

**OFFENBACH**

***THE BANDITS***

**English Version by Donald Pippin**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**THE BANDITS:**

Falsacappa, the chief

Fiorella, his daughter

Fragoletto, a local farmer who falls in love with Fiorella and joins the gang.

Old Pietro

Domino, Baravano, Carmagnola, others.

Four young ladies, misled by Falsacappa posing as a pious hermit.

**THE HOTEL STAFF OF THE BORDER INN:**

Pipo, Pipa, and various cooks

**THE EMBASSY FROM MANTUA:**

Compotasso, the Captain, others

**THE ROYAL ENTOURAGE FROM GRENADA:**

The Princess of Grenada

Carlo, her page

Count Gloria Cassis, her spokesman

Pablo, her tutor

Lords and Ladies of no importance

**THE MANTUAN COURT:**

The Prince of Mantua

The Duchess, the Marquise, other court ladies

The cashier

**THE DREAD CARBINEERS**, on night patrol

**NARRATOR: Offenbach! The boulevards, the cabarets of Paris, the glitter of the Second Empire, gaiety, laughter, champagne! What are to think when the lights go up on a desolate mountain landscape? Good Lord, are we in the right theatre? Or the wrong night? Check the program. Offenbach or Moussorgsky?**

**No trace of lavish elegance, nothing but a few rocks -- and we're not talking about diamonds. No dazzling chandeliers, no softly glowing candelabra, but naked torches. No gilded chairs and low silken divans, only a few sawed off tree stumps. Instead of gorgeously clad girls -- or scantily clad as the case may be -- we see one lone man -- rather poorly clad, by the way -- as he listens to the sound of a distant trumpet call, no doubt a signal. The atmosphere is dark and forbidding. Nearby, the sign reads FOR BANDITS ONLY.**

DOMINO:

The call! From down the mountain  
The distant horn I hear.  
So friends, come gather round.  
Come along! Gather round! All clear!

BARBANINO:

Who goes there?

BANDITS: (*from outside*)

Members all of the gang.

BARBANINO:

Then stand and say the password.

DOMINO:

The password, dummies!

BANDITS:

Hand grenade, cannon ball,  
Rifle shot, blunderbuss.

DOMINO:

Let them pass, they're bandit brothers.  
True friends, they're one of us.  
They're bandit brothers all.

BANDITS:

And bandit sisters, too.

Eyes alert, we look and lurk,  
All in the line of daily work.  
Where the forest is dark and lonely,  
There the sign reads FOR BANDITS ONLY..

DOMINO:  
My fellow thug.

CARMAGNOLA:  
Quick, find a hiding place.

DOMINO:  
Why hide?

CARMAGNOLA:  
Out of the way!

BARBANINO:  
You'll explain it when we're done?

CARMAGNOLA:  
There's nothing to explain.  
But if you want some fun,  
Wait and watch.

BANDITS:  
Wait and watch! Wait and watch!

Eyes alert, we look and lurk, etc.

*(Falsacappa, the bandit chief, enters disguised as a hermit, leading a bevy of weary young ladies.)*

FIAMETTA:  
Dear hermit, such a winding way!  
I fear you've led us girls astray  
As we plod only God knows where.

My shoulders ache, my back is sore;  
We've followed you ten miles or more.  
O darling hermit,  
Do confirm it:  
Are we near your place of prayer?

FALSACAPPA:  
The path of virtue we pursue,

A path till now unknown to you.

ZERLINA:

Although no doubt a novelty,  
These higher slopes are not for me.  
Going down I prefer by far.

The climb is long and steep to boot;  
Next time I'll take the easy route.  
O darling hermit,  
Do confirm it:  
Kindly tell where the hell we are.

FALSACAPPA:

The path of virtue we ascend,  
A thorny path without an end.

FIAMETTA:

Have we yet far to go?

ZERLINA:

Darling hermit, just answer yes or no.

OTHERS:

O darling hermit, do confirm it:  
Just answer yes or no.

FALSACAPPA:

*(casting off his hermit cloak)*  
We have arrived!

LADIES:

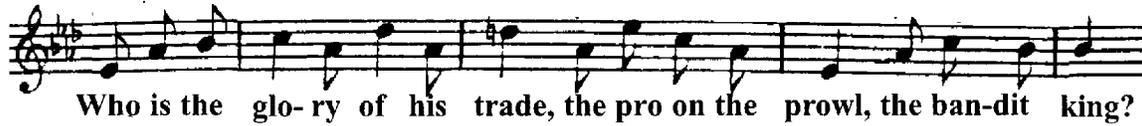
He has played us a trick,  
Led us on in disguise.  
Very smooth, very slick,  
The deceit, oh the lies!  
Oh the dog in disguise!

FALSACAPPA:

Right you are! I am Falsacappa!  
Young ladies, you are quite correct.  
From your surprise  
May I surmise  
A bandit you did not expect?

ALL:  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

FALSACAPPA:



Falsacappa!  
Leader and hero of the raid,  
Eager and out to do his thing?  
Falsacappa!

As he waylays the late wayfarer,  
See the poor devil shake in terror,  
His look of dismay beyond disguise.  
Now on his knees the captive cries:  
This can be none but  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

Who is the brave that serves the fair,  
Ever the prince of courtesy?  
Falsacappa!  
Lending an ear to her despair,  
Lifting the mask for her to see?  
Falsacappa!

Who in the heat and thick of duty  
Pauses to smile and bow to beauty  
Till the dear sweet with lowered eyes,  
Bashfully blushing, softly sighs:  
This can be none but  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

LADIES:  
Have mercy, bandit chief!

MEN:  
All hail, bandit chief!

FALSACAPPA:  
Ladies, no cause for alarm.  
You've captured the bandits with your charm.

Come, we can be friendly,  
Ladies, ladies.

Handle them very gently,  
Maties, maties.  
Go, take a turn, leave me,  
Presto, presto!  
All but my few,  
My true right arm.

LADIES:

Closer the men hover, hover, hover;  
Slyly they look us over, over, over.  
Now they become braver, braver, braver,  
Drawn by the magnet of our charm.

MEN:

We have found the pretty flowers  
And by rights the girls are ours.  
No man of repute would dispute  
That we entitled to share the loot.  
Are we not?

FALSACAPPA:

Not so hot!  
They are guests for the night;  
Due respect shall be shown.  
But should they beckon or invite,  
You're on your own.  
Should they wink or invite,  
You are each on your own.

MEN:

But if they invite,  
We are on our own.

**NARRATOR: So Falsacappa, the bandit chief, has succeeded in luring a bevy of gullible young ladies to his mountain hideout by masquerading as a pious hermit. Sheer brilliance! What imagination! What audacity! Give it a C minus, at best. No wonder that beneath the jovial surface, the spirit of rebellion is festering among the ranks, hungry for glamour, excitement, the big windfall. What do they get instead? Routine stuff. A purse here, a pocket watch there. Is this what the aspiring young bandit dreams of? Where is the challenge? Where is the artistic satisfaction?**

VARIOUS BANDITS:

“Treasure chests . . . gambling casinos . . . bank safes . . . under-ground vaults . . . crown jewels . . . front page headlines . . . la dolce vita . . .”

**NARRATOR: Dream on. For example, it is a known fact that a royal wedding is about to take place between the Prince of Mantua not far away and the Spanish Princess from Grenada. What more could a bandit ask for? Where could he find a better place to display his mastery of the craft? Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Met all rolled into one.**

VARIOUS BANDITS:

“And why ain’t we there right now?”

“Do we gotta wait for an engraved invitation?”

**NARRATOR: Critical eyes have started to turn upon Falsacappa. His wavering admirers, students, disciples, have started to mutter:**

VARIOUS BANDITS:

“No game plan!”

“No vision!”

“How did he get to be the guy on top?”

“What’s he got a brain for if it don’t produce?”

“Who needs him?”

**NARRATOR: Leaving the questions unanswered for the moment, there is one thing that Falsacappa indisputably has to his credit: a daughter that would make any man proud. Trained from infancy, steeped in the long family tradition, we have good reason to believe that Fiorella will raise the banner of banditry to ever greater heights.**

*Enter FIORELLA:*

FIORELLA:



House and home I cannot abide –  
The open sky for me.

