to me. Though sometimes I wish I didn't have quite so many of them.

ANGE PITOU This is carrying gratitude too far.

CLAIRETTE What would my real mother have done? I am sure that she would have come up with some dazzling solution! And so will we!

CLAIRETTE and ANGE PITOU
 With faith and fortitude combined,
 Though tested to the maximum,
 The answer we are bound to find:
 The hurdle we shall overcome.

 Braving the odds, this we can weather;
 Though tested to the maximum,
 The hurdle we shall overcome.

 Two hearts as one, onward together,
 With fortitude and faith combined,
 The answer we are bound to find.

CLAIRETTE I could be sick and far too frail ...

ANGE PITOU Despite the roses blooming in your cheek.

CLAIRETTE Yes, that excuse is rather weak.

ANGE PITOU I fear the plan would only fail.

CLAIRETTE No, no, no! Not the way to do!
 Madame Angot,
 Madame Angot would never stoop so low.

CLAIRETTE and ANGE PITOU
 Madame Angot

Madame Angot would give it the veto.

ANGE PITOU I have a plan that calls for testing.
Suppose I knock your would-be husband out?

CLAIRETTE Knock him out?

ANGE PITOU So ... what about
The helping hand that I'm suggesting?

CLAIRETTE No, no, no! Not the way to go!
Madame Angot
Madame Angot would give it the veto.

ANGE PITOU Suppose you say to Pomponnet:
Give me up, or you'll soon discover
Your place preempted by a lover.
For you, an empty bed ...

CLAIRETTE Often done, but ...
Better left unsaid.

ANGE PITOU Alas! Alas! What a hopeless impasse!

CLAIRETTE All is not lost ... I've one more suggestion,
Polite, to the point, and apropos ...
When the justice puts to me the question,
Will you take this man in marriage?
Instead of yes, I'll answer no.

ANGE PITOU You'll answer no?

CLAIRETTE I'll answer no!

ANGE PITOU Ah, such a radical plan as this
Calls for at least, here and now, a special kiss.

CLAIRETTE That is not the proper thing
While I wear a wedding ring.

ANGE PITOU That cursed ring, I keep repeating,
Justifies a bit of cheating.
One kiss, lingering and sweet,
Or I'll die here at your feet!

CLAIRETTE Lead me not into temptation
By demanding consolation.
Kisses are of course taboo,
Not the proper thing to do.

ANGE PITOU Show me some consideration
 With a tiny consolation.
 Kisses cannot be taboo
 If we stop at one or two.

 One kiss for a consolation.

CLAIRETTE Speak no more of consolation,
 Kisses are of course taboo,
 Not the proper thing to do.

(exeunt)

Enter Larivaudiere with Louchard, is chief of police.

LARIVAUDIÈRE We have frightened off the turtle doves.

LOUCHARD One of the turtle doves is the very man we've been talking about.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Ange Pitou?

LOUCHARD The popular balladeer.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Out of jail again? How does he do it? It's the mystery of the ages. I am baffled.

LOUCHARD You're not the only one. I do my job, I get him arrested. we take him to the judge; he does his job. The fellow is locked up, and the next day he's out on the street again. It happens over and over again.

LARIVAUDIÈRE He is devil himself.

LOUCHARD You know what I think? He has a friend in high places who is pulling strings for him.

LARIVAUDIÈRE But who?

LOUCHARD You're in a better position to know that than me, sir. But why flatter him by taking him so seriously? You're only making a celebrity out of him.

LARIVAUDIÈRE He is already a celebrity — and a very dangerous one. Here I speak personally. It so happens that he has gotten wind of my little affair with the glamorous actress ...

LOUCHARD Angelique Lange?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Sh! Not so loud!

LOUCHARD How did he find out?

LARIVAUDIÈRE I told you he was the devil himself. And through him, the world

will know it.

LOUCHARD A high official having an affair with an actress. That's not going to bring down the government.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Not the government, but it will be ruin for me. Barras, the real head of the government, believes that he has a monopoly on this particular actress. Little did he know when he introduced me to her — well, I don't like to boast. But if he found out, the consequences would be most unpleasant. I start to sweat every time I pass a guillotine.

LOUCHARD And you think that Pitou might bring down the blade?

LARIVAUDIÈRE That is precisely why I have kept him under such close scrutiny. What are jails for if you can't use them? However, frustration has driven me to an alternate scheme. If I cannot silence the rumor, I might at least have it diverted.

LOUCHARD By putting the blame on somebody else?

LARIVAUDIÈRE A plan that may require some cash outlay.

LOUCHARD Luck is with you. Here comes you singer.

LARIVAUDIÈRE And here is my chance to test my powers of persuasion. Leave me alone with him. (*Louchard exits as Pitou enters.*) Diplomacy, inspire me! Ah! Ange Pitou! Who would not recognize you! The celebrated balladeer, the voice of the people, the idol of Pàree! Such talent! Genius, no less!

ANGE PITOU Precisely my own opinion.

LARIVAUDIÈRE And such a prolific pen! Constantly on the lookout for subjects to satirize, I daresay.

ANGE PITOU Easy to find nowadays.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Ah, I've got one for you! Just a passing thought. A most amusing situation. It cries out for your touch. Intrigue in high places — in the highest places. You are familiar with the actress Angélique Lange?

ANGE PITOU Who isn't?

LARIVAUDIÈRE What a laugh on Barras! The head of the government who doesn't know what is going on in his own bedroom, under his very nose. She is carrying on with a financier named Lavoujon — a personal friend that he himself introduced her to. Everyone in the know finds it hilarious.

ANGE PITOU And you think it's true?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Think Think? I am a witness, a first-hand observer. I knew!
Oh, the fun you could have with it! My mouth waters.

ANGE PITOU You're right. It would make a spicy song. I have already
composed it.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Composed it already? That's what I call being on the job.

ANGE PITOU But you and I differ on one major point. You say that Lovoujon
is the villain — I say Larivaudière.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Larivaudière? Surely not!

ANGE PITOU Oh, yes! Larivaudière! I, too, have reliable sources. The
scoundrel is deceiving his superior and fleecing the nation at the
same time. And when the truth comes out, let's hope that he gets
what he deserves.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Sir, do you know who you are talking to?

ANGE PITOU I don't believe you introduced yourself.

LARIVAUDIÈRE I am Larivaudière!

ANGE PITOU Not Larivaudière!
My word! Not Larivaudière!

LARIVAUDIÈRE I repeat — Larivaudière!

ANGE PITOU What an unexpected pleasure!
You have caught me unaware.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Such an unexpected pleasure?
So I've caught you unaware?
Laugh about it if you dare.

ANGE PITOU Not the great Larivaudière!

LARIVAUDIÈRE In the flesh! Larivaudière!
Laugh about it if you dare.

ANGE PITOU Of course, I didn't know ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE A matter unrelated ...
This little song that you created ...
Make a change, but only one!
Larivaudière to Lavaujon!

ANGE PITOU And kill the rhyme? No thanks!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Let us get down to business:
May I suggest one thousand francs?

ANGE PITOU My honor up for sale?
My character on trial?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Well, well! Five thousand francs?

ANGE PITOU Away! Away!

