

ROSSINI

THE ITALIAN GIRL IN ALGIERS

English Version by Donald Pippin

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MUSTAFA, the almighty Bey of Algiers

ELVIRA, his scorned and beleaguered wife

ZULMA, her constant friend and confidante

HALY, the Bey's right hand man

LINDORO, a young Italian who has been captured and forced into slavery

ISABELLA, the Italian girl who comes to his rescue

TADDEO, her elderly but still hopeful suitor

Welcome to the sumptuous palace of Mustafa, the mighty Bey of Algiers -- all-powerful, all important, second only to Allah, or so he thinks. As the stage lit up one could detect a collective gasp of astonishment at the sheer magnificence of the spectacle, along with whispers rustling through the theatre from an indignant minority, appalled that such extravagance could be permitted in a world where poverty is still rampant. Ivory, gold and ebony, lavished in carefree abundance, indicate the continent where the action takes place. An assortment of eunuchs adorn the stage, gorgeously attired in flowing silk, each of them resembling a rare exotic bird of tropical plumage as they gracefully posture to show off to best advantage their costumes and coiffures.

Amid this surfeit of luxury and glitter, two relatively modest figures in drab attire seem oddly out of place. Like shy, frightened little creatures of the forest, they glance around nervously, as if expecting any minute to be pounced upon and devoured. You might almost feel inclined to pity them. But don't bother. After all, they are only women, lovely to look at but otherwise of no consequence. Just Elvira, the Bey's beleaguered wife, first lady of the land, and Zulma, her constant companion. Let's hope that they are grateful for the privilege of listening daily to wholesome time-honored words of wisdom: "Woman's lot is to serve and suffer. Sorrow purifies the soul."

A word of background. This opera by Rossini was premiered to world-shaking acclaim nearly two hundred years ago, a time when Italy was at one of the many low ebbs of her roller-coaster history. After centuries of humiliation,

occupied, fragmented and exploited by the two great superpowers of the world -- Spain and Austria -- she was currently subjected to the indignity of being liberated by Napoleon. In fact he succeeded in liberating a good many priceless works of art. But this was the dark before the dawn. Italy was on the verge of rejuvenation, a renewed burst of national confidence, fire and energy that led to eventual unification and freedom, all of which we attribute to *The Italian Girl in Algiers*.

Now Turkish history. Alas, the once glorious empire was also going through bad times. After a lengthy and awesome period of expansion that had all of Europe trembling, it was now in the contracting stage. Although greatly diminished, it still held onto most of North Africa, *but* -- and here is the crux of the matter -- it was by now far enough away to be laughed at. Which brings me to a word of warning to any Turks that may find it offensive. No question, our story is told from the *Italian* point of view. Some might accurately describe it as politically incorrect. But please, don't close the book in a huff.. Stick around for the end, when the tables are turned. Isabella, the Italian girl, not only instills some backbone into the browbeaten women, but with a flick of the finger she subdues the mighty Turk by transforming him into an *Italian* husband -- a "Pappataci." Translated literally, it means: "Eat and Shut Up."

Scene: the sumptuous palace of Mustafa, the Bey of Algiers.

CHORUS OF SLAVES & EUNUCHS

Woman's lot is to serve and suffer;
Ask not why, for God's ordained it.
Learned men have well explained it:
Sorrow purifies the soul.

ELVIRA

All too well I know my husband;
He's in love with me no longer.

ZULMA

Only patience can make us stronger,
For to cross or contradict is not our role.

ELVIRA

He's in love with me no longer.
Day by day it's more apparent.

ZULMA

I would plead, implore, but daren't,
For to cross or contradict is not our role.

(a voice from within)

The Bey!

ZULMA

Gather courage, I entreat you!
Lift our head up, gather courage, I entreat you!

ELVIRA

What to do? What can I say?

CHORUS

Oh, those looks of black that greet you!
Storm I fear is on the way.

MUSTAFA, *entering*

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**No absurd extreme is past her.
All would play the prima donna
And forget who's lord and master.
How they strut, they swagger, but they
Do not sway the Bey.
No, they do not sway the Bey.**

ZULMA

Speak, show courage.
Do not let him see you cringe or cower.

