STANISLAW MONIUAZKO

HALKA

ENGLISH VERSION

by

DONALD PIPPIN

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

HALKA --- a peasant girl from a small village in the mountains, largely owned by Johnny, a bachelor with whom she is passionately in love. He is in fact the father of her baby. Though promising to marry her, he has recently disappeared. Mystified and worried, she has come in search of him, and succeeds in finding him on the day that his betrothal to a wealthy heiress is being celebrated.

JOHNNY --- a prosperous landowner, certainly in love with Halka, and deeply torn. but not enough to forego the advantages of a splendid marriage to an even wealthier lady of his own class.

CONRAD --- devoted to Halka since childhood, who has followed her in her search, and now remains her only friend.

SOFIA — the warmly sympathetic lady whom Johnny is about to marry, She is unaware of her fiance's entanglements and obligations,

STOLNIK --- Sofia's well-meaning father, in whose castle the betrothal celebration is taking place.

DANIEL --- his steward.

Servants, nobles, mountaineers.

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English Version by Donald Pippin

ACT I: A magnificent wedding is soon to take place between Sofia, an only child, daughter of Stolnik, an immensely wealthy nobleman, and Johnny, an almost equally wealthy young landowner, a newcomer to the area from a tiny village in the mountains a good many miles away. It appears to be a match made in heaven, following what must have been a whirlwind courtship. Yet one suspects that romance is not the only issue. Huge estates of countless acres are about to be united. What could be more thrilling?

But the guests are barely assembled for a betrothal party on a warm summer afternoon in the garden adjoining the future father-in-law's ancestral castle when a small, plaintive, lonely voice is heard from outside, telling a sad, possibly sordid story, out of sync with the festive occasion: a young lady is apparently wandering in search of her lost fiance, who has recently and mysteriously disappeared. In great distress, terrified that something dreadful may have happened to him, at the same time fighting off the even greater fear that she has been forsaken, she clings, somewhat tenuously, to the belief that her beloved, so far above her in station, is a man of his word, not an opportunistic fly by night.

Sofia, Johnny's kind-hearted bride to be, is instantly sympathetic to the unfortunate girl's plight. She begs Johnny to speak with her, offer encouragement and whatever help might be useful. He might even suggest ways to best go about locating her missing lover. Johnny has little choice but to go along with his fiancée's urgent request, but he seems to be unaccountably embarrassed....

Scene: a palatial reception hall, with a French window overlooking a garden.

STOLNIK, DANIEL, PARTY GUESTS

Celebrate the peerless couple Bound for holy matrimony. May their shared pleasures double Under skies serene and sunny.

All declare, without exception, Each deserving of the other, Both a pattern of perfection Brought by luck or fate together.

True believers, pious Christians, They uphold a lofty standard: Woe to sinners who've meandered! Friends and neighbors, For good reason we're excited: Huge estates of countless acres By tonight will be united.

STOLNIK

Drink up with me, rejoice and celebrate!

CHORUS

With you we drink and celebrate! (All leave except Stolnik Sofia and Johnny)

JOHNNY

Dare I call you now my father As I claim your daughter's hand? For that bond so pure and sacred In return I give my heart, My life, my soul entire.

SOFIA

With my father's tender blessing My fears and tremors disappear.

STOLNIK

You're the son I've dearly wanted Since the first seeds of hope were planted.

SOFIA

With a father's tender blessing My fears and tremors disappear. With a gift freely granted, You fulfill my deepest desire.

Dearest father!
With your gift freely granted,
Fear is replaced by simple gratitude.
With your kindness and wisdom
Seeds of joy and peace are planted.
We dare to love
Knowing for certain that you approve.

JOHNNY

Give a father's tender blessing. On your daughter, on your son Bestow a gift born of love. With your kindness, with your wisdom, Seeds of joy and peace are planted. A father's benediction freely granted Brings the peace of mind long wanted. We dare to love Knowing for certain that you approve.

STOLNIK

You're the son I have wanted.
Gladly I bestow my blessing on your love.
For the union long awaited
You request a father's blessing,
Approval freely granted, fondly granted.
You're the son I've dearly wanted
Since the seed of hope was planted.

May love and wisdom guide you on your journey Together side by side.

HALKA (a lone voice from outside))
Torn from the stem, the blossom will wither.
Once like a dancer lighter then air,

SOFIA

Someone outside ...

HALKA

Cheerful and playful, brimming with laughter, I was a child without a care,

SOFIA

A song so tender! Oh, who could the singer be?

HALKA

Gone are those days, the laughter now mute --- Oh, where is my wandering lover?

JOHNNY (to Sofia)

How should I know? More than likely, just a beggar passing by.

HALKA

Man of his word, or merciless brute? How long till my torment is over? How long, my love, how long?

STOLNIK

From outside a passing stranger Tells of passion and despair.

JOHNNY

(Halka grieving ... Awkward moment An encounter best to avoid.)

SOFIA

Can we help her?

JOHNNY

(Why, oh why must she pursue me?)

STOLNIK

Who would dare disturb our revels?