LARIVAUDIÈRE You prefer ten thousand francs?
Take it or leave it.

ANGE PITOU Ten thousand ... ten thousand francs!
I could wed my Clairette.
A coup de grace for Pomponnet!

LARIVAUDIÈRE (He will give any minute.)
Come on! What do you say?
Ten thousand?

ANGE PITOU No!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Fifteen thousand?

ANGE PITOU For my honor?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Come on! Come on!
I'll go to twenty thousand.

ANGE PITOU No! Selling off my soul!

LARIVAUDIÈRE I'll give you one more chance ...
My final offer, thirty thousand francs!

ANGE PITOU Thirty thousand!

LARIVAUDIÈRE That's it!

ANGE PITOU I succumb to thirty thousand.

LARIVAUDIÈRE The tune can still remain the same.

ANGE PITOU With just a tiny change of name.

LARIVAUDIÈRE You'll sing the song today?

ANGE PITOU In bistro and cafe.
But, I must have the cash in hand.

LARIVAUDIÈRE The sum is yours to command.

ANGE PITOU Evermore your grateful debtor,
I can marry my Clairette.
All's for sale in gay Pàree —
You need only fix on the fee.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Evermore your grateful debtor,
I can now breathe somewhat better.
All's for sale in gay Pàree —
You need only fix on the fee.

ANGE PITOU Still the tender, faithful lover,
My long delay is nearly over.
So, no sooner said than done:
Larivaudière to Lavaujon!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Finally I find a cover;
Days of stress are nearly over.
So, no sooner said than done:
Larivaudière to Lavaujon! (exit)

ANGE PITOU (*alone*) Well, Mr. Balladeer, you have sold yourself. One rascal
to another. But at least I got a good price. And Clairette into the
bargain. This changes everything! I'm a Capitalist! We can get
married! Hola! Good news!

AMARINTHE (*enters, with others*) Ange Pitou, are you still hanging around? I
thought I had put the message in plain words.

ANGE PITOU Great things have happened! Go find Clairette! Tell her that I've
found the means we were looking for. Bring on the mothers!
Bring on the fathers! Let them all in on the good news. You,
over there!

OTHERS (*entering*) Ange Pitou! What are you doing here? Still chasing
after Clairette? Are you still around?

ANGE PITOU Listen. There's no time for beating about the bush. It's an
emergency. This revolting marriage that you've all turned out
for has to be called off. It must not proceed. You are taking
advantage of Clairette's sweet, innocent nature. She doesn't want
to marry that idiot. She loves me, and I'm not going to let her
fall victim on the altar of gratitude.

OTHERS — What? Call of the wedding? What's he up to? Who does he
think he is? Outrageous! A victim indeed!

ANGE PITOU Up till now I've held my tongue. I've not even asked her to
marry me, because I had nothing to offer. But that was
yesterday. Today things are different. I'm a rich man, and I
want Clairette to be my wife.

OTHERS Rich? He's come into money? A fortune? An inheritance?
What's he talking about?

ANGE PITOU Yes, today I have a fortune of thirty thousand francs.

OTHERS Thirty thousand!

AMARINTHE Ill-gotten gains, I have no doubt.

ANGE PITOU I sold a song.

AMARINTHE And you assume that we will sell Clairette for the same amount.

ANGE PITOU Go find her. Bring the glad tidings. Let her decide for herself.

AMARINTHE We shall do no such thing. If you have managed to hoodwink
our innocent child into falling in love with you, we are doing her
a great favor. This morning's legal tangle has been straightened
out, and we are ready to proceed with the wedding as planned
Neither you nor anyone else can stop us. Call Clairette.

ANGE PITOU All right, you win. Love loses. (So that's what I get for going
commercial. I was a fool to sell out. But I've learned my lesson.
I'm through with singing. I'll give Larivaudiere his money back
and start looking for a new career.)

OTHERS *(entering)* Ange Pitou! The song! The new song! We want to
hear! The song you promised us! Today's the day.

ANGE PITOU Don't get excited. I have nothing to sing.

OTHERS What's this? No song! You promised.

ANGE PITOU I'm through with singing. And from now on, you can make up
your own songs.

MEN You gave your word!
We heard you say
You'd sing today.
Fear now the rising tide of anger.
We'll pester you until
That promise you fulfill.
With one accord, the people vote
To hear you sing the song you wrote.
Sing for the throng
That want that song.

WOMEN *(returning with Clairette and Pomponnet)*
And why are you raising a riot?
What is wrong? What is wrong?

MEN Ange Pitou, who now is strangely quiet.

WOMEN Pitou! Make no mistake,
He's a rat, he's a snake!
Unwelcome in my house.

MEN No, no, no, no!
Not a rat, just a mouse.

MAN SOLO The song could hardly fail
To send him back to jail.

CLAIRETTE An idea!
And can a mere song, as you say,
Have a person put away?

CHORUS He promised us the song;
What more is there to add?
He'll sing, or else
We'll make him wish he had.
Sing the song, sing the song!
You gave your word,
We heard you say
You'd sing today.
Fear now the rising tide of anger.
We'll pester you until
That promise you fulfill.
With one accord, the people vote
To hear you sing the song you wrote.
Sing for the throng
That want that song.

CLAIRETTE Break it off! Break if off!

POMPONNET Why do you interfere?

CLAIRETTE This very song that he believes he lost,
I found myself, in the street where it was tossed,
Still intact and complete;
I know it all by heart.

ANGE PITOU You've learned it?

CHORUS You! Singing in the street!

POMPONNET With wedding plans all set to go?

CADET A disgrace, and I blush to play along!
My disapproval now you know,
But I would love to hear the song!

CHORUS Yes, go on! For heaven only knows,
We want to hear! We want to hear!

POMPONNET God help us!

CLAIRETTE Here's how it goes:

 Corrupt and rich, the kings of old,
Who found it lonely on the heights,
Were wont to purchase love with gold
And woo the fawning parasites.
Now we welcome a new regime —
A triumph born of great events.
The actress Lange now reigns supreme —
Explain to me the difference.

 Barras is King and Lange the Queen —
A change of cast in the same old scene.
Was it for this that blood was spent
To overturn the government?

CHORUS Barras is King and Lange the Queen,
A change of cast in the same old scene.
Was it for this that blood was spent
To overturn the government?

CLAIRETTE The kings of old despoiled the land,
And claimed, of course, the lion's share.
To fill the void, we have on hand
The prowling wolf Larivaudiere.

 Undercover, he pays the debts
That men of rank and power accrue;
Oh, so generous! He forgets
The money all belongs to you.

 Proudly we hail the new regime,
The sad remains of an innocent dream.
Was it for this that laws were bent
To overturn the government?

CHORUS Proudly we hail the new regime,
The sad remains of an innocent dream.
Was it for this that laws were bent
To overturn the government?

CLAIRETTE The sycophants of old were prone
To ingratitude, it would appear;
To steal a mistress from the throne

Was standard fare of yesteryear.

Ancient history? Au contraire!
Hypocrisy's alive and well!
Dare we ask Larivaudiere
Where first he found fair Mademoiselle?

On the details, no need to dwell —
A lady so eager and willing to sell.
But was it for her that heroes went
To overturn the government?