When fellow bandits all are sleeping,  
When the night owl appears,  
A constant lookout I am keeping  
For the dreaded carabinieri.

From moonlit woods a crackling rifle shot –  
What can this music mean? Pow, pow, ah!  
Fiorella’s on the scene!  
They call me booty queen,  
The bandit’s daughter, seventeen.

I scamper down the mountain rocks,  
On dusty roads I roam,  
At my glory when danger knocks,  
In heat of hazard most at home.

I may appear a fragile flower,  
But a word to the wise:  
The man who tries to test his power  
Could be in for surprise.

From moonlit woods a crackling rifle shot –  
What can this music mean? Pow, pow, ah!  
Fiorella's on the scene!  
The local pillage queen,  
The bandit's daughter, seventeen.

**NARRATOR: Unlikely as it may seem, Fiorella has come on a sentimental errand: it's Daddy's birthday, and she has a very special present for him, guaranteed to melt a doting father's heart -- her own portrait in which, as a playful touch, she is costumed as a court lady.**

FIORELLA: After all, am I not the local princess?

FALSACAPPA: You'll always be my princess.

**NARRATOR: But there is an ulterior motive behind this touching gift. With it, Fiorella is hoping to soften her father, to prepare him for what is bound to be a blow. The truth is, she is beginning to have doubts . . .**

FIORELLA: I've been thinking hard lately . . . I'm not so sure that a career in banditry is what I really want. Sometimes it seems to me that what we're doing just isn't quite right . . .

**NARRATOR: Who can wonder at Falsacappa's alarm? What parent will not sympathize? No matter how carefully you try to bring up your children, you just never can tell how they're going to turn out.**

FALSACAPPA: I never thought I would see the day when my own daughter would let her old Dad down. But perhaps this is only a passing phase. Maybe a touch of fever. When did you notice the first symptoms?

FIORELLA: Very recently .It started that afternoon, just a week ago, when we went calling on that young farmer and cleaned his house -- so to speak. Such a nice young man . . . So different from anybody else I've ever met . . .

*(The bandits return with a fair-complexioned, gracefully built young man in tow.)*

BANDITS:

We took the rascal by surprise,  
A local farmer, pocket-size.  
Bend over backwards all you can,  
He's hardly what you'd call a man.

FIORELLA:

The boy!

FRAGOLETTO:

The girl!

FIORELLA:

The boy! My agitation I must conceal.

DOMINO:

My friends, no cause for alarm.  
He's here on hold. I've got him on his knees.

FRAGOLETTO:

Sir, why so overbold?  
And why so rude and surly?  
You've got me on my knees?  
I fear you speak too early.  
Excuse me if you please.

*(He nonchalantly throws Domino to the ground.)*

BANDITS: *(rushing forward)*

A snippet of a Samson!

FIORELLA:

*(also rushing forward)*

Touch a hair on his head  
If you dare!

FALSACAPPA:

What a puzzle! What a riddle!  
Not a clue, though I rack my brain.  
Not a clue, not a clue!  
Someone kindly explain  
What a dad should do.

FIORELLA:

Not a puzzle! Not a riddle!  
But a love I cannot contain  
Nor subdue, nor subdue.  
I'll be silent for a little  
To avoid giving pain  
With a bolt from the blue.

FRAGOLETTO:

Not a puzzle! Not a riddle!  
But a love I cannot contain  
Nor subdue, nor subdue.  
And my darling in the middle,  
So alert, so humane,  
As I saw, as I knew.

FALSACAPPA:

I am baffled . . . and bewildered . . .

FIORELLA:

I have fallen for the farmer . .

FRAGOLETTO:

How I worship my Fiorella!

BANDITS:

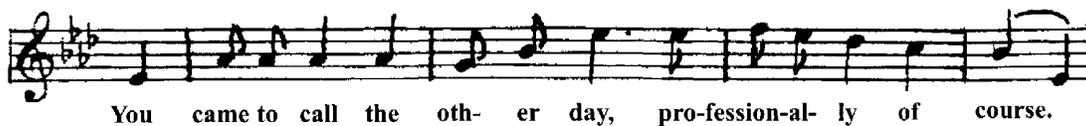
Something odd to say the least is going on.

FRAGOLETTO: Sir, your men have done a foolish thing. They have gone to a lot of trouble to drag here a fellow who was already coming of his own accord.

FALSACAPPA: Say, don't I know you? Aren't you the young farmer we dropped in on last week?

FRAGOLETTO: That's me! And I come now to return your visit . . .

FRAGOLETTO:



I greeted you with some dismay,  
And a smile I had to force.

But then your daughter came in view,  
And a sudden thrill ran through me.  
Wholeheartedly I welcomed you  
For having brought her to me.

We were both then well satisfied.  
You had plenty to plunder  
While my own eyes were occupied  
In amazement and wonder  
At your wonderful daughter,  
Your wonderful, wonderful, wonderful daughter.

How well you knew your way about!  
So thorough in your stealing!  
My house and barn you emptied out,  
Leaving me the floor and ceiling.

My father's watch, my feather bed,  
My silver plate and platter,  
My Sunday suit -- you went ahead,  
You got the lot -- no matter.

We are both now well satisfied.  
You have plenty of plunder,  
And while you were thus occupied,  
I was stealing your thunder,  
Your wonderful, wonderful, wonderful daughter.

**NARRATOR: This sounds like the start of a promising courtship, but don't get your hopes up. Frankly, I'm not at all sure that Fragoletto is the sort of son-in-law Falsacappa is looking for. An honest, hard-working farmer? Sounds like trouble in the offing. Better to play it safe. Stick to outlaws for in-laws. But the clever young farmer has already foreseen both the problem and the solution.**

FRAGOLETTO: Simple. I'll join the gang.

**NARRATOR: You have to admire his adaptability, but Falsacappa is still hesitant . . .**

FALSACAPPA: Not so fast, young man. A gang has standards to maintain. We can't accept just anybody who wants to be a crook. We look for talent. If you want to be one of us, you'll have to prove yourself.

**NARRATOR: And so while the gang follows the young man out to test him in performance, to audition him, as it were, old Pietro is ordered to remain**

**with Fiorella, to entertain her with crime stories, hoping thereby to reawaken her girlish enthusiasm.**

FIORELLA: Very well, good old Pietro. Do as my father says. Tell me a wicked story.

PIETRO: Aha, here's one. Let's see if I can remember it. . . Once upon a time there lived an incorruptible politician . . . *(long pause)*

FIORELLA: Yes? And so?

PIETRO: That's it!

FIORELLA: Why, you cynical old geezer! I hope you didn't make that up yourself.

PIETRO: Certainly not! I stole it. From that remorseless old sinner – what was his name? Oh, yes! Monsieur Voltaire.

*(The Prince of Mantua enters, evidently lost, and immediately notices Fiorella.)*

PRINCE: What a beautiful girl! Bella, bella, bellissima!

FIORELLA: What a nice looking young man!

PIETRO: *(aside)* A young man indeed. And judging by his handsome suit and aristocratic bearing, I would bet that this slender youth carries a fat purse.

PRINCE: Pardon me, friend. I seem to have lost my way. Turning this way, turning that way. Could you kindly direct me back to civilization?

PIETRO: Sir, I would like nothing better, but the way is rather complicated. Without a guide, you will soon be more lost than ever. What's more, I've heard it said that there are bandits in the neighborhood.

PRINCE: Bandits!

PIETRO: Don't be alarmed. But be careful. Wait here. I'll go see if I can find you a guide.

PRINCE: How very kind of you, to go to so much trouble for a stranger.

PIETRO: Service to others, one of life's privileges. But I warn you, young man. Do not try to go it alone. I'll be back in no time.

PRINCE: *(looking at Fiorella)* Take lots of time. Waiting will be a pleasure.

PIETRO: *(to Fiorella)* Keep him here. Entertain him. Don't let him slip away.  
*(to Prince)* I shall return, sir, just as fast as these old legs can carry me. *(Exit)*

PRINCE: How romantic! I wonder if I'm dreaming. A lonely mountain-side, a lovely girl, a chance meeting . . .