JOHNNY (to Sofia)

Kind of you to pay attention To a stranger half demented While within our sheltered mansion We rejoice, happy and contented.

SOFIA

(Warm of heart, he feels compassion. Overhearing a person who suffers. O my love! Speak to her, do hurry! If betrayed by a faithless lover, She has to know all isn't over. Though forsaken and left forlorn, She will recover, and life goes onward,

Left forsaken and forlorn, Yet all is not over: life and hope go on. My love, do hurry! And let her know that all isn't over. Do hurry! Right away, have the girl brought in.

JOHNNY

(Outside, my lovely Halka grieving While here within our sheltered mansion all rejoice. Here, wine and laughter – there, heartbreak.)

(to Sofia) Left forsaken and forlorn, She needs consolation, A kindly friend to tell her life goes on. If you insist ... yes, I'm the person. So, my dear, I'll see what I can do By way of advice and friendly consultation. Have the girl brought in.

STOLNIK

Such compassion for a stranger
Pouring out her sorrow,
Lost and desolate, left forlorn and forsaken,
No doubt betrayed by a faithless lover.
You must tell her that life is not yet over.
Offer comfort, and let her know that life goes on,
And let her know that life goes on.
No time to squander! Have the girl brought in.
(Stolnik and Sofia leave, Johnny remains)

JOHNNY

(alone, sad and restless)

Now no escape ... the worst of timing!

She arrives just as I'm getting married,

Here no doubt to insist I keep a promise –

To her, a girl so far beneath me!

Well! Though it hurts, I ought to see her, If at least to say I'm sorry. But she has come too late! I've made my decision.

Then I was gloomy, depressed and lonely, Sun, moon and stars had ceased to shine. O Halka! You smiled and made life worth saving! You were my joy, my reason for living. Love and desire took over and conquered: I wanted only to make you mine.

Caught in the clash of love and duty, Choosing to honor ancestral pride, So farewell to candor, farewell to beauty! Yet in my heart a wild storm is raging, Stirred by the joy I dare not remember In days of torment and love denied.

HALKA.

(entering, unaware of Johnny's presence) Simple, naïve, not part of his world ---Ah, but he loved me, poor as I am! Holding me close and warming my heart, The magic of springtime filled the air. Dearest beloved, meadows are greener, Music is sweeter because you care.

Can it be just an innocent dream?
And must I awaken to fear and despair?
My love! I need to hear your answer.
Where have you gone? And why did you leave me?
Till you return, I shrivel and die,
A withering plant without water.
(She becomes aware of Johnny's presence and rushes into his arms.)

HALKA

Oh, Johnny! Beloved!
I heard a rumor that you'd forsaken me
For a noble lady you intend to marry.
But held so warmly in your embraces,
I can ignore that wicked slander.
Your eyes reveal all I need to know.

My ray of sunlight! My winged falcon! So full of joy, my heart will surely burst. From deepest sorrow to bliss unbounded, For now I know you love me as before, And we're together, as close as ever, Past vows unbroken.

My ray of sunlight! etc.

JOHNNY

(I've got to tell her! But not this moment! How can I coax her away from here?)

Again together, as close as ever, I love you as I did before. How could you doubt? Again together, as close as ever, I love you as I did before.

HALKA

Still you love me as before.

JOHNNY

Still I love you as before. (She throws herself into his arms, he pushes her away gently.)
Slow down, my sweet. Our love must wait!

Stay calm and trust me. I made a promise.

CHORUS (offstage)

Evviva!

JOHNNY

People coming ... they mustn't see us. Along the river ... We'll meet tonight Beside the statue of the holy virgin. I'll not be late. Till then lie low.

We'll then escape, just you and I, Finding at last Peace and freedom to love. We leave today never to return, Far, far away, just you and I.

HALKA

Sheer heaven! Just you and I. Peace and freedom to love. We leave tonight together. Sheer paradise! Just you and I. Finding at last freedom to love.

JOHNNY

Halka my love, let's not delay.

HALKA

Home to the hills far away, Starting again, just you and I, Home to the mountains where I was born.

JOHNNY

To start again, we go to find A home in the mountains where you were born.

HALKA

Home to the hills where I was born, Starting again, just you and I.

JOHNNY

Who brought you here?

HALKA

(in her own world, paying no attention to what he says)
My winged falcon!

JOHNNY

Are you alone?

HALKA

My golden hero! You love me, you love me as before!

JOHNNY

O Halka! Do hurry! I plead, I implore! Be off, I beg you, I implore! Of course I love you as before, But go, I beg you, I implore.

HALKA

My falcon! My hero! Say you love me once again!

JOHNNY

Yes, of course. Later on.

HALKA

All that I have ever wanted Now the god of love has granted, You are mine forever. Say it once again!

When the sun is slowly setting, By the river I'll be waiting – Waiting for my darling, Now mine alone.

Those unhappy days are over, Days of longing for my lover.

JOHNNY

Hurry, hurry! Go without delay!

HALKA

I am yours and you are mine.

JOHNNY & HALKA

I am yours and you are mine. I am yours, yours alone,

And you are mine!

JOHNNY

You alone I adore; I am yours as before.