CHORUS On the details, no need to dwell —
A lady so eager and willing to sell.
But was it for her that heroes went
To overturn the government?

LOUCHARD Arrest that woman!

CROWD Lord!

ANGE PITOU Let her go! Call a halt!
For I'm the guilty author,
Yes, I'm the one at fault.

LOUCHARD We can take no other course;
We have law to enforce.

POMPONNET This is outrageous!

ANGE PITOU Do allow me to suggest,
I'm the one you should arrest.

LOUCHARD Lock the lady up in jail;
Law and order shall prevail.

POMPONNET My wedding day is not to be!
My bride is under lock and key.

LOUCHARD and SOLDIERS
Disregard her youth and gender;
Treason we cannot ignore.
Those who shelter or befriend her
Rank as co-conspirator.

POMPONNET Bear in mind her youth and gender;
Spare the girl that I adore.
To the death shall I defend her,
Though her blunder I deplore.

ANGE PITOU Unto justice I surrender;
I'm the man you're looking for;
Take in hand the true offender;
Her mistake you can ignore.

CLAIRETTE Let them seize me, I surrender!
I know what I'm asking for.
Disregard my youth and gender;
Treason one cannot ignore.
Open wide the prison door.

MARKET FOLK Taking one so green and tender?
Youthful blunders we ignore.
To the death shall we defend her;
Honor rises to the fore!

End of Act I

ACT II

We go indoors for Act Two, to the sumptuous if somewhat over-decorated salon of Angelique Lange, the glamorous actress whose life would appear so many faceted, whose dizzying ascent to the heights of wealth, fame and power has taken Paris by storm. The outspoken song that landed Clairette in jail has made indelicate reference to the superb balancing act that she maintains between Barras, who controls the government, and Larivaudiere, who controls the purse strings, simultaneously mistress of both. But a girl has to ask herself, is this enough? What if her heart still hungers for romance, novelty, excitement?

You will recall that Ange Pitou, our romantic hero, has received a note from an unknown admirer, inviting him to an intimate rendezvous -- a note to which he was rather more responsive than one would have hoped. Fortunately, there is little likelihood that Clairette will find out.

As the sultry actress smolders, in anticipation of his arrival, several of her fashionable friends try to console her for the outrage so recently inflicted upon her by an apparently demented young girl singing in the street. As they give full vent to their indignation, some may marvel at the striking resemblance between these elegant ladies and the lowly women of the market place. You forget that the Revolution has wiped out these petty distinctions.

Scene: the salon of Angelique Lnage

CHORUS of LADIES

An assault on the human spirit!
I blush even as I hear it —
This tale is too gross to repeat.
Oh, a lady can but despair
When a friend's delicate affair
Is bandied about on the street.

Though truth may be stranger than fiction —
Far be it from me to decide.
Now I don't for a moment say
You are guilty in any way,
Yet I hope you have nothing naughty to hide.
The imprudence implied
Must be flatly denied.

Dear, oh dear!
Oh, I hope you have nothing naughty to hide.
Everything implied
Has to be denied.

- LANGE Please, not another word! I am tired of hearing about that mad girl who has been slandering me in public. I intend to see her myself, and find out what she's up to.
- CHORUS But the girl is in jail. She is under arrest.
- LANGE One is not the friend of Barras for nothing. I have arranged for her release.
- CHORUS You want her out on the street again to continue her malicious campaign?
- LANGE I want her brought here to me, to find out the motive for her madness. So now let's change the subject. I have important matters on my mind. Where is my hairdresser? He was due hours ago, and Pomponnet is usually so punctual. Tonight I am particularly anxious to look my best. Go, see if you can find him. And don't come back without him. (*servant leaves*) There! I've got rid of the servant. We can talk freely.
- CHORUS About the secret meeting?
- LARIVAUDIÈRE When is it to be?
- CHORUS At midnight.
- LANGE Tonight! But that gives us very little time. Why was I not informed sooner?
- LARIVAUDIÈRE My fault. Such a distracting day.
- LANGE And where is this midnight meeting taking place?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Well, my dear, we thought, perhaps, why not here?

LANGE Here! Far too dangerous! Why here of all places?

LARIVAUDIÈRE To ward off suspicion. Your, uh, friendship with Barras makes you a highly unlikely conspirator. And the house, after all, is in an isolated area.

LANGE Which will make it all the more conspicuous when people start pouring in. But wait! I've an idea! The more conspicuous the better. Light up the halls. Put on your finest. Order champagne. For a midnight ball!

CHORUS Of course! A grand ball! Music and dancing! How chic! The latest thing! A brilliant idea!

LARIVAUDIÈRE That should throw Augereau's soldiers off-guard.

CHORUS Those blood-thirsty soldiers! They know no mercy! God help us if they find us out!

LANGE And who's afraid of Augereau's soldiers? We women have our own weapons.

On the field, men of war play the hero.
 Though said to be the weaker sex,
 Our muscle we can also flex.
 When put upon our mettle
 And forced to pen fire,
 Before the smoke can settle,
 We've got what we desire.

Astride a horse.
 They charge upon the foe,
 Or scale a wall and take a town
 To bring a kingdom tumbling down
 And lay the mighty low.

We sound a smoother call to arms,
 Our theatre of war
 A polished ballroom floor,
 And when we don our uniforms
 Of satin chic and sheer,
 Let the hero beware
 On this fatal frontier.

On the field, men of war play the hero.
 Though said to be the weaker sex,
 Our muscle we can also flex.
 When put upon our mettle
 And forced to pen fire,

Before the smoke can settle,
We've got what we desire.

These heavy-weights
Enrich the hall of fame.
If widows weep and orphans sob
Because they do a manly job,
Who are they to blame?

We women claim a greater glory.
The foe we magnetize
With soft and sultry eyes,
At last to end the story
With victory complete,
As the hero surrenders
And falls to our feet.

On the field, men of war play the hero.
Though said to be the weaker sex,
Our muscle we can also flex.
When put upon our mettle
And forced to pen fire,
Before the smoke can settle,
We've got what we desire.

Ladies, don your uniforms. We shall meet here on the battlefield
at midnight. *(ladies exeunt)*

SERVANT Madam, your hairdresser has arrived. *(Pomponnet enters)*

LANGE Ah, Pomponnet. At last! I'd nearly given you up.

POMPONNET Do forgive me, Madame. Never, never before have I been late
for an appointment. But the most dreadful thing has occurred.
I'm at my wits end. Shattered!

LANGE Perhaps a cup of tea?

POMPONNET This is beyond tea.

LANGE What has happened?

POMPONNET Nightmare! Disaster! By this time, I expected to be a married
man. We were on our way to the wedding, happy as can be, and
then suddenly, unaccountably, my darling, my angel ...

LANGE You don't mean that she has jilted you already?

POMPONNET Some demon took possession of her. Madness! Lunacy! She
started to sing on the street. A political song, attacking the new
government ...

LANGE And slandering me, I believe. And so they arrested her?

POMPONNET They took her straight to prison ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE Where she has been lodged ever since.

LANGE So it was your betrothed who had the gall, the insolence ...

POMPONNET Oh, you must forgive her! She didn't know what she was saying.
The words were not hers. She didn't realize ...