FIORELLA: Sir, you are in for a rude awakening. You must not wait. Go immediately. You've not a second to lose.

PRINCE: Leave, before that kind old gentleman returns?

FIORELLA: Are you so foolish as to think that this kind old gentleman will return alone?

PRINCE: Certainly not! He went to fetch a guide.

FIORELLA: Naïve, innocent youth! Sir, look at me.

PRINCE: I've been doing nothing else, ever since I stumbled upon you.

FIORELLA: And just what do you take me for?

PRINCE: No doubt, the prettiest, daintiest little shepherdess that ever graced a mountain side.

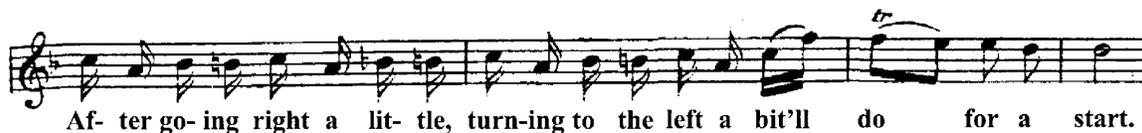
FIORELLA: Thanks a lot. But think again. Take another look.

PRINCE: If you are not a shepherdess, who are you? And what are you doing in this remote part of the world?

FIORELLA: You heard the old man speak of bandits in the neighborhood. My father is their chief. And I am the child of my father. Now do you get the picture? Are you aware that you are in grave danger? You must run!

PRINCE: Like a scared rabbit? Like a coward?

FIORELLA: Like an intelligent man. Listen carefully . . .



Stay along the mountain summit  
Till the path begins to plummet –  
That's the easy part.

Take the bridge across the river  
Heading to the valley, give or  
Take a mile or so.  
Pass the cemetery  
And you've not so very, very  
Far to go.

Take my advice, not my hand:  
You must run to beat the band.  
If you stay, if you stall,  
You may never leave at all.  
Not at all! Not at all!

Down the mountain through the meadow  
Toward the village straight ahead, Oh,  
Then turning west,  
Passing by the apple orchard,  
Stopping when your feet are tortured,  
Time out for rest.

When recovered, do continue.  
Eager still to save your skin, you  
Won't turn around.  
Hurry, hurry, go it!  
You'll arrive before you know it,  
Safe and sound.

Danger and death hover about.  
Be off, be gone!  
Sir, must I be stern?  
Run, before your time runs out.  
Soon dear Papa will return,  
And I would hardly recommend  
For him to find you here, my friend.  
Make a dash! Make a dash! Ah!

Hurry now before we spot 'em!  
Down the mountain to the bottom  
Head for the plain.  
Pass the patch of elderberry;  
When you see the monastery  
Veer left again.

Pass the cattle crossing; that 'll  
Take you to Seattle –

Oh, never mind when!  
Hurry, hurry, go it!  
You'll arrive before you know it, Amen!

BOTH:

So be off and away!  
(I am off and away!)  
No debate, no delay.  
Better not hang about.  
Better not delay!  
On your way! (On my way!)

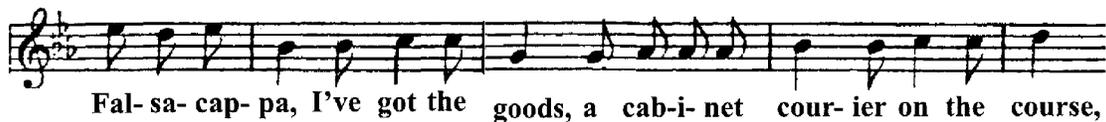
*(The Prince runs off.)*

**NARRATOR:** Such a lapse on Fiorella's part is hard to explain, much less condone -- allowing, actually assisting, a young man to escape. Daddy is not going to like it one little bit.. Fortunately, there is an immediate distraction. Fragoletto, the fragile looking young farmer, returns a hero! Lion, fox and tiger combined. In his grasp, a shaken up courier from the court of Grenada on his way to Mantua.

BANDITS:

What a hero, one of a kind!  
Lion, fox and tiger combined.  
Though compact, in fact rather small,  
He's the biggest bandit of all.  
Nimble, nervy, never flustered or afraid,  
Bandits ever are born and not made.

FRAGOLETTO:



Galloping through the lonely woods,  
He spurs and whips his haggard horse.

Carefully hid behind the hedges,  
I leap and take him by surprise.  
Pulling him down, I grab the wretch's  
Head and hold it in a vise.

Loath to alarm the man unduly,  
I push him back and pull a gun.  
Curling a lip, he answers coolly:  
Sir, it's six, I have to run.  
Sorry, I simply have to run.

Then I start to wonder:  
Have I made a social blunder?  
Should I, on the other hand,  
Join the boys of the band?

I rebounded, sir;  
I knew 'twas all for her.  
My heart began to soar  
And I was hesitant no more.  
Love alone provided the answer;  
I knew exactly what to do.

So I grab his grip and wallet;  
Both of them now I bring to you.  
Any critic would have to call it  
A promising debut.

Taking a tumble, now he stumbles –  
Clic a clac, I crack the whip.  
Quicker and faster, I'm the master,  
Clic a clak, I grab the grip.

**NARRATOR: The courier's valise indeed has got the goods -- not jewels, not gold, but something even more precious: the idea that Falsacappa has been grasping for. The idea of a lifetime! This one should make bandit history.**

**While it would be premature to divulge it in its entirety, here's the back-ground: mention has been made of a royal wedding soon to take place between the Prince of Mantua and the Princess of Grenada. Such matches are seldom the result of irresistible romantic passion, but something rather more along the lines of a corporate merger. And here as well, the issue usually boils down to money: how much can the girl's father cough up?**

**However, in this particular case, because of complications that we will happily explain on written request, the traditional roles are reversed. The Prince of Mantua is to do the paying. Upon delivery of the Princess, C. O. D., you might say, the Spaniards are to receive three million gold pieces. She and her entourage even now are headed towards the border, where a delegation from Mantua will meet them at the Border Inn and escort them to the Mantuan court where her fiancé and the hoard of gold are waiting.**

**Through this cacophony of detail, the bandits hear one clear, resonant note -- three million gold pieces, a call to action. Surreptitiously**

laying the groundwork for future maneuvers, Falsacappa deftly substitutes the portrait of Fiorella – costumed, you may remember, as a court lady - - for that of the Spanish princess and sends the courier quivering on his way to the court of Mantua.

Time to celebrate! Three million in the offing, plus the triumphant initiation of Fragoletto into the gang. All is well, except for that distant but ominous sound of tramping boots, those pesky carabinieri, the night patrol, who make it so difficult for a bandit to do what comes naturally.

BANDITS:

Prepare a grand celebration;  
The hand of friendship we extend.  
Welcome the man of dedication!  
Latin alone will serve the occasion:  
Dignus, dignus est intrare.

DOMINO:

Proceed, receive our newest candidate!  
He's proved himself a worthy friend.

FALSACAPPA:

Never neglecting a custom of old,  
Pour out the wine, the liquid gold.  
Here on the rocks we celebrate  
Those that embrace the bandit state.

BANDITS:

A worthy friend! A worthy friend!  
Prepare a grand celebration, etc.

FALSACAPPA:

Let us begin the swearing in,  
A tie that binds through thick and thin.  
Repeat the terms, my pretty chick,  
By which he swears by oath to stick.

FIORELLA:

The by-laws of our trade demand it;  
You must obey and follow through.  
Your three-year tenure as a bandit  
You have the option to renew.

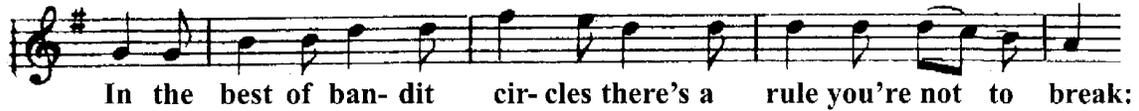
FRAGOLETTO:

This I swear to.

FIGURELLA:

Now before us kneel.  
Here's a cloak of black,  
Here's a sword of steel.  
Here's your rifle back.  
(Ah! So sweet as he swore!  
Never before have I enjoyed  
A ceremony more!)