HALKA

You alone I adore! I am yours and you are mine. Together forevermore! My Johnny!

JOHNNY

Together! Together!
But now you'd best be gone.
I'll meet you later on.
Later on, later on, we'll meet later on.

(He embraces her, then shows her to the door. Guests enter and surround him.)

BASSES

Has the groom gone into hiding? Now's the call for courage, no back-sliding.

JOHNNY, with forced gaiety Here I am, set to go.

TENORS

You're in fact a lucky fellow. Would that I were in your shoes.

JOHNNY

Right you are, on with the show!

BASSES

Hurry up, the bride is waiting. Come, no time to lose.

TENORS

Come along, no time to lose. (Stolnik enters to a warm welcome.)

CHORUS

Host of the party! A night of feasting! What a treat!

A festive occasion! With lots to drink and lots to eat, Exotic fruit and vintage wine, And an orchestra to boot.

Let us start with a toast To our venerated host And to his long and noble line.

We foresee a night of pleasure Revels to recall at leisure, Conversation, song and laughter. Later on, We're dancing until dawn. Song and later on Dancing until dawn.

GUEST, *raising a glass* Toast the host of noble lineage!

OTHERS

Evviva!

ANOTHER GUEST A second round to love and marriage!

OTHERS

Evviva! Slightly plastered, more than mellow, Now I envy the chosen fellow!

STOLNIK

Welcome to my humble castle, Fellow nobles, brought together To console a doting father, Sad upon this glad occasion, Joyful, yes, but heavy hearted, Pulled by mixed emotions.

Oh, how to find the words to say it? But words alone cannot convey it. From my one and only daughter All too soon I shall be parted.

This day of great joy and festivity Will linger sadly in my memory. Nonetheless, now acquiescing, On the two I place my blessing.

JOHNNY

My new father!

STOLNIK

Dearest daughter! Both my children! Friends, forgive a grudging father From his beloved daughter soon parted, From his child, his one and only, Who would not be heavy hearted?

Yet we come for celebration! What if days are cold and lonely? Still I'm served a heaping platter, In the prime, though getting fatter, And good food and wine still matter.

Now's the time for celebration!
Friends and neighbors, all are welcome!
Enough of how a father feels!
Full of vigor, strong and able,
Swing your partner, click our heels
Before we gather round the table.

DANIEL (aside to Stolnik)
Sir, inside the air is stifling
And far too hot for dancing.
Why not have the ball out here?

STOLNIK

Wise servant, thank you kindly; Your advice I'd follow blindly. Ready all for the grand mazurka!

MAZURKA

ACT 11

Halka nervously awaits the next meeting with Johnny, wracked with anxiety, despite his reassurances that he loves her still, despite his promise that they will leave together that night under cover of darkness, return to their village in the mountains and get married. Expecting him any minute, she is taken aback when her long time friend Jontek, in love with her since childhood, shows up instead. Fearing the worst, he has followed her in her long trek and now confronts her with a scathing indictment of his rival's character, hoping to disabuse her of this improbable dream. She refuses to listen, just possibly because what she fears he may be telling the truth. Stubbornly, she dismisses even the possibility that Johnny could be unfaithful, much less on the verge of marrying another woman. Is he not the father of her unborn baby? Could he forsake both mother and child, his own child? Unthinkable. But Jontek has the evidence on his side, evidence that Halka will soon be compelled to witness with her own eyes.

(The garden close to the castle)

HALKA, alone

Before the feet of the virgin
There I'll soon await my beloved,
Kneeling in prayer and imploring
Our sainted holy mother
To console a child at sea, confused and uncertain.
Oh, turn your eye unto an orphan
Much in need of loving guidance.
I must be patient ...

Blazing torches light the castle. Here so dark ...

(joyfully) Soon I'll see again my mountains! Johnny swore that together we'd return. Until today I'd wept and waited, Praying he had not forgotten. And now at last my dream comes true! Wide awake, I'll find my paradise!

When the morning sun shines bright upon the meadow, Would that I could soar over treetops like a swallow; Like a sparkling goldfish swimming up the stream, I'd race to my beloved.

But I'm neither goldfish sparkling in the water, Nor a meadow lark, nor swift winged swallow. Only the wind conveys my song of love.

Were I a star looking down from the heavens,

A glow reflected in the water, Lighting your heart, my darling, Adorning your soul with gentle splendor! Ah, were I even a flame, a flickering flame Whose light can barely cast a shadow!

If each of the countless tears I've shed Could become a single drop of dew! If only my tears, the countless tears I've shed, Like dew, would moisten the roots of your soul!

But alas! I'm neither goldfish nor swallow, Nor a flick'ring flame, nor ever burning star. Just a girl from the mountains whose abundant tears Produce no leaves and blossoms.

A star in the heavens, or merely a candle, On you alone my light would shine. A swift gliding swallow or unswerving eagle, On wings of love my soul would soar.

A swift gliding swallow or unswerving eagle, To you, my golden hero, On wings of love I'd soar.

But alas! I'm neither eagle nor swallow, Nor a burning star. Just a girl from the mountains. Yes, but the wind conveys my song of cheer!