Pure, sweet and simple as a flower!
How could she know that is was wrong,
Rousing the public with a song?
She, so distant from the wheels of power!

A budding rose, we must allow her
The pretty privilege of youth,
Naively speaking out the truth —
Still such a sweet and simple flower.

My little flower, so unspoiled!
Not for the world would she expose
Lies and duplications of those
Now rashly, recklessly embriled.

And your own reputation soiled!
To utter charges so unkind
Would never cross her simple mind —
My little flower, so unspoiled!

LANGE I would like to take a look at that infamous song.

POMPONNET Yes, but don't punish her for it. Punish the man who wrote it.

LANGE Who is?

POMPONNET A public nuisance! A menace to society! A Bohemian! His
name is Ange Pitou.

LANGE Ange Pitou!

LARIVAUDIÈRE And something of a business man. I pay him not to sing. He
accepts my money and has someone else do the singing. I
wonder what her commission was.

POMPONNET Oh, no, sir! She came upon the song entirely by chance. A
malign stroke of fate! It had been tossed into the gutter.

LARIVAUDIÈRE And she rescued it?

SERVANT This way. Mademoiselle. *(Clairette enters, still in bridal dress)*

LANGE So you are the — Good heavens! Clairette!

CLAIRETTE Marguerite!

LANGE Is it really you?

CLAIRETTE After all these years! What a surprise!

LANGE No, no! You are not the rude, spiteful girl who has been singing that odious song about me!

CLAIRETTE But the song wasn't about you. It was about Angélique Lange, the actress.

LANGE My professional name.

CLAIRETTE Forgive me. I had no idea.

LANGE Of course you didn't. But when did you become so involved in politics? And in a wedding dress, no less.

CLAIRETTE There's a connection. This morning I was to get married, but I didn't want to. Oh, it was awful!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Because you're not in love?

CLAIRETTE Oh, but I am! Only it's with someone else, not the man I was getting married to. I was desperate ... like plunging down a precipice ... I didn't know how to stop.

LANGE You poor child!

CLAIRETTE And thne suddenly I got one of my wild ideas. I thought, if they arrest me and put me in jail, then we can't go ahead with the wedding. And we couldn't!

LANGE Mad as ever! Just the way you were back in the old days, when we went to school on Saint Michel.

CLAIRETTE and LANGE
 Dear were those days beyond recapture,
 Days we have left so far behind;
 Bathed in a glow of innocent rapture,
 Clear and unclouded, they come to mind,
 Laden with tears and laughter intertwined.

LANGE The times you told about your history!
 With fire and drama you would spark it.
 So green with envy, how I longed to be

Adopted by a produce market.

CLAIRETTE Behind the corners, we'd converse
 In spicy gutter talk, or worse,
 As holy sister, grim and scary,
 Would shed the light-on higher spheres.

LANGE You broadened my vocabulary
 With language not for saintly ears.

CLAIRETTE and LANGE Dear were those days beyond recapture,
 Days we have left so far behind;
 Bathed in a glow of innocent rapture,
 Clear and unclouded, they come to mind,
 Laden with tears and laughter intertwined.

LANGE Now I boast of prestige and rank —
 A ready target of attack.

CLAIRETTE And it is I that you can thank
 For stupid songs behind your back.

LANGE I forgive you these offenses,
 Oh, but once upon a time
 I'd have brought you to your senses
 For committing such a crime.

Hold your tongue, you little brat!
 I will make you pay for that.
 My paper dolls I'll put away,
 And I won't go out to play.

Take it back, or you will not
 Get to see what I have got;
 No, I'll not let you even look
 At my new colored picture book.

CLAIRETTE For my reply, now let me see:
 Stupid, who has given you
 The right to tell me what to do?
 I can tell the teacher who
 Overturned the pot of glue.
 And I know what happened when
 You were out till half-past ten.

LANGE How fiercely we would fuss and fight!

CLAIRETTE And minutes later all was right.
 Oh, the glee! The delight!

BOTH The sheer delight!

LANGE This knock-about I much prefer
To poison given with a purr.
With pleasure I forego the mix
Of paramours and politics.

BOTH To those days we are indebted
For the style that served us well,
Although not always to the credit
Of the school on St. Michel.
Growing up beside the Seine,
(Those) happy days back when.

LANGE That day we dug into old records --
It ended with a howl of mirth.
It seems your father breathed his last
Three days before your date of birth.

CLAIRETTE And take an even stranger case --
Our disbelief I still recall.
Your father's name we tried to trace,
And found -- alas, alack!-- that you had none at all.

BOTH To those days we are indebted, *etc.*

SERVANT (*entering*) Madame! A gentleman to see you.

LANGE Good heavens! I had almost forgotten!

CLAIRETTE Am I in the way?

LANGE Well, to be quite frank — this does call for privacy. You see,
I've found somebody, too. He doesn't know it yet, but he soon
will. So far, I have worshipped from a distance, but now I
expect to get quite a bit closer. Here's a room where you can
make yourself at home. And don't worry. I'm not going to let
you marry Pomponnet. After all, what are old friends for?
(*Clairette leaves*) Show the gentleman in.

ANGE PITOU (*enters*) (I am here, but my heart is with Clairette ... with
Clairette!)

LANGE Ange Pitou! You see, I know your name, as who does not? But
I wonder if you know mine.

ANGE PITOU I have just found out. (My God! Helen of Troy! No, no, no!
My heart is with Clairette!)

LANGE At last I get to meet the composer of such lively, wonderful

songs. A man of such talent and intelligence.

ANGE PITOU One has ones moments.

LANGE But tell me, why is the brilliant songwriter so hostile to a pleasant, warm-hearted woman like myself?

ANGE PITOU Because, despite the high marks that you give him for talent and intelligence, the man is an idiot whose head ought to be examined. (Clairette, where are you?)

LANGE The new regime ... Perhaps you do it an injutive. Sit down. Let's talk about it ... Let's talk of politics, the past and present.

ANGE PITOU Enough already has been said.

LANGE You're so blasé?

ANGE PITOU I choose instead
To speak of matters far more pleasant.

LANGE But do explain and tell me why
You're so completely taken by
That old regime, corrupt and shoddy?
To say the least, I find it strange
That you resist the rising tide of change —
The new regime I myself embody.

ANGE PITOU Oh, say no more! If it be true
That this regime, in fact, is you,
I cast aside all reservation!
Hereafter, day and night I'll dream
About the charming new regime.
Disdaining all that went before,
What man can see and not adore
The tantalizing transformation?

LANGE You offer rays of hope to lift the spirit.
Are we to claim you heart at last?
Oh, celebrator of the past,
Embrace the future, now so near it!
You need but seek and you shall find.

ANGE PITOU The France of yesterday was kind,
But will today be so warm-hearted?

LANGE Yes, I can serve as guarantor
Of fertile hills and valleys to explore
On a course waiting to be charted.

ANGE PITOU I need but gaze into your eyes

To find out where my future lies.

LANGE Indeed?

ANGE PITOU Oh, ripened vision of refinement!
I pine for paradise supreme,
Enamored of the new regime,
Whose face and form I find so sweet
I fall converted at her feet
To embrace the stunning realignment.