HALY

Here each minute seems an hour.

ELVIRA

Win or lose, I've got to chance it.
All or nothing, there's no half way;
I can only hope and pray.

These tears, my lord, you must forgive;
Perhaps your heart may soften.

MUSTAFA

My ears, you know, are sensitive;
My dear, you nearly deafen.
I wonder often,
What shall I do with you?
Oh, what? Oh, what to do?
It's time I trade you in for new.

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY
He has got to be the limit!
None would call him over timid.

MUSTAFA
Ever in pursuit of pleasure,
Light and winged as a feather,
Shifty as the wind or weather,
I've the women at my feet.

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY
Ever in pursuit of pleasure,
Light and winged as a feather,
Shifty as the wind or weather,
He's the model of conceit.

MUSTAFA
Clear the room, too much noise!
Haly, stay with me.
I've told you that I am weary of my wife;
She lingers like a curse.
To oust her is bad;
To keep her is worse.
I need an answer in a hurry ...
I shall have her remarry!
She'll wed Lindoro!

HALY
Immoral! He isn't Turkish.

MUSTAFA
Neither here nor there.
That being settled, go find me an Italian.
This I've set my heart on,
To find out if these fair and fiery females,
These luscious Latins
Are all that they're reputed.

HALY
But the sea is uncertain, half my pirates potted ...
It may not be so quick.

MUSTAFA

Take a week if you like.
And by that time, if you have not succeeded
You'll be stuck on a stick.

HALY

That's all I needed. (*exeunt*)

From the cluster of eunuchs, a pale faced young man emerges, seemingly adrift in a sea of foreign faces --- a native born Italian named Lindoro, recently cast up on these alien shores, taken captive, shoved into slavery, homesick, and pining above all for his beloved Isabella, far away across the sea. His situation is grim. But hold back on the sympathy. It will soon get worse.

LINDORO, *entering*

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**The torment for a lover
To gaze across the sea!**

**One hope relieves the darkness:
Some day again I'll be free.
Though captive and lonely
Mid languid desert breezes,**

**One comfort, one only,
Repairs the broken pieces.
I dream of my darling
Whose heart belongs to me.**

**When, if ever, shall I see my Italy again?
Three months, like three ages
I'm stuck here, and of all outrages,
Forced into slavery,
My love so far from me.**

MUSTAFA, *entering*

Italian! You are far too gloomy.
I'll give you a wife!

LINDORO

For me? So sudden! Good God!
But really! Before I've met her?

MUSTAFA

What a face! What a figure!
You will love her!

LINDORO

(My poor lost darling! If not one thing
It is another.)

**Sir, I'm hesitant to marry,
For I'm finicky and fussy,
And by nature so contrary,
I'm impossible to please.**

**Though you offer girls aplenty,
Scarcely one in five and twenty
Would begin to qualify.**

**She would have to be a beauty
With compatible vibrations,
Never arrogant or snooty,
Never timid, never shy.**

**Were I bent on matrimony.
There are certain stipulations:
Beauty, wit and good vibrations,
Many more than meet the eye.**

**Granted I were feeling matey
And you found the perfect lady
There is barely one in eighty
That should bother to apply.**

MUSTAFA

**You want beauty? You want money?
Charm? Affection? I've the answer!
She's a woman in a thousand,
You could find no better spouse, and
I know whereof I speak.
She's the woman, she is unique!**

**Charm & money, skin of honey.
Bodice out of Botticelli
That will turn a man to jelly –
I do not exaggerate.**

**Beauty coupled with affection,
Ruby lip and fair complexion,
Every possible perfection
That could matter in a mate.**

**I'm the man who ought to know,
For I'm married to her now.**

LINDORO
**Well, for example I'd insist on
Frankness .. candor ... devotion.**

MUSTAFA
Like Isolda to her Tristan!

LINDORO
**I'll not have her vain or flighty.
As for beauty ...**

MUSTAFA
Unsurpassed by Aphrodite!