O joy, O joy! My love will return. The night was long, but comes the dawn. The night is over.

The sun comes up, and life goes on! (noticing Jontek's quiet arrival, she runs toward him, with reproaches)

My friend, how could you? Spiteful and mean, You misled me with rumors.
What was the point,
Grinding and crushing my only joy?
But I have seen him, and I have heard him.
My ray of sunlight!
Because he loves me he'll not forsake me.

JONTEK

Child, how could you be so foolish?

HALKA

How little you know him!
The way he trembled when he embraced me!
Ah, Jontek, Jontek!
What can you gain by breaking my heart?

JONTEK (with irony)
So I have lied to you?

HALKA

You laugh at me! (suddenly crumbling) Jontek, take me from here.

JONTEK *indifferently* If that's what you want.

HALKA

To city ways I feel so foreign ... A simple country girl from the mountains. The rising sun gives no delight, No warmth, no solace.

The setting sun brings only dread, Anguish and horror.

These heavy walls are like a prison. My lonely heart here turns to ice. Friend, take me away ... take me away ... To my own mountains. He'll follow me. Perhaps he's already waiting there. (fearfully, timidly) You're laughing still?

JONTEK

Come on! If he's already there.
'Twould be a shame to make him wait.

You still believe him? That smooth seducer! Grow up and face the truth: You have been betrayed. As sure as wind blows across the pasture, As sure as streams run down the mountain side, He's lied to you and led you on.

Throughout the ages, bear this is mind: You are the servant, he has the clout.

You're his to use, and then discard. (sadly) You still believe him? That smooth seducer! When will you face the truth? You have been betrayed.

HALKA. with utter docility I trusted him, I trust him still.

JONTEK

That rogue and scoundrel! Master of persuasion, Adept at flattery and easy promises. So kind on the surface! Beware the predator Wielding his weaponry, deceit and treachery.

Tender and warm when on the prowl, After the conquest, he gloats, you suffer. Compare my devotion: heartfelt and consuming; His love, only a pastime; his heart, a stone.

You're caught in the clutches of a lust driven animal Who feeds his appetite and then moves on.

Halka, I've yearned for you,
I'm a garden waiting for rain.
My every thought of you alone.
He looks you over with half a glance
And says to himself, "That one I want."
He takes advantage of youth and candor,
Then soon is gone.

You still believe him? That cold seducer! Naïve and gullible, you have been betrayed. As sure as wind blows across the pasture, As sure as streams run down the mountain side, He's lied to you and led you on.

(With fierce irony)

You come expecting the man you worship. *(pointing to the castle)*

See for yourself with whom he is dancing,
There arm in arm with the bride he has chosen.
A splendid match,
The perfect couple, of equal rank.
(with fury and irony)
A lovely bride, of noble birth,
So fair, so fine, she meets the mark.

Too bad for you, left out in the dark. Lovers, look on! Celebrate!

CHORUS, from within

A toast to hail the happy couple On the verge of getting married. May their lives be rich and varied, Blessed with days and nights of love.

(Motionless, Halka has listened to the words of the chorus. Realizing her plight, she comes to, and runs to the castle door to pound on it in desperation.)

HALKA

I must go in! Come, open the door! O Johnny! It's me! Won't you answer? I plead to my poor baby's father.

JONTEK, *holding her back*The door will never open. We'd better go.
You call in vain.

HALKA

He is inside. I must go in.

JONTEK

A waste of breath. Let's get away.

HALKA

Oh, someone! Come, open the door.
O Johnny, for me! Won't you answer?
Remember our poor little baby.
(to Conrad) I implore you! Oh, help me!
I know he's there inside.
Our master, my falcon!
Be kind, I need your help.

JONTEK

Do calm yourself and leave with me. Halka, let's not make a scene to no avail. It matters not how much you plead ... A waste of breath.

HALKA

O Johnny! Please, let me in! I need you now! I need you now!

JONTEK

I beg of you, be calm and go.

HALKA

O Johnny! I need you now.

JONTEK

I beg of you, be calm and go.

(Johnny emerges from the castle, followed by others. At the sight of him, Halka collapses onto a bench and remains there immobile, totally immersed in her own grief.)

JOHNNY

(to Halka, sotto voce)
Here you're not wanted, so keep your distance.

I gave fair warning.

JONTEK (stepping forward)
Blame me, my Lord.

JOHNNY

(On the verge of exploding upon seeing Jontek. With an effort he controls himself, speaking with repressed anger.)

So you're the one who had the gall
To bring her here, my orders disregarded.
You made her leave her happy home,
Her home and friends, to venture off to parts unknown.
(Be damned to hell!)

A peasant girl who fantasizes,
She must return. I place her in your care.
Your helping hand, of course, will amply be rewarded.
She must return. The job I leave to you.
Your effort will be well rewarded, fair is fair.
Without delay, you take control --This timely service will not go uncompensated.
A worthy deed deserves reward.

JONTEK

O noble Lord! Though kindly meant, The plan that you propose will hardly do. Her father dead, her mother, too, An orphan, she no longer has a home. Without recourse, bereft, in deep despair, She turns to you.