SERVANT *(at the door)* Madame, two words quickly! The police officer
who conducted the young lady here is back with Larivaudiere,
who seems to be in a rage.

LANGE Dear God! I knew that I was playing with fire. He has spied on
me. But now that I've got you here, I'm not going to let you slip
through my fingers. Ah! Clairette! Clairette! Come in quickly!
I need you.

CLAIRETTE *(enters)* What is it? *(sees Pitou)* Oh! How did you know I was
here?

ANGE PITOU Clairette! I never expected ...

LANGE You seem to know each other. Fine. There's no time for
explanations, but you've got to help me out. Simply go along
with whatever I say, however preposterous. No contradictions,
please. Otherwise I'm ruined.

CLAIRETTE Of course. Whatever you say ...

ANGE PITOU Anything to help ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE *(bursting in, with Louchard)* So my suspicions are confirmed!
Stay where you are! Nobody is to leave the room!

LANGE And what is the meaning of this old-fashioned melodrama?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Good work, Louchard.

LOUCHARD I saw him go inside. I listened at the door, and put two and two
together.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Louchard, you deserve a medal for this. *(to Lange)* So, my
charming lady love! I've found you out. And here is the
evidence in front of my eyes.

LANGE Evidence? Evidence for what? I don't quite follow you.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Don't play the innocent. I demand an explanation.

LANGE It seems to me that I am the one owed an explanation. What are you driving at?

LARIVAUDIÈRE You wrote to this gentleman.

LANGE I did. Go on.

LARIVAUDIÈRE You admit it. You invited him in for a romantic rendezvous, after carefully shoving me off the premises.

LANGE Correct. Continue.

CLAIRETTE (And he accepted ...)

LARIVAUDIÈRE Continue? Isn't that enough? What more is there to say?

LANGE You've said nothing. Of course I invited him in. A friendly attempt to bring together two young people who are much in love. I was arranging a rendezvous for Clairette, who happens to be an old school friend. I went so far as to get her released from prison, for the same purpose. Little did I realize that this small act of kindness would be misinterpreted, my motives maligned, my integrity questioned ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE Louchard! You will answer for this!

LANGE Just as I have said! It is clear,
 For her alone he happens by.
 Monster that you are, such a smear
 Not even you can justify.

CLAIRETTE No, not for her I find him here!
 For me alone he happens by.
 His infidelity I fear;
 I tremble, though I know not why.

ANGE PITOU Too well I know for whom I'm here;
 I came with hope, I knew not why.
 This antiquated financier
 Still has her heart, alas, not I!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Who is to say why he is here?
 There may be more than meets the eye.
 I was right to be severe;
 The three, no doubt, — are here but why?

LOUCHARD I was a fool to interfere!
 I tremble, yet I know not why.
 (I shake and tremble, yet I know not why.)
 Should her anger prove sincere,
 My discomfort I cannot deny.

Alas! Alas! They'll take it out upon the spy.

LARIVAUDIÈRE But wait! It's Pomponnet
That soon you mean to marry.
You take me for a fool.

CLAIRETTE No, no, sir! Cross my heart!

LANGE I'm appalled, I'm in a fury!
And what is more, perhaps a little hurt.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Swear by the cross, before me and before him:
Do you love this man?

CLAIRETTE Lord! The answer's yea!
Forced to admit it,
Yes, I love him, I adore him!

LANGE (Poor little thing! She blushes to confess,
Even if untrue. But no matter ...)

LOUCHARD My head will be served on a platter.

LARIVAUDIÈRE And as for you, balladeer:
You simply came to call upon her?

ANGE PITOU No other reason brought me here.
Can you doubt my word of honor?

LANGE (What a lit! Very smart!
He's a man of my heart.)

LARIVAUDIÈRE On your word?

ANGE PITOU On my word!

LOUCHARD (This fellow I can't figure out.)

ALL (*with adjusted pronouns*)
My doubt about the story
Is far from satisfied.
I'll make somebody sorry
If taken for a ride.

LARIVAUDIÈRE (*to Louchard*)
What now have you to say, you snake?
Baboon! Blunderbuss! Birdbrain! Knucklehead!

LOUCHARD Of course! Of course! I made a small mistake.
But I thought ... I could swear ... As I said ...

All very odd! All very strange!
Still I believe ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE I want to know!

LOUCHARD That your lovely lady Lange
Is an angel pure as snow!

LANGE Finally doing me justice!
I'm an angel, as you see.
His commendation, I trust, is
Good enough for you and me.

OTHERS Heralded now as an angel!
Yes, it takes me by surprise.
His commendation, I trust, is
Finally doing her justice,
Coming from a man humane and worldly-wise.
Justice rendered on reflection:
On the spot police protection,
Good enough for you and me.

LARIVAUDIÈRE All right. I admit that I was mistaken. I apologize. But how is it
that you suddenly become the guardian angel of a rebel poet who
composes songs against the government and a misguided girl
who sings them in the street?

LANGE For a man who prides himself on being a politician, you can be
remarkably dense.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Dense?

LANGE Must I spell out the most elementary principles? A popular
singer, who has the younger generation in the palm of his hand
— would it not be of some value to have him on our side?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Of course! What was I thinking of? I am an idiot.

LANGE Who am I to disagree?

LARIVAUDIÈRE But Louchard was so convinced.

LANGE Rush! A commotion outside ...

POMPONNET *(from outside)* But I am expected! An urgent errand. I must see
Madame. She sent for me herself.

LANGE Pomponnet! *(to Pitou and Clairette)* This could be trouble. If
he sees the two of you together, he will certainly let the cat out
of the bag. *(aloud)* Listen, my two lovebirds, wait in here for a
few minutes. I'm sure you wouldn't mind alone. *(And now to
get rid of Pomponnet!)*

POMPONNET *(enters)* Here I am! Your servants were trying to ...

LANGE Do come in, sir. And what is the purpose of this visit?

POMPONNET Madame! I hurried back! And brought with me ...

LANGE Wait a minute. Are you not Pomponnet the hairdresser? Often seen at the palace of Crillon?

POMPONNET Why, yes, my clientele includes ...

LANGE This man caters to the most reactionary element in Paris. Financed by the former nobility, he makes a daily practice of turning heads, making waves, falsifying colors ...

POMPONNET But, but, but, Madame!

LANGE And even serves as a courier. Have the man searched.

POMPONNET Searched! What have I done? Don't you remember? ...

LANGE He has on his person a subversive song, attacking the new government.

POMPONNET Of course I do! It was you ... I came back expressly ...

LANGE Enough! Let the evidence speak for itself. There, you see! Have him taken away for questioning.

LARIVAUDIÈRE A conspirator! Louchard! Take him in hand. You heard the charge.

POMPONNET Me! Under arrest! I don't understand.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Come! We'll sort this out later. Off with him.

Clairette and Pitou return, as Louchard takes away Pomponnet.

CLAIRETTE Wasn't that Pomponnet in the hands of the police?

LARIVAUDIÈRE He is under arrest.

ANGE PITOU Why him? Why is he being arrested in my place?

LANGE You are taking his place. Let him take yours.

CLAIRETTE The new justice ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE I could stand a few explanations myself. Tell me ...