FALSACAPPA:



When a man of honor burgles,  
Fifty-fifty on the take.  
Never stoop to hoard or hog it  
When you pick a purse or pocket.

FIGURELLA & FIGURELLA.

Pearl and diamond, gold and silver –  
What's it for if not to rob?  
Made to plunder, made to pilfer,  
Made to give the gang a job.

FIGURELLA:

As you go about your duties  
You will meet with quite a few  
Willing wives and budding beauties  
With an eye for stealing you.  
Swear before capitulating  
You'll remember one who's waiting.

FIGURELLA & FIGURELLA.

Out to plunder, out to pilfer,  
You must give your heart to me,  
Dearer far than gold or silver  
And it's absolutely free.

FIGURELLETTA:

Starting out on new employment,  
Yes, I have to be sincere:  
No, it's not for just enjoyment,  
But for love of you, my dear.  
Though the way is rough and sordid,  
With a kiss am I rewarded.

BANDITS:

Though the way is rough and sordid,  
With a kiss are you rewarded.

FIOR. & FRAG.

Pearl and diamond, gold and silver –  
What is all of that to me?  
Not to plunder, not to pilfer  
Is the heart you get for free.

MEN:

Now for the barrel – take a swallow,  
There will be always more to follow.

FALSACAPPA:

Under the sky  
Drink and get high.

BANDITS:

Under the sky  
Drink and get high.  
Sweet is a kiss and sweet the tune  
Blended beneath the summer moon.  
Come, one and all,  
Drink till you fall.  
Come all, get high,  
Let go, let fly. Ah!

FIORELLA:

Torches flaring  
Light the clearing;  
Lovers pairing  
Slip out of sight.

Fires dwindle,  
Eyes enkindle.  
Red wine flowing,  
We'll keep going,  
Feast and revel all the night.

BANDITS:

Torches flaring, etc.

Sparkle and shine,  
Pour out the wine.

Drink and be glad;  
Live up, go mad.  
Nectar of night under the moon!  
How soft the air, how sweet the tune!  
Glitter and glow,  
Follow the flow.

PIETRO:

From afar! You can hear . . .  
Sounding from below . . . be still . . . be still . . .  
The carabinieri! Their helmets,  
Their helmets of steel catch the light.

FALSACAPPA:

The night patrol!

BANDITS:

A note of chill!

FALSACAPPA:

I hear the distant tread of boots.

BANDITS:

The boots!

FALSACAPPA:

The boots! I hear the beat, the beat of the boots,  
Of the boots, of the boots, of the boots.  
The carabinieri are on the way!

I fear the beat, the beat of the boots,  
Of the boots, of the boots, of the boots.  
Police are out to hunt the prey.

BANDITS:

I hear the beat, the beat of the boots, *etc.*

FRAGOLETTO:

As there is bound to be a clash,  
Trust me, I'll fight.

FALSACAPPA:

Stay mum, my boy; not so rash.  
Stay out of sight,  
Disperse, retreat.

Later on we'll show our manly stuff.  
There is a time to bluster and bluff  
And also a time to be discreet.  
Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet!

BANDITS:

*(pianissimo!)* We hear the beat, the beat of the boots, etc.  
Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet!

*(As the bandits disperse, a chorus of carabinieri crosses the stage.)*

CARBINEERS: *(speaking in rhythm)*

They pay us for keeping the peace;  
The dives and the dens we police.  
We're ever on the trail of crime,  
But 'tis our most unhappy fate  
To arrive every time, every time  
One tad too late, always too late! *(Exeunt)*

DOMINO:

The rounds I trust for now are over.  
Our style for a moment they were cramping.

FALSACAPPA:

Retreat, again go undercover.  
I hear a second troop come tramping.  
Again the beat!

OTHERS:

Retreat, retreat!

*(The carabinieri cross the stage from the other side.)*

CARBINEERS:

They pay us for keeping the peace. etc.

BANDITS:

No more the beat, the beat of the boots.  
The car ---

FALSACAPPA:

Be quiet! Quiet till we hear  
Their steps recede . . . disappear.  
Sing, but keep it low,  
Piano, piano, pianissimo . . .

BANDITS:

No more the beat, the beat of the boots, etc.  
They have gone away!  
Torches flaring, *etc.*  
Embers glowing, red wine flowing,  
We'll keep going  
All the night.

ACT TWO

**NARRATOR:** In Act One we were introduced to the hopes, the dreams, the aspirations of the bandits. Act Two shows them in action, as they are catapulted into the bigtime, international circuit. No more piddling local engagements. The scene is the Border Inn, which our modest French authors have placed on the border of Italy and Spain. This is the focal point where the various forces are to come together, or collide as the case may be.

To review the situation: a delegation from Mantua is due to arrive from the East, meet the princess of Grenada, arriving from the West, and escort her with her Spanish retinue to the Mantuan court, where the Spaniards are to collect three million gold pieces in exchange for the Princess. In modern currency, that's about ninety million dollars – a trifling sum to the proud CEO of today, but enough to grab the attention of a bandit intent on furthering his career. Not to suggest that there's any connection.

The scheme is fourfold – and here I would suggest total concentration. First, by posing as starving beggars, the bandits will gain access to the hotel, take the staff by surprise, overpower them, lock them up in the pantry, take over the hotel, and posing as innkeepers, be ready to greet the Mantuans when they arrive. Then they will overpower the Mantuans, lock them up in the cloak room, don their costumes, and posing as Mantuans, be ready to greet the Spanish Princess with her entourage. Then they will overpower the Spaniards, lock them up in their various chambers, and posing as Spaniards, with Fiorella in the starring role of the princess, proceed majestically to the court of Mantua and claim the three million. Simple as that. What could go wrong?

Little knowing what awaits them, Pipo, the innkeeper, and his staff are in a dither of excitement at the honor of entertaining not one but two distinguished clienteles expected to arrive any minute from East and West. They are only slightly disconcerted when a grungy horde of beggars shows up first.

**Incidentally, what with the comings and goings of so many different groups -- hotel staff, beggars, bandits, Mantuans, Spaniards, Carbineers -- you may think that you see the same person more than once.**

COOKS:

Now the ovens all are lit;  
Chicks are turning on the spit.  
On the stove the kettle purrs,  
Ready for the customers.  
All with hearty appetite  
Shall be welcome here tonight.

PIPO:

Listen, cooks who beat and bake,  
Tonight will either make or break.  
Folk are due from West to East  
Who will expect the best at least.

COOKS:

And they will get our best at least.  
Now the ovens all are lit, etc.

*(A group of mangy presumed beggars staggers in. Alert observers may recognize familiar faces.)*

BEGGARS: *(singing in canon)*

Pity those that hunger –  
Spare a crust of bread,  
Just a tiny crust of bread.  
I can go no longer,  
I am nearly dead.  
I am nearly, nearly dead.  
Facitate caritatem.  
Date panem, date panem.

**NARRATOR: Step one of the grand scheme is easily and gracefully accomplished. The hotel staff is safely stashed away in the pantry . . .**

FALSACAPPA: And we are well on our way to the three million.

CARMAGNOLA: Not to mention any other little trifles that we manage to pick up along the way.

FALSACAPPA: Asses! Amateurs! So that's your idea? Picking pockets, stealing watches, snatching trinkets and handkerchiefs? For shame! We are about

to become courtiers, nobility, men of polish and dignity. We do not stoop to petty pilfering.

CARMAGNOLA: You mean go for the gold!

FALSACAPPA: That's it! Think large! One should steal according to ones position in society. Fiorella, my daughter, you are well aware that everything depends on your cooperation. (*dotingly*) Look at her! Who else could pass for a Spanish princess? Here is your chance to make up for the weakness you displayed yesterday afternoon, allowing that young gentleman to escape. We'll overlook it this time, but watch your step. Today we're counting on your utmost effort.

FIGORELLA: And if I consent to be the hub of this great wheel, what do you offer me in return?

FALSACAPPA: Ah, child of my own blood! Just like her old man: what's in it for me? That girl has a head on her shoulders. (*magnanimously*) What do you say to five per cent?

FIGORELLA: Really, father!

FALSACAPPA: (*hastily*) Sorry, ten per cent. Fifteen!