LINDORO
Features?

MUSTAFA
Classic!

LINDORO
Complexion?

MUSTAFA
Creamy!

LINDORO
Her figure?

MUSTAFA
Luscious!

LINDORO
Her eyes?

MUSTAFA
Dreamy!

LINDORO

**(I keep stepping into trouble.
What, O what am I to do?)**

MUSTAFA

**You will make the perfect couple
Heaven made her just for you.**

LINDORO

**Oh, confound it! Just my luck! Oh,
I would speak but only stammer,
While inside me like a hammer
Love is pounding at my heart.**

MUSTAFA

**Are you made of stone or stucco?
Blind to beauty, cold to glamour?
Stop the stalling, love is calling
Captivating, ready waiting –
Listen, that is only part! (*exeunt*)**

The scene changes to a rocky coastline, where we arrive just a bit too late to witness what must have been a spectacular encounter -- a ship run aground by a gang of pirates, headed by Haly, Mustafa's capable henchman. The precious booty on board the boat pales beside the most valuable cargo of all, an Italian girl named Isabella – exactly what Mustafa ordered. She is accompanied by Taddeo, her persistent suitor, elderly but still hopeful.

CHORUS OF PIRATES

**Gold for plunder, slaves aplenty,
Tons of booty. Cargo! Whiskey!
Plus some beauties! Tasty lasses!
Dainty fare for Mustafa!**

**One among them far surpasses,
Fit for sultan, sheik or shah.
Haute cuisine for Mustafa!**

ISABELLA

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**With despair, dismay and panic,
For in truth, I'm much afraid.**

Dear Lindoro! O my beloved!

**For you only I brave the danger.
Who to turn to? What friend or stranger
Can console or give me aid?**

PIRATES

Haute cuisine for Mustafa!

ISABELLA

**No more tears of self-indulgence!
Danger thrives because we fear it.
I have still a spark of spirit –
After all, they're only men.
Not exactly a lion's den.**

**A woman's arsenal can topple nations
And I have weaponry for all occasions.
Oh, a smile, a stolen glance, a sultry sigh!
I overcome with just a smile,
A stolen glance, a sultry sigh!**

**Afric or Ottoman,
Greek, Turk or Tuscan,
There's not a man
Can do what one of us can.**

**In one way all akin,
Jet black or pale of skin,
Be they but masculine
They need the feminine
And yield the right of way
When I go by.**

**Here they come ... what to do?
Stay cool and easy, and keep it light and airy.
Bear in mind, men are men,
And not so scary.**

The pirates come in, headed by Haly, with Taddeo in tow.

TADDEO

Misericordia! God help me!
Show some pity ... It's I!

HALY

Quiet, you mongrel!
One more slave, nothing more.

TADDEO
(Chained at the market!)

ISABELLA
Dear old Taddeo.

TADDEO
Misericordia! Have pity ...

ISABELLA
Relax, it's only me.

HALY
Graybeard, who is that lady?

TADDEO
What to say?

ISABELLA
I am his niece.

TADDEO
Right! I'm his niece.
And therefore we have to stay together.

HALY
Your native country?

TADDEO
From Leghorn, near Pisa.

HALY
Aha! Italian!

TADDEO
I believe so ...

ISABELLA
And proud to be so.

HALY
Eureka, friends!

ISABELLA
What is so thrilling, if one may question?

HALY

What a find! What a haul!
Enough to turn me Christian!
We'll give her to Mustafa.
No spike or spit for Haly! Oh,
She'll be the shining light, the star
Of his seraglio!

TADDEO

Ah, Isabella! Complete and total ruin!

ISABELLA

How so?

TADDEO

Were you not listening?
Oh, that word I've heard tell of!

ISABELLA

A word?

TADDEO

Seraglio!

ISABELLA

So then?

TADDEO

You don't object to being Belle of the Bey?
Of Mustafa?

ISABELLA

The wheel's already spun,
So what's to gain by working up a fever?

TADDEO

O debauched Mary Magdeline!
Light of my life, do you take me for a baboon?
Don't I know you've a lover? Yes, that Lindoro.
I know the score, oh yes! Though I've not seen him.