JOHNNY

(He's mocking me! His insolence is past endurance!)

JONTEK

(after a long pause, with dark significance)
Now blessed with child, its father unrevealed,
Take care of her, be kind,
And reap rewards from heaven.

JOHNNY

(Insufferable! He goads me on!)

JONTEK

Expect from heaven all that you deserve. If there's a God above, you'll not go unrewarded. To her be kind!

JOHNNY

For service rendered, look for ample compensation. Depend on me! From God above, expect the just reward that you deserve.

JONTEK

She turns to you. From God above, expect the just reward that you deserve.

DANIEL & CHORUSES

(with minor variations)

Two unruly peasants here, Intruding on their betters! Uncouth peasants here, breaking up the party. Go, throw them out! Meaning now! What a ruckus, what a racket! They are here to make a row.

Do they intend to stay
And cast a pall upon the party?
With indecent show of passion
Breaking up the celebration.
Not where they belong.
Don't they know right from wrong?
Away with them!
Ban them from the tables;
Steer them to the stables.
They forget their station, who knows why?

With indecent show of passion Breaking up the celebration. Lowly peasants gone astray. Stand up (Brace up) and send them on their way.

JONTEK

Halka, come away. Here your tears are wasted. We don't belong; come with me. Cries of despair, scalding tears here are wasted.

Wealthy, far above us,
None among these people either see or hear.
Heartless and inhuman,
None among these people
See or hear or even seem to care.
Halka, I have told you all along,
None among them listen to your song.

Come back with me. Simmer down, come away; Here with strangers, only grief, only pain. The party's over, Come away, we don't belong.

SOFIA

Does she come here to grieve, breaking up the party? Hard to dismiss or condone. (to Johnny) Agitated, overheated, So unhappy, so pathetic. Pain, reproach and fear — Could be that someone's done her wrong, Led her on and brought her down.

(to Halka) Help, relief and shelter Seek among the servants, where you belong. Though the world is helter skelter, There you'll find repose and shelter, Willing ears that hear your song.

HALKA

Oh, Johnny! Mourn the timid dove, Her feathers torn and mangled by the falcon. Swooping downward, fierce and cruel, He has caught her in his clutches, Torn the gentle bird asunder. Behold your dove, shattered! Broken! Your pleasing words she mistook for love. She dies for what she thought was love.

JOHNNY

Does she come just to play out the injured party? To complain and accuse? (to Sofia) Tiresome lady, she's demented. Agitated, overheated And starved for attention -- Cries of woe for all to hear. Best for now to play along.

(to himself) (Though she's clearly crazy, Still I'm most uneasy.
Owing to her friend,
Who is to say where this could end?
Just as I have long been dreading,
She shows up before the wedding.)
(to Daniel) Show your stuff, we've heard enough.
Go send the peasants on their way.

STOLNIK

This it don't understand!
Two uncouth peasants here,
Breaking up the party.
No, surely not what we planned!
Ah, do they intend to stay
And cast a pall upon the party?

With indecent show of passion Breaking up the celebration, Not where they belong. Don't the know right from wrong?

Ban them from the tables right away. Never could I imagine such a day. They forget their station, showing up, Don't ask my why, I can't imagine.

With indecent show of passion Breaking up the celebration. Lowly peasants gone astray. I simply don't know what to say.

ACT III

The final two acts are set in a village square with church and tavern, nestled among the mountains, steep hills on either side, and a deep ravine, spanned by a foot bridge with a swift flowing river below. While the hard-working farmers and villagers celebrate a rare holiday, Halka and Jontek return to their hometown, weary and travel-worn from the long, excruciating walk in scorching heat on dusty roads. Halka, barely recognizable, stunned and bewildered, maddened by grief, her eyes opened but unable to bear the light, seems entirely enclosed in her own private world, brooding upon the rapacious falcon that pounces on the helpless dove, only to leave it broken and mangled. How will she react when the engaged couple arrive for the marriage ceremony, scheduled for this very afternoon? A black raven seen flying overhead is not a good sign.

(In a mountainous countryside, a village owned largely by Johnny. It is evening, towards sunset. A few peasants, both men and women, are sitting on steps in front of an inn. Others are scattered on the mountain rocks. Still others are walking in and out of the church .A vesper bell rings out.)

PEASANT CHORUS

After vespers on a Sunday
See the sun still brightly shining.
Done with heavy toil and labor,
We deserve a day of leisure.
Come and join us, friend and neighbor,
For a lively round of pleasure.

Soon the master is arriving. Looking forward to his wedding, With his farms and rentals thriving, On his bounty we are betting.

Lucky man! But for the peasant, Pain and sweat are not so pleasant. Mid the dazzle of the castle Who befriends the lowly vassal?

Seize the day, no time for sorrow; Tears can wait until tomorrow. Then it's back to toil and trouble, Grinding labor, daily struggle.

Often told 'tis sin to covet, God's command we can't ignore. So we try to rise above it Though the wolf is at the door. (Jontek with Halka approach, both looking travel weary and bedraggled.)