FIGORELLA: Father, you don't understand. I want more than that, much more! (*seeing his alarm*) I'm not talking about money.

FALSACAPPA: (*vastly relieved*) Ah, in that case I see no problem! You shall have it. Name it, my dear. What do you want?

FIGORELLA: (*looking at Fragoletto*) Him!

FALSACAPPA: That little twerp?

FIGORELLA: He's big enough for me. (*as an after thought*) Give the fifteen per cent to him, and then give him to me.

PIETRO: Aha! Child of your own blood! She's your daughter all right.

FRAGOLETTO: And as soon as we find a notary, we know just what to say.

FIGORELLO & FRAGOLETTO

“O man of law,  
Do not withdraw,  
Dear not'ry, stay!  
We beg on bended knee.  
Sir, hear us out,

For 'tis about  
A situation you can remedy.  
Dear not'ry, do but tarry . . .  
You see how necessary . . .  
We're in a situation  
That you can remedy."  
Pst pst pst pst . . .

"Sad to say,  
Not today.  
Later on you can marry.  
Sorry, I'm  
Short of time  
And must hasten on my way."

CHORUS:

Not'ry, stay  
Anyway.  
Though we may seem old fashioned,  
For two hearts so impassioned  
There is danger in delay.  
I fear two loving hearts so hot  
Could start a fire on the spot.

FIOR. & FRAG.

"Like hand in glove  
Are we in love,  
And you can see 'twill hardly do to wait.  
Should you refuse,  
We simply choose  
To seek a shady nook to celebrate.

And there we two together  
Shall bill and coo together,  
And what we do together  
One need not translate.  
Muz muz muz muz (*kissing sound*)

If you're kind, if you're wise,  
Our delights you'll condone;  
If you are not made of stone,  
You will smile and sympathize."

CHORUS:

Go ahead, get them wed.  
Though it may seem old fashioned,

Even hearts so impassioned  
Settle for the wedding bed.  
I fear two loving hearts so hot  
Could start a fire on the spot.

FIOR. & FRAG.

“All signed and sealed,  
So clear the field.  
Can you not see we want to be alone?  
Your work is done,  
So kindly run;  
We now can manage, thank you, on our own.

For you ’twill be no trouble  
To find another couple,  
And now that we are married,  
We are on our own.”  
Ha ha ha ha!

CHORUS:

Notary, take your fee;  
There is no need to tarry.  
After two lovers marry  
You can leave them on their own.  
No further need to linger on,  
So hurry, hurry, sir, be gone!

**NARRATOR: And so the new hotel staff set about their duties to get the hotel ready to receive.**

BANDITS:

Trust to us! All is well,  
For we now understand it:  
We’re to show how the bandit  
Runs a luxury hotel.

CARMAGNOLOA: Chief! They’re here! The party from Mantua, coming to meet the Princess. First to arrive, just as we expected.

FALSACAPPA: Then we’ll want the entire staff on hand to give them a proper greeting. Come on, gang, Let’s show them what old country hospitality is all about.

FRAGOLETTO:

Come out, you cooks! The staff as well.

We want the kitchen personnel.

BANDITS:

*(emerging clad as kitchen help)*

Upon command  
Are we at hand  
All clad in new attire,  
No longer crooks,  
We're pastry cooks  
That poke and tend the fire.  
If supper's burnt  
It's not our fault  
For we have learned  
To come when called.

FALSACAPPA: Well, troupe, we got through the practice warm-up. Now the stage is yours. You know the script. No need for a prompter. Get into your roles and let's see if you can pass for the real thing.

BANDITS:

The real thing! The real thing!  
Here we'll play the underling,  
Make 'em believe we are the goods,  
Not your standard highway hoods.

*(The delegation from Mantua enters, headed by the Baron of Compotasso and the captain.)*

COMPOTASSO:

A staff most sinister looking!  
I dread to sample their cooking.  
This motley crew I would dub  
Barely human, possibly sub.

BANDITS:

The real thing! The real thing!  
Here we'll play the underling,  
Make 'em believe we are the goods,  
Not your standard highway hoods.  
Make 'em believe! Make 'em believe!

COMPOTASSO:

We are sent here by state decree  
Upon our royal master's order.  
You are both to go, says he,  
To meet the Princess at the border.

CAPTAIN:  
Meet the Princess at the border.

COMPOTASSO:  
How to receive her *comme il faut*,  
What are the two parts necessary?  
The civil element must go  
To counteract the military.

CAPTAIN:  
I am the military.

COMPOTASSO:  
Behold the military.

BANDITS:  
The military! The military!

COMPOTASSO:  
So now you know the brilliant mind  
Behind our royal master's order,  
And that is why we come combined  
To meet the Princess at the border.

By sending both, as you can see,  
Our master displayed his talents:  
We gratify the eye, says he,  
And send a brain along for balance.

The perfect pair, he winking said,  
And I believe he reasoned thusly:  
To harmonize with an egghead,  
We need a basso big and musc'ly.

CAPTAIN:  
I am the beefy basso.

COMPOTASSO:  
Behold the beefy basso.

BANDITS:  
A beefy basso! A beefy basso!

COMPOTASSO:

So now you know the brilliant mind  
Behind our royal master's order,  
And that is why we come combined  
To meet the Princess at the border.

FALSACAPPA: And so I have the honor of addressing? . . .

COMPOTASSO: His Excellency, the Baron of Compotasso, of Mantua.

FALSACAPPA: (*indicating Pietro*) Then may I introduce? . . .

COMPOTASSO: Ah, Pipo, the innkeeper, I presume.

PIETRO: You presume? Listen, kiddo, let's get this straight. I'm Pipo, you can check my credentials. Pipo the innkeeper. You don't believe me? Hey, tell this guy who I am.

BANDITS: (*variously*) You're Pipo. Sure he's Pipo. Ha, ha, ha! Who says he's not? Pipo the innkeeper. Good old Pipo.

FALSACAPPA: A sensitive man, as you can see, sir, but no doubt Pipo the innkeeper.

COMPOTASSO: Well, I'm glad we cleared that up. Signor Pipo, perhaps you would be so kind as to accommodate . . .

BARBAVANO: (*rushing in*) Chief! Chief! They are here! The Princess! With her embassy from Grenada.

FALSACAPPA: Where are they now?

BARBAVANO: Right on my heels!

FALSACAPPA: Then we've no time to lose. Inside, everyone! Come along! Our doors are open. Welcome to the Border Inn. Step on it!

COMPOTASSO: Your hospitality is appreciated, but . . .

FALSACAPPA: We'll talk about it inside. Let's get moving. You, sir, this way! Through the door.

COMPOTASSO: But as we have come expressly to meet the Princess, would it not be more courteous . . .

FALSACAPPA: You can meet her inside. Come along! I said inside! Hurry up! Lunch is served!

COMPOTASSO: But signor!

FALSACAPPA: Let's not get nasty.

BANDITS:

On your toes! Adios!  
Time to take a walk.  
You'd better beat  
A quick retreat,  
Without back talk.

COURTIERS:

Why so tough,  
Rude and rough?  
Positively gross!  
Coercing us.  
How scandalous!

BANDITS:

On your toes! Adios!  
Be off, hurry up, on your toes!  
*(shoving them off as the Spaniards enter)*

SPANIARDS:



Your walls and towers slowly vanish  
As we approach the new frontier.

CARLOS:

Oh, beloved Princess, must we be parted?  
You alone I'll always adore!

PRINCESS:

Forced to marry, I am sad, broken hearted,  
Losing you for one I abhor.

GLORIA CASSIS:

Far away, your home lies behind you;  
You arrive in search of a new.  
As you enter, let me remind you  
You have now not one land, but two.

Strange and unfamiliar the setting;  
Rocky and rough the road you pursue.  
Nonetheless you'll not be forgetting  
That a Spaniard stays ever true.

Your true Spaniard you always can spot  
By the panache,  
By the flash and the flair,  
By the blood that burns sultry and hot,  
And by the song that pours out on the air.  
By the flash, the panache,  
By the flash and the flair.  
So elegant always, elegant always,  
None to compare.