LANGE First, let me tell you that it is nearly midnight.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Midnight!! My God, the meeting!

LANGE Clairette, this does not concern you. Hersilie will show you to a room, where I want you to get a good night's sleep. You've had a long day. Tomorrow we'll have time to talk. *(to Pitou)* No, you stay with us. *(Clairette leaves.)* We have a little surprise in store. Prepare for a shock. My friend, we have deceived you as successfully as we have deceived the world. You think you are the only subversive here. We are all subversives! Myself, Larivaudière, Barras, too! Yes, we all wear the yellow band and the black beret!

CONSPIRATORS Covert, we fight in a secret war,
And claim the name of conspirator.
Our bond in common we convey
With yellow band and black beret.

LANGE These outer signed
Display that we're united.

TRENITZ Conspirators on call,
Courageous and clear-sighted!
Gallant men, one and all,
With nerves that never fail.

ANGE PITOU *(interrupting)*
Ah, bravo!

LANGE *(as they quake in terror)*
No need to turn so pale.
May I present a new recruit,
A balladeer of some repute,
Much to the government's dismay.
His pen could be of great assistance.

TRENITZ His yellow band and black beret
Are notable for non-existence.

CONSPIRATORS: Covert, we fight in a secret war,
And claim the name of conspirator.
Our bond in common we convey
With yellow band and black beret.

CLAIRETTE *(enters)* What a crowd!

CHORUS A stranger!

LANGE Up so late,
What brings you out of bed?

CLAIRETTE My news cannot wait.
I saw outside my window,
Heading this direction,
A mounted guard ... now nearly at the gate.

CHORUS Augereau's mounted guard!
No escape! We are lost!

WOMEN They have found us!
They've hunted down the prey;
The enemy has found us.
Too late to get away,
Already they surround us.

ALL The call of doom has sounded;
Our cause has been betrayed.
And the house now surrounded —
Too long we have stayed.
Too long, too long, too long ...

LANGE No, no, no, no!
There must be a way.

CHORUS But where?

LANGE To turn aside this cruel pack of hunters,
A wedding feast could do us wonders.

CHORUS A wedding feast could do us wonders?

LARIVAUDIÈRE *(bringing forth Clairette and Ange Pitou)*
And here they are, the groom and the bride!

LANGE But the bands that reveal our party ...
And the berets known far and wide?

TRENITZ *(turning them inside out)*
Bah! So much for the black berets!
So much for the yellow bands!

CHORUS We solve the problem many ways!
You need but leave it in our hands.

HUSSARS *(outside)*
On patrol, we come to crack down
On subversives, high and low.
Never known to blink or back down,
We defend the status quo.

LANGE Throw open the doors! Let them enter. Gentlemen, your
partners. Ladies ... — My favorite waltz! I could dance all

night ...

(leading the waltz)

Turning, turning,
To a melody's ebb and fo\low,
Full of rapture,
Full of yearning,
To hearts still young and all aglow.

CHORUS

Turning, turning,
To a melody's ebb and fo\low,
Full of rapture,
Full of yearning,
To hearts now all aglow.

HUSSARS

(entering)

On patrol, we come to crack down
On subversives, high and low.
Never known to blink or back down,
We defend the status quo.

LANGE

What do you want?
Explain this sudden visit.

OFFICER

The underground, we're told, is here.

LANGE

Our director, Barras,
Is known to be my close friend.
And as for the rest,
The underground —
Take a look!

My friend are here for a small celebration,
A feast, a wedding with dancing to boot.
And you, whose glory is serving the nation,
We cordially welcome and warmly salute.

Keen, captivating
Partners are waiting.
Burdens of duty tonight we defy.
Music is saying,
Down with delaying!
Officer, let us begin, you and I.
And you, and you, and you, and you!

ALL

Turning, turning,
To a melody's ebb and flow,
Full of rapture,
Full of yearning,
To hearts still young and all aglow.

CLAIRETTE *(dancing with Ange Pitou)*
Waltzing is magic! I'm dancing on air!

ANGE PITOU Yes, but the magic will soon fade away.

CLAIRETTE Why do you speak of tomorrow's despair?
You know that I love you, come what may.

LANGE *(overhearing)*
In love? With her?

OFFICER What is the matter?

LANGE Oh, nothing!

OFFICER We'll stop and sit down if you like.

LANGE Nothing to speak of. Already over!
(I am betrayed!
But I shall have revenge.
Yes, watch for when to strike!)

ALL Turning, turning,
To a melody's ebb and flow,
Full of rapture,
Full of yearning,
To hearts still young and all aglow.

 Turn and turn, turn and turn,
Captivating, liberating,
To the music of rapture,
To the music of yearning,
To the charm and delight,
We turn and turn and turn!

End of Act II

ACT III

What do governments matter when love goes awry?

It is fortunate that Act Two ended when it did. Otherwise, we would have witnessed a highly embarrassing scene for both Ange Pitou and Angelique Lange, who were under that impression that they were alone and unobserved, and painful for Clairette. Suffice to say, a reconciliation between our two original lovers will take some doing on Ange Pitou's part, if it can be done at all.

Act Three brings us back to the streets, but to a different part of Paris, an amusement park on the other side of town, a highly unlikely place for our friends to bump into each other. It would almost seem as if they had been brought together by some hidden hand . . .

Scene: Belleville, the Ball of Calypso. Enter three ladies, Ararinthe, Cadet and Babet.

AMARINTHE Thank God! Clairette has been released! The agony of yesterday! But all's well that ends well, and here we are at Belleville, the Ball of Calypso.

BABET At her invitation.

CADET Why does she drag us half way across the city?

AMARINTHE Ashamed to go home, I daresay. The poor child must be absolutely mortified.

BABET Overcome with remorse.

AMARINTHE Let's not be too severe when she pleads for forgiveness.

CADET Isn't that her now? My word, are you sure it's the same person?

Enter Clairette, surrounded with men.

CHORUS Enter, enter! And take the center!
But can it be the girl we know?
In finest feather, but altogether
Unlike the shy Mam'selle Angot.

CADET So here you are!

AMARINTHE Where have you been?

CADET And what about the new costume?

AMARINTHE You're going to tell us, I presume,
Just how you got it, and from whom.

CHORUS Do tell about the new costume.
Just how you got it and from whom.

CLAIRETTE For me you've gone to great expense
To guard my state of innocence.
By nature honest, down to earth,
I gave you back your money's worth.

My maiden blush and lowered eyes
I realize were just a sham,

Demure and docile, and all very nice,
But not in the least the girl I am.

Mother paved the way!
Now her daughter, now her daughter,
Not the mealy mouth
You and others always thought her,
Starting now, I'll show
The *real* Mam'selle Angot.

CHORUS Mother paved the way!
Now her daughter, now her daughter,
Not the mealy mouth
You and others always thought her,
Starting now, she'll show
The *real* Mam'selle Angot.

CLAIRETTE On my behalf, you then selected
A husband worthy and respected.
My heart refused to go along;
I loved another, right or wrong.

Fending it off to no avail,
I dared say neither yes or no;
And so I managed to land in jail,
To escape the jarring winds that blow.