CHORUS

Two strangers ... Look closer. Who is the fellow? ---Who is the lady? They both look familiar ... It's Jontek! ---Right! Our Jontek! But the lady? ...

JONTEK

God be praised! At last we made it.

CHORUS

With Halka!

JONTEK

Finally home again.
Tired out and weatherworn,
To our village we return,
Not in the mood for song and dancing.

CHORUS

You and Halka!

JONTEK

Yes, Halka. But hardly the girl that once you knew.

CHORUS

So forlorn, so heavy hearted! Not the person we remember. What a change! A broken spirit, Stunned by a mortal blow.

JONTEK

A blow delivered by our young master.

HALKA

(mechanically repeating)
A blow delivered by our young master,
And my friends no longer know me,
A gentle, wounded bird.

Hear the sorrows of the dove, Enticed, then taken by the falcon, First caressed, then torn to pieces, Left to die, her heart still beating. Ruthless falcon, why so cruel To a helpless dove?

CHORUS

Weep for poor deluded Halka, Lost in fog and fantasy. Bewildered and shaken, She wanders in the dark.

JONTEK

Yes, a tale too often told. Lowly peasant meets the gentry. Johnny, not without ambition, Chasing wealth, prestige and pedigree, Discards the servant girl.

HALKA

No! He's made no wicked bargain with the devil!

CHORUS

In simple words we can understand; Not a request, but a command. How did it happen, and what went on?

JONTEK

I heard, I saw.

CHORUS

Then tell us all!

JONTEK

We arrived on the day he announced his betrothal. At once, seeing Halka,
He drew her aside,
To lead her along with silken caress
And calm reassurance,
Said not to worry and all would be well ...
His lies I could not bear to hear.
Bursting with anger, I spoke my mind.
Like thieves, he drove us both from the castle.

CHORUS

No! Like common thieves, he drove you away.

HALKA, in a trancelike state
My cruel falcon, you're here again
To entice me, then betray me – no, no, no!
Toward the highest of the mountains
Flies the dove, but white no longer.
Stained with blood, her wings are red,
And as she slowly nears the summit,
Flapping bravely, harder, harder,
She falls to earth like a heavy stone.

CHORUS

Dire the fate bound to fall when the hunter spots the prey. For poor folk no mercy, and none to shed a tear. None to heed or listen to cries of despair. For the poor, none to listen and none to shed a tear. No one to listen, no one to care,

No one to heed or hear and show compassion. (One of the mountaineers spots a black raven flying past, and points it out to the others with alarm)

A raven! An omen! A message from the Almighty!
A black raven gives warning from on high.
(A deadly message from the Almighty, sent from on high.)
A deadly omen!

HALKA

The dove must die!

CHORUS

Dire the fate that decrees the gentle dove must die, Torn apart at the pleasure of the cold, cruel falcon. No haven for the girl squeezed dry and tossed away, None to hear the cry of the mangled prey. None to hear her call of despair.

A fatal omen from on high
Warns of misfortune, doom and destruction.
Deaf to her pleading, a man we need not name,
This man alone bears all the blame.
The wedding party! Arriving!
(All leave. Conrad returns, in pensive mood.)

ACT IV

Jontek is sadly resigned to the empty life he foresees without Halka. "Through the old man's withered heart the winter wind blows cold." Though he despises Johnny, he does not want to see him abandon her. There is a slim chance that the bride-to-be will recognize Halka as the overwrought girl who inter-rupted the betrothal party. Seeing her pitiable plight, inflicted by Johnny, she may have second thoughts, even at this late date, about marrying a man of such questionable character.

Halka remains lost in a daze of fog and fantasy, made thicker yet by a new and crushing grief: her baby has miscarried. When she sees the bride and groom enter the church, followed by the villagers, her anger explodes. In crazy, blind fury, she tries to burn down the church. But the rage, like the fire, is quickly extinguished. She comes to her senses, only to recognize that she has nothing left. She has lost everything. Sorrow has drained her heart of anger. Yet one recourse remains, the one thing still that cannot be taken away from her.

JONTEK

Poor, grieving Halka! She insisted on coming here Despite the pelting tears shed already, Pierced to the heart by lies and betrayal. When she sees the married couple Her wound will reopen.

O God of those that suffer!
On her let shower compassion,
And heal her wounded heart.
My own efforts to console her come to nothing.
(A piper appears and plays a merry tune)

JONTEK

Why so perky? Tell me, piper, What makes your tune so merry?

PIPER

Sir, a wedding celebration. I'm to play ...

JONTEK

Ah, for me the news is bitter; A sweeter tune I'd find more tasty.

PIPER

From the homeland ...

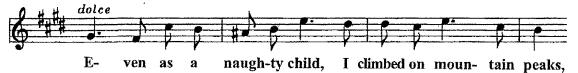
JONTEK Of fields and mountains!



Through the fir trees breez-es whis-per, rip-ened fields turn gold;

Through the old man's withered heart The winter wind blows cold.

Until lately, immune to sorrow, Prone to neither lend nor borrow. Now I'm torn apart by Halka, Daily torn apart.
Though I love in vain, Still my heart goes out to you; I mourn for you alone.