Some are known to swear they are Spanish.  
They are not, whatever they are!  
Castanets they barely can manage,  
And they fumble on the guitar.  
On their cheek the rose starts to wither,  
And the fire has burnt down to ash.  
When their eyes would signal "Come hither!"  
They forget the flair and the flash.

Your true Spaniard you always can spot  
By the panache,  
By the flash and the flair.  
Some that may claim to be Spanish are not!  
Of your spurious Spaniard, beware!  
Where, O where are the flash and the flair?  
So elegant always, elegant always,  
None to compare.

PRINCESS: Are you sure this is the place where we are to be met?

GLORIA CASSIS: Our directions were explicit. And I have followed them to the letter.

PRINCESS: But I see no one here it all.

TUTOR: Nor I, Princess. Not a soul. This is very rude.

PRINCESS: It is no way to treat royalty.

CARLOS: A mockery, an insult to the pride of Spain.

PRINCESS: There, there, my dear. You must not get excited.

GLORIA CASSIS: I shall investigate. Hello! Hello! You in there! Anybody home?

FALSACAPPA: (*emerging from the inn, with Barbavano*) Coming, coming! Just a minute.

BARBAVANO: Like I said, it's the folks from Spain.

PRINCESS: (*with a distinct touch of hauteur*) Yes, signor. We are, as you so charmingly put it, the folks from Spain. Known otherwise as the Princess of Grenada and her royal retinue.

FALSACAPPA: Your Majesty!

GLORIA CASSIS: And am I correct in assuming that you are among the party of dignitaries sent to escort us?

FALSACAPPA: Absolutely correct. Captain of the Carabineers, just come from Mantua. And I've brought a nice little group for you to meet. High class, *crème de la crème*. Like you and me. I have a feeling we're all going to get along just fine. You'll enjoy the Baron . . . the Baron of . . .

GLORIA CASSIS: The Baron of Computasso?

FALSACAPPA: Ah, yes! I see you know the name. But let's see if we can't get some of these nice people out here to say hello. Hey, you inside there . . . Baron of . . . Baron of . . . What was that name again?

GLORIA CASSIS: Computasso.

FALSACAPPA: Of course. Hey, Computasso!

PIETRO: (*appearing*) Computasso, that's me! What's going on out here?

FALSACAPPA: The Embassy from Grenada.

PIETRO: Have you got proof?

FALSACAPPA: That's what they said.

PIETRO: Well, I suppose they ought to know. So, ladies, gentlemen, what can I get for you -- soup, fish, salad? Or would you rather see the menu?

FALSACAPPA: Imbecile! What are you talking about?

PIETRO: Isn't that what the innkeeper is supposed to say?

FALSACAPPA: That was earlier. You're not the innkeeper any longer.

PIETRO: Then who the devil am I?

FALSACAPPA: You're the Baron of . . . Baron of . . . name again, please?

GLORIA CASSIS: Campotasso.

FALSACAPPA: Right you are! The Baron of Campotasso!

PIETRO: Ah, yes, to be sure. What won't I be forgetting next?

GLORIA CASSIS: Allow me to introduce the Princess of Grenada. I am Count Gloria Cassis. This is Pablo, tutor to the Princess. We will be joined by Lords and Ladies of no importance.

PRINCESS: You've left out Carlos, my own, my special page. We are never separated.

CARLOS: Never!

PIETRO: (*severely*) Did you say never?

PRINCESS: (*nearly breaking down*) Never! . . . until now. Oh, my dear! How I wish that Mantua were a thousand miles away!

CARLOS: Fear not. I'll be with you there as well.

FRAGOLETTO: (*appearing with Fiorella*) Princess! You've finally arrived!

FIGORELLA: Your rooms are ready, Princess. Whenever it is your pleasure . . .

PRINCESS: Finally! Two people that look human. I was beginning to despair. Kind sir, young as you are, you must be the innkeeper.

FRAGOLETTO: (*blushing*) Still new on the job.

PRINCESS: And the lovely girl is . . .

FRAGOLETTO: My sweetheart.

PRINCESS: I knew it! I knew it! (*with a touch of mystery*) I always know.

FIGORELLA: Yes, Princess. I am his sweetheart, and he is mine.



FALSACAPPA: We military men are in the habit of following orders without asking questions. My orders are that you are to go to bed immediately upon arrival.

PRINCESS: But this is absurd!

CARLOS: Outrageous!

FALSACAPPA: Let's not get nasty.

BANDITS:

On your toes! Adios!  
Time to take a walk.  
You'd better beat  
A quick retreat,  
Without back talk.

SPANIARDS:

Why so tough,  
Rude and rough?  
Positively gross!  
Coercing us.  
How scandalous!

BANDITS:

On your toes! Adios!  
Be off, hurry up, on your toes!

*(The Spaniards are hustled into the hotel.)*

Not to the trumpet and not the drum,  
Bound for the court the bandits come.  
Safe in our pockets there we'll stash  
All three million, paid in cash.  
Straight to our pockets goes the cash.

FALSACAPPA:

Pietro, you shall play the role of tutor.

PIETRO:

That I can do.

FALSACAPPA:

That you can do.  
And you, my burly bumpkins, I invite  
To play the Lords of no importance.

THREE:  
We'll get it right.

FALSACAPPA:  
You'll get it right.

THREE:  
Expect a nondescript performance.

FORELLA:  
And I?

FALSACAPPA:  
The Princess, dear, who else?

FRAGOLETTO:  
And I?

FALSACAPPA:  
The page for whom she melts.

OTHERS:  
The page!

FORELLA:  
I am a Princess now . . .

FRAGOLETTO:  
And I a courtly page . . .

FORELLA:  
Like people on the stage . . .

FRAGOLETTO:  
To you I make a bow.

FORELLA:  
What a handsome page!

FRAGOLETTO:  
Oh, my lady fair!

FORELLA:  
Are you in love with me?

FRAGOLETTO:  
Yes, Your Majesty!

FORELLA:  
By my hand you swear?

FRAGOLETTO:  
As soon as I'm of age.

FORELLA:  
Oh, my handsome page!

FRAGOLETTO:  
Oh, my lady fair!

OTHERS:  
A charming pair! A charming pair!

FALSACAPPA:  
But now we have no time to spare.

OTHERS:  
A charming pair! A charming pair!

Not to the trumpet and not the drum, *etc.*

GLORIA CASSIS: (*from balcony*)  
Why do you scream? Why do you shout?  
What is the hullabaloo about?

PIETRO:  
Nothing at all. Go to bed!

GLORIA CASSIS:  
What I heard would waken the dead.

PIPO: (*appearing*)  
Help me out! Help me out!

FALSACAPPA:  
Oh, the devil! Take him in hand!

PIPO:  
Help me! Oh, save me from Falsacappa!

GLORIA CASSIS:  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

THREE: (*to Pipo*)  
A word out of you, be ready to die.

PIPO:  
I didn't speak. No, sir! Not I!

SPANIARDS: (*also popping out*)  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!  
Who has dared utter that horrible name?  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!  
Underworld king of notorious fame!

FALSACAPPA:  
Dear Princess, dear Princess!  
Nothing wrong, I assume?  
Why are you here?  
Why do you leave your room?

PRINCESS:  
But surely you heard the commotion.

CARLOS:  
A bandit is out and about.

SPANIARDS:  
Someone has cried, Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

GLORIA CASSIS:  
Are you acquainted with Falsacappa?

FALSACAPPA:  
A monster like Falsacappa?  
Nothing to fear. Go back, I pray.  
Who is the scoundrel, anyway?  
He's certainly not a friend of mine.

BANDITS:  
No, certainly not a friend of mine.

FALSACAPPA:  
Never have seen him, no, never have met him.  
No, how could I possibly ever forget him?

CAMPOTASSO: (*speaking*)  
There he stands!  
It's Falsacappa himself, the bandit chief!

FALSACAPPA:  
A man of peace,  
I shy away from brutal force.  
Nevertheless, for all my pains,  
I am compelled to take the reins.  
Yes, the gentleman is correct;  
The name is one that commands respect.  
I am the hero of the day,  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!  
*(to the bandits)* Do as I say Take'em away!

ALL:  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

FALSACAPPA:  
Until tomorrow late,  
We'll lock them safe inside,  
While we as heads of state  
To Mantua shall ride.