Mother paved the way!
Now her daughter, now her daughter,
Not the mealy mouth
You and others always thought her,
Starting now, I'll show
The *real* Mam'selle Angot.

So now you know the score.

AMARINTHE Now we know how you got into prison, but how did you get out?

CLAIRETTE That story will have to wait. More urgent drama is about to
unfold. I have been betrayed.

AMARINTHE Betrayed?

CLAIRETTE By the man I worshipped.

AMARINTHE Ange Pitou!

CLAIRETTE Yes, Pitou. The idol of my heart, for whom I went to prison,
desperately hoping that through some miracle we might get
married. I was a fool. Last night the idol smashed into a million
pieces. No, I shall never marry him.

anyone. *(He bumps into Larivaudiere.)*

BOTH Watch where you're going!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Stupid ass!

POMPONNET You jerk!

BOTH *(What did I say?)*

EACH He's a tough!
He's a rough and a tough.

His fist, I fear, can pack some power;
Suppose he means to stand and fight?
Although inside I quake and cower,
I'll bluff it out and hold on tight.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Are you cross-eyed or are you blind?

POMPONNET *(His anger I must pacify.)*
My fault! I'd something on my mind.

LARIVAUDIÈRE *(On bluff and bluster I rely.)*
I'll crack your skull and pick the pieces.

POMPONNET *(If I back down, I'm good as done.)*
Be off, before my wrath increases.
That tongue in cheek you'll keep in check,
Unless you want to risk your neck.
Otherwise, I advise
A kinder, gentler tone.

LARIVAUDIÈRE *(A fatal lapse! I was perhaps*
A bit outspoken.)

POMPONNET When you dance around with me
You put your life in jeopardy.

LARIVAUDIÈRE *(If only I had worn a muzzle!)*

POMPONNET *(It's now his turn to take the heat.)*
Come on! Get ready for a tussle!

LARIVAUDIÈRE I just recall, somebody I'm to meet.
(As he tries to run away, Pomponnet inadvertently pulls off his wig.)

POMPONNET Stop! What's happened to your hair?

LARIVAUDIÈRE Have a heart! Oh, what am I to say?

POMPONNET My word! Not Larivaudiere!

LARIVAUDIÈRE God forbid! He knows my name!

POMPONNET Look at me, I'm Pomponnet!

LARIVAUDIÈRE Pomponnet!

POMPONNET Larivaudiere!

BOTH Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!
A sight for sore eyes!
A partner in disguise!
In camouflage, you are
Just a tiny bit bizarre.
Yes, I would go so far
As to label you bizarre.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Pomponnet! When I saw you last, you were on your way to prison.

POMPONNET Oh, sir! I hope that you haven't tracked me down in order to send me back to that ghastly cell. My darling Clairette! Locked up behind bars! I beg you to use your influence to get her released. The sweetest, most innocent ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE Your innocent Clairette is precisely the reason I am here.

POMPONNET Clairette! (She appears and eavesdrops.)

CLAIRETTE (Do I hear my name?)

LARIVAUDIÈRE She has written me a note of considerable interest.

POMPONNET A note from prison?

LARIVAUDIÈRE My dear man, you are behind the times. No, your pretty bride is free as a bird, and I would suspect not far away. Frankly, I have my doubts about that girl. Bewildering, to say the least.

POMPONNET Clairette is an angel, a jewel, a pearl, a ray of sunshine ...

CLAIRETTE (Poor Pomponnet! He's still back in Act One.)

LARIVAUDIÈRE Yes, yes, yes! She is an angel and you are the Emperor of Rome.

POMPONNET Call me what you like, but I'll not have you insulting Clairette.

CLAIRETTE (Bravo, Pomponnet! Well-spoken.) Gentlemen! Oh, I beg your pardon! I took you for two friends of mine — Pomponnet and Larivaudiere. I've invited them here to the Ball of Calypso, to

listen to my story. It is of vital importance to both.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Well, well! Perhaps you could tell us what it's about.

POMPONNET Yes, yes, indeed!

TRIO:

CLAIRETTE My dear friend's a charming man
I revere as a friend or brother.
But though I love him as I can,
My heart I've given to another.

POMPONNET Oh, God! What message do I hear?

LARIVAUDIÈRE It's clear enough, yes, all quite clear.

CLAIRETTE I make no defense, no rebuttal
For this enchanting poet I chose.

POMPONNET A poet?

CLAIRETTE So worldly, sensitive and subtle.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Ah! *C'est la vie!* That's how it goes.

POMPONNET I have lost! All is over!
My head is in a daze.

CLAIRETTE Oh, what a fond and tender lover!
My simple trust he now betrays.

There you have my story,
So lately come to light.
As referee and jury
I've called you out tonight.
(*to Lar.*) With Lange I believe you're acquainted,
The famous actress on the stage.

POMPONNET I am.

LARIVAUDIÈRE We've met.

CLAIRETTE A woman hardly sainted,
The latest talk is all the rage.
First, Barras she happens to ensnare,
And now deceives with an old goat,
A banker named Larivaudière.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Old goat? Old goat?

POMPONNET Now his turn, take note, take note, take note.

CLAIRETTE Not stopping there, or so I've heard,
This woman so wondrous rare
Already has lined up a third
To supplement Larivaudiere.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Oh, God! What message do I hear?

POMPONNET It's clear enough, yes, all quite clear.

CLAIRETTE To her boudoir the man's invited –
With what in mind, God only knows!
The old goat, I fear, was slighted.

POMPONNET Ah! *C'est la vie!* That's how it goes.

LARIVAUDIÈRE I have lost! All is over!
My head is in a daze.

CLAIRETTE And with my own unfaithful lover
This same old man she now betrays.
There you have her story,
So lately come to light.
As referee and jury
I've called you out tonight.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Good grief! I am Larivaudiere!

CLAIRETTE I was aware.

LARIVAUDIÈRE You were aware?

POMPONNET And I, to my dismay...

CLAIRETTE You're my sweet Pomponnet.

POMPONNET You were aware?

CLAIRETTE I was aware.

LARIVAUDIÈRE Revenge, without delay!

CLAIRETTE We await the leading players,
But beware! Prepare for surprise.
Look! Over there!
Do you see? There he is!

POMPONNET It's he?

LARIVAUDIÈRE And she?

CLAIRETTE Revenge is ours!
His roving he will rue.
I will hear of no excuses,
And to punish his abuses,
Yes, to punish his abuses,
I would even marry you.

 Off we go, out to show
Shady dealing brought to light,
Lying low, soon to know
Who is tit for tat tonight.

 As for those who suppose
Love is just a merry game,
Sticking close, we'll expose
And reduce them both to shame.

 Those triflers who suppose
Love's just a merry game,
We'll wantonly expose
And reduce them both to shame.

ALL THREE Off we go, out to show
And expose shady dealing.
I've a feeling
That we hold the master key.
Follow us! Come along! *(exeunt)*

PITOU *(entering)* The ball of Calypso! A note from Angelique brings me
bounding. Marvelous woman! How cleverly she handled it last
night, when dear, dewy-eyed Clairette barged in at the most
inopportune moment. Clairette never suspected a thing. Well,
nothing that I can't patch up tomorrow. Meanwhile, the night
sparkles and out in the dark the voice of adventure and romance
is calling.