Seeking hidden treasures of the wild -- A prize to give my queen.
I found the most reclusive flowers,
By careless eyes unseen.

From village fairs I brought you trinkets Envied by disdainful girls, Rings and bracelets made of colored glass --For us they passed for pearls.

Proud and free, I envy no one; Nonetheless, I'm only human. For the unmanly tears I've shed, Dear Halka, you're to blame!

As the bud becomes a blossom, As the egg becomes a swan, Halka, you've become a wonder I can only gaze upon.

Time is moving, all is changing, Nothing stays the same. For the bounder you preferred My dream went down in flame. Life goes on and all's forgiven; You are still my earth and heaven. To relieve your weight of sorrow I would walk through fire, Through the raging fire.

Halka, my beloved, Gladly I would walk through fire, To relieve your sorrow I would walk through fire,

(The piper leaves, playing a sadder tune. Halka runs down from the hillside, followed by women and mountaineers who try to restrain her. Jontek goes toward her, but she avoids him and sits on a stone by herself. Daniel enters and addresses the crowd.)

DANIEL

Such a warm and welcome turnout
On a joyful, glad occasion.
Give a rousing long ovation
For the master and his lady.
(The crowd responds with a distinct lack of enthusiasm

TENORS

We will carry out instructions
Do our duty just as ordered.
Do exactly as told when the two arrive,
Cry "Hosanna", give it all we have,
Even look alive.

BASSES

We will play our part as ordered. If we must, we'll do our duty To the master and his lady.

SOPANOS

We will carry out instructions, Do our duty just as ordered, Evviva! Hallelujah!

ALTOS

We will play our part, do our duty as ordered; Cry "Evviva" and "Hosanna" For the master and his lady.

STOLNIK, *entering* What a joyful day, dear children!

CHORUS, *submissively* We are pleased, sir, to do you honor..

JOHNNY, *entering* Welcome all, you grateful people!

CHORUS, *still submissively* Oh, so grateful! If you say so ...

JOHNNY, startled (God Almighty! Halka here!)

SOFIA, *entering* Is something wrong, dear?

CHORUS

Humbly, we extend a greeting Summoned here together, Wishing you a fruitful marriage Seasoned by fair weather.

DANIEL

Why this welcome so half-hearted? Are you lazy or in pain? How about some enthusiasm? Try again!

CHORUS

To oblige the noble lady, Play along and raise your voices. Show that everyone rejoices: Show that all applaud, raise your voices: Cry hosanna! Hallelujah!

SOFIA

(noticing Halka on the sidelines) Mid the cheering, why is she so despondent?

CHORUS

She grieves for good reason.

SOFIA

Her sorrow seems overwhelming.

CHORUS

A local girl, deceived and forsaken.

JOHNNY

(Spared! She does not recognize her.)

HALKA

Lost and bewildered, I wander. I call but hear no answer. In vain I've been searching all over; My falcon has flown away.

Father of all, I'm one of your children.
Father on high, watch over me now;
Merciful God, in tears I pray;
Help me survive this most cruel blow.
Help me survive this cruelest blow.
O Lord, help your grieving child
Survive this mortal blow. Turn not away.

STOLNIK

Vaguely I seem to remember That girl whose heart had been broken. Betrayed by a two-timing lover --It happened not long ago. I've seen her before, and not long ago.

Father of all, she's one of your children. Help her survive this most cruel blow. Help her survive this cruelest blow. O Lord, help her survive this mortal blow. God of love, turn not away.

SOFIA

Vaguely I seem to remember
That girl whose heart had been broken.
A girl in despair I saw not long ago.
Vaguely, now I remember
That girl whose heart had been broken.
It starts to come back to me now.
Surely I've seen that face before,
Certainly not long ago.

Father of all, she's one of your children. Help her survive this most cruel (cruelest) blow. O Lord, help her survive this mortal blow. God of love, turn not away.

DANIEL

Vaguely I also remember
That girl whose heart had been broken.
Betrayed by a two-timing lover —
It happened not long ago.
Surely I've seen her before,
Certainly not long ago.
Father of all, she's one of your children, etc.

JONTEK

Dear God, let these two remember! Then putting the pieces together, And tasting the fruits of betrayal, There'll be no wedding today. She'll cancel the wedding, and go.

I pray that these two will remember! Then putting the pieces together, And tasting the fruits of betrayal, She'll cancel the wedding, and go. There will be no wedding today. Certainly no wedding today.

Father of all, she's one of your children. Help her survive this most cruel (cruelest) blow. O Lord, help your grieving child Survive this mortal blow. Turn not away.

JOHNNY

Worst of days for it to happen! The past returning to haunt me, It leaves me shattered and shaken; My guilt I cannot ignore.

Guilt and remorse hard to bear. If it would just go away! Though also shattered and shaken. She seems determined to stay.

The past returning to haunt me; For sins of youth I must pay. O Lord, forgive, forgive This cruel, near fatal blow. Turn not away.

BASSES

The pieces now come together.
The pieces at last begin coming together.