CAMPOTASSO:  
Do not despair, sons and daughters of Spain,  
For in the cellar that stores the champagne  
Are the policemen, superb, disciplined!  
I shall return with the lot, like the wind!

FALSACAPPA:  
So then it's war! That's where we shine.  
Gather round, friends of mine.

BANDITS:  
So then it's war, to end all war!  
Let' em out, clear the door.  
One for all, man to man.  
Viva, viva, Falsacappa!

CAMPOTASSO:  
Here they are! Here they are!

CARBINEERS:  
*(as they stagger out drunk)*  
They pay us for keeping the peace;

The dives and the dens we police, etc.

FALSACAPPA:

The military weave about;  
We'll have to wait till they dry out.

BANDITS:

Tremble, tremble,  
Under cover, overcome.

SPANIARDS:

Tremble, tremble,  
They have got us under thumb.  
Double trouble,  
Double trouble's yet to come.

BANDITS:

Tremble, tremble,  
Tremble for the troublesome.  
Trample, trample,  
Tread upon the troop of 'em.  
See the troop of dread police.

CARBINEERS:

They pay us just to keep the peace.

SPANIARDS:

We'll not be long compelled to wait  
Until they meet their proper fate.

BANDITS:

So off we go to ride in state  
To claim the millions that await.

### ACT THREE

**NARRATOR: All has gone exactly as planned. The pieces have fitted together like clockwork. With impeccable timing, the bandits have done a smooth, professional job and can now proceed as solid citizens – a royal entourage, no less – to the court of Mantua. Here the Prince, whom you may suspect -- this time with good reason –**

of having seen before, awaits the arrival of his expensive bride. He is far from ecstatic. We have already caught a glimpse of her own distress at the approaching marriage which will tear her away from the handsome page she adores. How much greater is the misery at Mantua, where the Prince is about to be torn away from no less than four lovesick ladies.

COURT LADIES:

A delicate dawn, the day's reborn,  
Sweeter yet sadder than before  
Now is the time we ladies mourn  
His very last night as bachelor.

MARQUISE:

A detestable void is life!  
I foresee nothing but long despair.

DUCHESS:

What possessed him to take a wife,  
When we were so willing to share?

MARQUISE:

He's getting married!

DUCHESS:

He's getting married!

PRINCE:

I'm getting married!

LADIES:

He's getting married!  
A delicate dawn, the day's reborn,  
Sweeter yet sadder than before.  
Now is the time we ladies mourn  
His very last night as bachelor.

PRINCE:

A song would pass the time,  
A tale from long ago.  
Though less than sublime,  
I find it apropos.

LADIES:

Whatever song you choose,  
However dull the tune,  
We'll utter ahs and oohs

And probably shall swoon.

PRINCE:

A handsome youth of twenty  
Once ruled upon the throne;  
The ladies of the county  
Had eyes for him alone.

And one among their number  
Who admired him all the more,  
Unto his darkened chamber  
Came knocking at the door.  
Knock knock! Knock, knock!

Open, Prince, the hour is late;  
I adore you now as always.  
How long must a lady wait  
In the cold and empty hallways?

LADIES:

Open, Prince, the hour is late;  
I adore you now as always.  
How long must a lady wait  
In the cold and empty hallways?  
Do hurry, Prince, the hour is late.  
Oh, how long must a lady wait?

PRINCE:

My dear, the Prince responded,  
'Twere best you go away.  
To someone else I'm bonded;  
I married her today.

The die is cast already;  
I've made a lasting vow.  
Well, well, replies the lady,  
I'll return a week from now.  
Knock, knock! Knock, knock!

LADIES:

Open, Prince, the hour is late, *etc.*

**NARRATOR: The stage is set for the arrival of the spurious Spaniards. It would appear that they have only to walk in, present their credentials, hand over the supposed bride and walk out with three million gold pieces.**

**But the bandit's life is not as enviable as you might think. In fact, you might accurately describe it as one damn thing after another. As any environmentalist will tell you, a sound ecology depends upon a delicate balance. Likewise, in order for a bandit to do his best work, he has to have an honest man on the other end of the seesaw. Without this, how can you expect him to get off the ground?**

**Although our friends are due any minute, allow me to introduce the man who handles the purse strings of Mantua. Meet the cashier.**

CASHIER:

I live for love, I live for pleasure;  
Lively ladies I adore.  
The luxuries of life I treasure,  
Always first in line for more.

Made for razzle dazzle,  
I dabble, I dally.  
Living high, the best I buy  
And never mind the bill.

Later on, the hassle,  
The time for the tally.  
Too unpleasant! For the present  
Take it from the till.

Some would look askance;  
As for me, I don't complain,  
For if I had the chance,  
I'd do it all again.

Ah! Ah! Here's the reason why:  
It just so happens I'm that sort of guy.  
Ah! Ah! I'm that sort of guy.

My style of living I've perfected,  
Yet one drawback I foresee:  
My books are bound to be inspected;  
Then it's ball and chain for me.

Finding now my coffer  
So vacant and void,  
The deficit will definitely  
Seem a little queer.

Apologies I offer

If some are annoyed.  
Little doubt they'll take it out  
Upon yours truly here.

That's the way it goes;  
As for me, I don't complain,  
For heaven only knows,  
I'd do it all again.

Ah! Ah! Here's the reason why:  
It just so happens I'm that sort of guy.

**NARRATOR: With mixed feelings, the Mantuan courtiers prepare to greet the innocent, trusting bandits, who arrive starry-eyed, eager as kids on Christmas morning, ready to reach for the stocking.**

*(The courtiers of Mantua make a regal entry, followed by the bandits posing as the royal party from Spain.)*

COURTIERS:

Enter the Princess with her handsome page,  
Her eyes aglow with noble pride.  
Born to command and take the center stage,  
Here she'll reign as a royal bride.

PRINCE: *(recognizing Fiorella)*  
The girl!

FIORELLA: *(recognizing the Prince)*  
The boy!

FRAGOLETTO:

That double cry, what does it mean?  
They're acquainted -- how can it be?  
What's going on behind the scene,  
And why this twinge of jealousy?

BANDITS:

Profit in the pocket!  
Posing as Castellians  
We make off with millions,  
And without a row.

Have 'em hand it over,  
Quick and to the point;  
Then we clear the joint;

See you later, ciao!

COURTIERS: (*eyeing them askance*)

That a royal party!  
Masqueraders, surely,  
Camouflaging poorly,  
Possibly a joke.

Mountebanks and jesters!  
No one even knows them,  
Some might well suppose them  
Coarse and common folk.

PRINCE:

Ah, the rustic beauty!  
Happily I met her  
And became her debtor –  
Thanks to her I'm here.

I cannot but wonder  
At the change of station –  
What a transformation  
In her social sphere!

FIORELLA:

Never mind the money!  
We are courting danger  
When the former stranger  
Stops our escapade.

FRAGOLETTO:

Are the two acquainted?  
How the fellow eyes her!  
Does he recognize her  
As the mountain maid?

FIORELLA:

It's he!

PRINCE:

She, indeed!

FIORELLA:

Oh, father, hear! I pray,  
We must give up the plan,  
Be off and away!

FALSACAPPA:  
My dear, whatever for?

FIORELLA:  
I recognize the man.  
There he stands –  
The man that I protected.

FALSACAPPA:  
Are you so sure?

FIORELLA:  
I know it's he,  
And he also knows it's me.

FALSACAPPA:  
Stay cool and collected.

FIORELLA:  
It's the last thing I expected.

FALSACAPPA:  
Stay collected, stay collected.

BANDITS:  
Profit in the pocket! etc.

COURTIERS:  
That a royal party! etc.

PRINCE:  
Ah, the rustic beauty, etc.

PRINCE: How does it happen that you arrive unescorted? I sent the Baron of Campotasso expressly to meet you.

PIETRO: Campotasso! That's me!

PRINCE: Don't be ridiculous! I know the baron when I see him.

PIETRO: Who says I'm not the Baron of Campotasso?

FALSACAPPA: Idiot! That was yesterday. You're the tutor to the Princess now.

PIETRO: Of course! How could I be so forgetful? You're quite right, sir, my mistake. I'm the Princess to the tutor now.