LANGE *(entering)* Ah, what a relief to find you here!

PITOU But surely no surprise.

LANGE I have become overly suspicious – the object of so many plots
and counterplots. Unfamiliar with your handwriting, I thought
possibly ...

PITOU My handwriting?

LANGE But rest assured, I followed your instructions to the letter.

PITOU *(puzzled)* Did I send instructions?

LANGE And here I am, done up like a sensible, homespun, hard working
woman of the market place.

PITOU Very becoming, too.

LANGE An unusual spot for a rendezvous. I might have known that you would choose a place that was colorful and original.

PITOU But I didn't choose it. You did!

LANGE I! When did I ever make such a suggestion?

PITOU Here, in this charming invitation that I have read and re-read a hundred times. You don't deny writing it?

LANGE I seem to be having a very peculiar lapse of memory.

PITOU Listen. I know every word by heart.

(reciting) "Dear foe and critic whom I ought to hate.
Whose scorn I should not tolerate,
I can no longer hide or fight the way I feel.
As you and you alone have set my heart aglow,

At nine o'clock tonight
Come to Belleville, the ball of Calypso.
Past quarrels put aside,
Waiting there you will find,
Eager and starry-eyed,
The woman who adores you."

LANGE The note is signed?

PITOU And signed Lange.

LANGE A hoax! A fraud!

PITOU Can it be? How strange!
So this charming little note
Is not from you?

LANGE There is more. Shall I quote?
"I am a dreamer, at odds with convention;
I stumble on, a man without a goal.
And yet I dare to love you heart and soul;
Life without you is beyond comprehension.

You'll find, not far from your chateau,
But far away from present day ordeal,
A little ball at Belleville.
You might attend incognito.
As woman of the market place
I bid you come to my embrace,
From there to watch the passing show.

My fate is yours. May I remind you,
 I wait with mingled joy and dread?
 If at nine o'clock I fail to find you,
 By nine forty I shall be dead."

PITOU Another fraud! A pseudo billet-doux!
 And is it signed?

LANGE Of course! Ange Pitou.

BOTH Clearly a plot! Clearly an outrage!
 Phony letters, both akin.
 Clearly a plot! Clearly an outrage!
 Someone out to do us in.
 How appalling! How bizarre!
 Sheer deceit that goes too far.
 I am appalled! I am aghast !

LANGE Escape! Leave quickly, I implore you!

PITOU Why run away? No, here I shall stay,
 For I love you, yes, I adore you.
 There it is! My secret is out.
 A nod from you will turn my life about.

CHORUS
(closing in) Ha ha! The secret you disclose
 Is one that everybody knows.

PITOU This interference you'll regret.
 That goes for *you!*

CLAIRETTE *(joining the group)* For me as well?

CHORUS Clairette!!!

CLAIRETTE And so, Madame, the truth is out
 Beyond the shadow of a doubt.
 Oh, not content with two on hold,
 One not so young, the other old,
 You now go after number three
 By taking one away from me.

 You've found the man to fill the bill,
 So take him any time you will.
 Though smooth and charming as can be,
 You can have the man for free.
 And yet I ought to warn you flat.
 The rat is worth not even that.

 So take him! Willingly to you I toss the ball
 To one of little merit,

To one of little merit,
 Allow me to present a man with none at all.

CHORUS Bravo! The blow has taught her
 To hammer like a pro.
 At last, her mother's daughter –
 The new Mam'selle Angot!
 The true Mam'selle Angot!

LANGE So I begin to see the light!
 This alley cat can scratch and bite.
 So shy and simple, so naïve,
 Or so she's led you to believe.
 Her gutter language would disgrace
 A drunken sailor off the base.

 See here, you little hypocrite,
 You do not shake me up a bit.
 Am I the one that you should scold
 Because his love for you grows cold?
 Poor man, he turns to someone new
 Because he's sick and tired of you.

 I understand, so back to you I toss the ball.
 Though at best I've little merit,
 Though at best I've little merit,
 Allow me to suggest that you have none at all.

LARIVAUDIÈRE (*to Lange*) The truth I out! Deny it if you dare.

LANGE Good heavens! Who on earth is that?

LARIVAUDIÈRE "That" is Larivaudiere!

LANGE Larivaudiere! Ha ha ha ha!

LARIVAUDIÈRE You deceive me with a lover,
 My devotion you betray.
 But the drama isn't over;
 I shall have the final say.

PITOU Such a fright'ning show of temper,
 Truly terrible to see!
 Rattle sabers, but remember
 You are dealing now with me.

CLAIRETTE You can have my flighty lover;
 You have caught the butterfly.
 My romantic dream is over,
 So I gladly say goodbye.

LANGE So I have your former lover!
 I have caught the butterfly.
 By tomorrow you'll recover –
 Even sooner if you try.

POMPONET & CHORUS
 In a frenzy, overheated,
 How they leap into the fray.
 Level heads by now are needed,
 Or there will be hell to pay.

CLAIRETTE We've said enough; no more ill feeling.
 Friend, your hand.

LANGE You deign to stoop so low?

CLAIRETTE Hot-tempered women of the market,
 We have it out, then let it go.

LANGE I agree ...

LARIVAUDIÈRE But I object!

CLAIRETTE Be quiet! Be quiet!
 The subject has come to a close,
 Unless you want me to expose
 Your part in the plot I learned at the party.

LANGE So lately brought into the market,
 I have nothing to sell, but a bargain to offer:
 Food and drink – all on me!

CHORUS The kind of friend we like to see!

POMPONET
 (*to Clairette*) You're weeping?
 Your eyes are full of tears.

CLAIRETTE Tears? No ...

POMPONET But yes! I am not blind.
 How come the tears? How come the tears?

CHORUS How come those tears?

CLAIRETTE Never mind.

PITOU Suppose I told you I was sorry,
 That I had tamed the savage beast ...

CLAIRETTE Sir, if you believe I'll swallow that
 You do not know me in the least.

My feelings come together –
Vexation and dismay.
For such a weightless feather
I slighted Pomponet.

Suppose I went contritely
And tried to make amends:
He'd say, no doubt politely,
Let's stay the best of friends.

POMPONET True and steady, I am ready
Any time you'll have my hand.
We were heading for the wedding;
Let's proceed just as we planned.

CHORUS How delightful that the rightful
Man is once again to go,
As intended, to the splendid
Daughter of Madame Angot.

PITOU Losing one round, I'll try another;
She may yet turn out like her mother.
By and by ... we shall see ...

LANGE With wine we salute the occasion
As the band winds up for the dance.

POMPONET And so I get a second chance
To lead a wedding celebration.

LANGE (*to Pomp.*) Who are you marrying today?

CLAIRETTE Who? Who? Me and me alone!
Not the mother's docile daughter,
Not the timid mouse
You and others always thought her –
As of now, recognize
A girl who's found the way,
Walking off with the prize,
Her faithful Pomponet!

CHORUS Her and her alone!
Not the mother's docile daughter,
Not the timid mouse
You and others always thought her –
As of now, recognize
A girl who's found the way,
Walking off with the prize,
Her faithful Pomponet!

The End