TENORS

The pieces are finally coming together.

MEZZI

The pieces are coming together.

SOPRANOS

All's coming together.

CHORUS, united

Halka forsaken! His vows first made and then broken. For her a mortal blow! For someone else (naming no names) he turns away. Father of all, *etc*.

SOFIA, to Johnny

I know I've seen her face before!

JOHNNY, *hugely embarrassed*Of course! How could you not remember? The face of a soul in confusion, The troubled girl who interrupted Our festive betrothal party.

HALKA, to no one

Johnny! My Johnny!

JOHNNY

(Mighty God! You demand stiff payment for sins of youth. Perhaps Sofia will just ignore it ... Better yet, fail to comprehend. We must be off and proceed as planned.)

HALKA

The wounded dove can fly no longer.

SOFIA, to Halka

Child, why are you so unhappy?

JOHNNY, to Sofia

Come, my darling, night is falling; Wedding bells are sweetly calling. We must hurry; night is falling; Wedding bells are sweetly calling To sanctify our holy union Within the house of God.

SOFIA

Pain and grief here cast a shadow.

Dearest, come along, for night is falling;

And wedding bells now calling

Sanctify our perfect love

There in the house of God.

STOLNIK

Pain and grief here cast a shadow. Let us hurry! Night soon will be falling; Wedding bells are sweetly calling To sanctify your love within the house of God.

SOPRANOS & MEZZI

Side by side, may you be blessed With all that life can offer – Years of health and happiness, An early taste of heaven.

TENORS & BASSES

... all life has to offer. (... all life offers) ... happy years of content, an early taste of heaven.

JONTEK, *forcefully* And the pangs of hell!

DANIEL

Which of you ruffians made that remark?

TENORS, BASSES

Not I! Not I!

DANIEL

Peasants, come, you know your places; Two by two, proceed inside. I want contented, smiling faces As you bow and greet the bride. Be bright! Be merry!

CHORUS

We can turn it on as ordered. (Excepting Halka and Conrad, all proceed into the church.)

HALKA, *bitterly*Bright and merry! Bright and merry!

JONTEK

Now you've seen him, you have heard him. Was I right, or was I wrong?

HALKA, again drawing within herself O my Johnny! O my falcon!

JONTEK

Look in there!

(He draws her to the church door and forces her to look inside. Halka lets out a scream of despair.)

CHORUS, from within the church Loving father, God of mercy, Here before your throne we kneel. May the blessed thrive and prosper; May the wounded mend and heal.

HALKA

(as if roused from a dream)
Ah! My baby died of hunger ... slowly of hunger!
I've lost my sweet, little baby.
His mother here ... his father there ...
I see his tiny, helpless arms,
There reaching out and imploring.
His mother here ... his father there ...

Ah! The fiercest birds of prey, the hawks and vultures, Watch over their nestlings ...
And mine lay dying of hunger ...

Cold are your hands, my dear little baby, Your mother not there to wrap you in white. Not there to soothe and lull you to sleep, to eternal sleep ... As cold as ice, your sweet tiny fingers, My little darling!
I'll not be there to lay you down to rest
And lay a flower upon your grave ...

Wait for me in heaven; I'll not be long. Soon I shall hold you again close to me. You'll have your mother before too long.

O cruel man with heart of stone!
From me and our baby you turned away.
Before I die, you, too, will suffer.
Your baby's mother, your rightful wife,
I'll see you pay the penalty.
No shelter will these walls provide.
You lied and cheated. You will burn for that!

You lied and cheated. You will burn for that! (maddened by grief, she gathers up dry twigs and sets fire to them with the little lamp by the church)

CHORUS, within

On this solemn day of marriage, Lord, attend our holy rite: Guide these children on their passage From the dark into the light.

To your true and faithful servants Point the way to peace on earth; To the grieving and tormented, Grant renewal and rebirth.

(Throughout, Halka has stood peering into the church, torch in hand. Upon seeing her faithless love, then Sofia, the innocent cause of her anguish, and especially the compassionate country folk she have befriended her, she covers her eyes, horrified by the atrocity she was on the verge of committing, and throws the torch into the swift flowing river below.)

HALKA

God in heaven! God of love!
Save me! Hold me back!
Lord, have mercy! Hear me call to you!
Save me from rage and despair!
Lord, hear me, hear me call to you!

Sorrow has drained my heart of anger, My baby gone forever. I look ahead and see nothing there; My life and my pain will soon be over. Live on, dear Johnny, no longer mine,
And find happiness with your chosen bride.
Be to her the man once I worshipped.
I die, still true to you alone,
To you alone.
(She plunges into the river down below.)

JONTEK, rushing in frantically Halka! O Halka!

CHORUS

Too late to save her \dots the rushing current \dots icy water \dots Driven mad, she chose to die.

SOFIA, JOHNNY, STOLNIK (emerging from the church) What has happened?

JONTEK

Halka!

CHORUS

Broken-hearted, devastated, she has left us Nevermore to return.

DANIEL

(also emerging from the church)
On this day of jubilation
Celebrate the happy couple!

CHORUS

Celebrate the married couple!

THE END