PRINCE: (This is very strange. She's even prettier than her picture, and yet I would swear that this is the girl I met on the mountain.) And so, my dear, you are the Princess of Grenada?

FIGLIOLA: Well, yes, sir. . . . Yes, of course!

PRINCE: Tell me then, who is presently on the throne in Grenada?

FIGLIOLA: Why, I thought you knew . . . Papa!

PRINCE: (Quick thinking!) And this young man?

FIGLIOLA: He is my page . . . who never leaves my side.

PRINCE: Never?

FIGLIOLA & FIGLIOLA. Never!

PRINCE: (Well, that at any rate corresponds to what I was told. I'll have to bide my time and wait for further developments.)

FIGLIOLA: Your Lordship, I don't wish to appear hasty, but we have an urgent account to settle. Three million gold pieces.

PRINCE: Ah, yes, my cashier is handling that. I am sure he can take care of it to your satisfaction. Perhaps you'd rather be alone with him. So why don't we give your party a brief tour of the palace? This way, Princess. Your new home. I hope it meets your expectations.

*(Exit the duke, followed by Figliola and everyone except the Cashier and Falsacappa.)*

FIGLIOLA: So we are to have a private interview. I suppose you will want to see my credentials.

CASHIER: No offense intended. Merely a technicality. The standard routine. As I expected, the papers seem to be quite in order. I foresee no problem.

FIGLIOLA: Then let's get on with it.

CASHIER: Would a banknote be satisfactory?

FALSACAPPA: I must insist on cash.

CASHIER: Whichever you prefer. But I have a banknote right here, already prepared, made out to you personally, a simple man to man transaction. I put it right here on the table and turn to other business. Such a busy day, so much on my mind. There it is . . . the sum of one thousand francs!

FALSACAPPA: One thousand! That leaves a balance of two million, nine hundred and ninety nine thousand.

CASHIER: A balance of how much did you say? Let me see . . . (Doesn't look good; he hasn't touched the check. Don't tell me he's an honest man.)

FALSACAPPA: I said two million . . .

CASHIER: . . . nine hundred and ninety nine thousand. That's absolutely correct. Our figures agree. One from ten, carry nine. The signore takes an interest in financial affairs? This gives us much in common. Money is such a broad subject. Fascinating, but so complicated!

FALSACAPPA: Let's confine the subject to the three million that you owe me.

CASHIER: Ah, yes, concentration! The only way to get ahead. The path to success! If that's what you want to talk about, let's have a frank discussion. So, I give you three million . . .

FALSACAPPA: That's what I'm here for.

CASHIER: And what happens to it? You give it to the government.

FALSACAPPA: Those are the terms.

CASHIER: And what do you get out of it? That's the question! Mind you, that's the crux of it. What will the government give you? Nothing at all. A reward? Oh, no! I know these governments – don't get me started on that. No appreciation of the hard working, self sacrificing individual.

FALSACAPPA: Come, let's get to the point.

CASHIER: Happily, there are some individuals who know how to look after their own interests. Yes, thank goodness, some people grow up and learn how to take care of themselves. You and me, for example . . . both of us clever fellows . . . you on that side of the table, me on this side. What does it matter to us whether the government of Grenada gets its three million or not? They wouldn't even know what to do with it. And in the end it would all just wind up in somebody else's pocket.

FALSACAPPA: Yes, yes, we know all that, but . .

CASHIER: So here we are, just you and me, smart fellows, each looking out for himself. And here's a note for one thousand francs. Nobody else has seen it. Nobody even knows of its existence. Odd, I don't seem to find it listed here in my records either. And if I leave it here on the table, it will probably slip from my mind as soon as I turn my back. You can't imagine how forgetful I sometimes am. Now what did I do with my quill pen? Excuse me for a moment while I go scrounging around for another. And I've already forgotten what we were talking about. *(He heads for the door.)*

FALSACAPPA: Hold on, sir! Where do you think you're going?

CASHIER: *(The check is still there. Just my luck, to meet up with an honest man!)*

FALSACAPPA: See here, sir! I want that three million, in gold! And I want it now. Where is it?

CASHIER: *(after a pause)* Whoosh!

FALSACAPPA: What do you mean, whoosh? Hand it over.

CASHIER: Much as I would like to, I'm afraid that's out of the question.

FALSACAPPA: Out of the question? Why out of the question?

CASHIER: What I mean is . . . well, you know how money goes. I haven't got it. It's all gone.

FALSACAPPA: Why, you crook! You scoundrel! Good God, you're in the same business I'm in! Thief! Thief!

FALSACAPPA:  
You weasel you worm! Contemptible thief!

CASHIER:  
Oh, help me, help!

BANDITS: *(rushing in)*  
Who cries? Who calls?

FALSACAPPA:  
Three million gone!

BANDITS:  
Three million gone!

FALSACAPPA:  
All frittered away!

BANDITS:  
All frittered away! The man is a crook!

CASHIER:  
Oh, help me, help me, help me out!

FALSACAPPA:  
The bastard has to pay!

PRINCE:  
*(also rushing in, followed by the courtiers)*  
Sir, why this rude, ill-mannered shout?

COURTIERS:  
Say, what's the racket all about?

CASHIER:  
They strangle me, dangle a knife in my face.

FALSACAPPA:  
He is a blot on the human race.

BANDITS:  
The son of a bitch refuses to pay!

FALSACAPPA:  
The son of a bitch refuses to pay!

CASHIER:  
Sir, the man is insane, Out of his mind!

FALSACAPPA:  
Your cashier has been robbing you blind.

BANDITS:  
Your cashier has been robbing you blind.

PRINCE:  
Sir, this you must explain.

CASHIER:  
But of course! Right away.

PRINCE:  
Go ahead, what have you to say?

CASHIER:  
Hush! Hush! What is this I hear?  
Castanets . . .

COURTIERS:  
Drawing near . . .

*(The real Spaniards arrive upon the scene.)*

SPANIARDS:  
Your true Spaniard you always can spot  
By the panache, by the flash and the flair.  
Some that claim to be Spanish are not –  
Of the spurious Spaniard beware!

PRINCESS:  
I am the real Spanish princess.

CARLOS:  
And I the authentic page.

OTHERS:  
Here we present our witness,  
Victim of shock and rage.

PRINCE:  
So if these are the true,  
Then some one else is false.

CAMPOTASSO:  
As false as false can be!

CAPTAIN:  
And I point to Falsacappa!

ALL:  
Falsacappa! Falsacappa!

BANDITS:

So the jig is up; we have had our fling.  
By the neck we now are to swing.

OTHERS:

So the jig is up; they have had their fling.  
By the neck they now are to swing.

PRINCE:

Go, hang the rascals for their crime.

FALSACAPPA:

We're in no hurry, take your time.

PRINCE:

I want to see the rascals swing  
For their crime.

FIOR. & FRAG.: (*from offstage*)

Fiorella's on the scene,  
The queen of her domain,  
The bandit daughter, seventeen.

FIORELLA: (*entering*)

Prince, do not forget:  
Thanks to my compassion, you live.  
I beg you in return  
To forgive, to forgive.

BANDITS:

Do forgive us!

OTHERS:

Do forgive them!

PRINCE:

I shall gladly forgive,  
If they in turn will mend their ways.

ALL:

Oh, long live the Prince!

GLORIA CASSIS: (*aside, to the cashier*)

We have a small account to settle:  
Three million, many thanks!

CASHIER:

Correct. But you're a clever man who I bet'll  
Gladly take one thousand francs.

**GLORIA CASSIS:**  
Oh, but of course! I understand.

**CASHIER:**  
You understand!

**FRAGOLETTO:**  
Reformed, it now is our intention  
To turn from vice to doing good.

**FIORELLA:**  
To concentrate on crime prevention  
And cleaning up the neighborhood.

**FALSACAPPA:**  
In short, to live as honest people should.

**BANDITS:**  
In short, to live as honest people should.  
So! No more to fear the beat of the boots,  
Of the boots, of the boots, of the boots.  
The carabinieri can go to hell,  
And that is all we have to tell.  
To the beat of the boots,  
To the rhythm of the beat  
Of the carabinieri  
We bid a brief and fond farewell.

**THE END**