ISABELLA

My love I do not deny, though many months it has been
Since he took ship, sailed from Italy, and vanished.

TADDEO

So now milady tries to track him down,
And you see how we're punished.

ISABELLA

And you?

TADDEO

And I, so far as mere companion, hopefully tag along.

ISABELLA

And now?

TADDEO

And now my role is switched to Othello,
While you sing a siren song
In a bordello!

ISABELLA

**Freaks of fortune, frowns and favors,
Drastic ups and downs of chance do nothing to me,
But the thing that does undo me
Is the grumbling of a fool.
The whimper, the whining,
The grumbling of a fool!**

TADDEO

**Sober-minded, serene and placid,
You could never find a man of sweeter temper.
Hardly prone to whine and whimper,
I'm the one that's calm and cool.
Unruffled, unrattled,
I am ever calm and cool.**

ISABELLA

God preserve me from such a lover!

TADDEO

Foxy females I cannot suffer.

ISABELLA

I would gladly give the boor up.

TADDEO

**Idiotic, leaving Europe.
Why, O why did I leave Europe?**

ISABELLA

**I'm fed up with you. Go to Hades!
To the devil! Frankly, I don't give a damn!**

TADDEO

**Any place, ma'am, free of ladies
I would find a welcome change from where I am.**

ISABELLA

**Landed in Africa, homeless and friendless,
What will become of me? Dangers are endless.
What hope of remedy? What perils await?
Was ever such a quandary? O brutal fate!**

TADDEO

**Hard years of labor, torture and prison,
Wasting in custody, these I envision.**

BOTH

O such a quandary! What shall I do?

TADDEO

Donna Isabella ...

ISABELLA

Mister Taddeo ...

TADDEO

Can't we be friends again?

ISABELLA

Sunshine after showers!

TADDEO

Are you still cross at me?

ISABELLA

I, cross at *you*?

BOTH

**So onward! Happily united,
Our lamp of love relighted,
We brave the desert and the jungle.
We'll be fond niece and uncle.
Again at peace, we brave the jungle**

As loving niece and doting uncle.

TADDEO

**That Bey sounds all too scary, ah!
I'd stay out of that area.
We must not cross the Bey!**

ISABELLA

**A waste of time to worry;
We're bound to find a way.**

BOTH

**Together onward, again united,
The hatchet buried, the lamp relighted.
As loving niece and doting uncle,
Together onward, again at peace.**

TADDEO

**To cross the Bey bodes naught but ill;
We'd find ourselves in Emeryville.
I say again, be wary!
We'd best avoid the Bey. *(exeunt)***

Back in the Bey's palace. Mustafa is talking with Lindoro while Elvira and Zulma hover in the background.

MUSTAFA

**Italian, I've an offer.
We've a boat here from Venice;
We have stripped it of gold,
Settled the ransom.
Soon it will sail.
Perhaps you'd like to join those aboard?**

LINDORO

**Home to my country! Sir, I ask nothing else!
To you I'm so indebted ...**

MUSTAFA

**By the way, take Elvira.
Otherwise, forget it.**

LINDORO

(A cruel bargain!)

MUSTAFA

Go meanwhile to the vessel;
Inform the captain of my orders,
And make this most explicit:
He's not to leave the harbor without you.

LINDORO

(To escape and end at last
This wretched, god-awful visit,
There's little I won't do.)
I'll convey your message. (exit)

ELVIRA, *piteously*

Then it's true, I've to leave you?

MUSTAFA

Drop a line, dear ... at least a card from Naples.

ELVIRA

But my heart will be empty ... O my love!

MUSTAFA

Hurry! Your stubbornness I find rather odd.
You've still some packing.

ZULMA

He's the absolute clod!
Nothing is lacking.

HALY, *entering*

Viva! Long live the Bey!

MUSTAFA

I trust you had success.

HALY

Past expectation! Your mouth will simply water.
An Italian girl, made to order!

MUSTAFA

Good servant! Elvira, you haven't got all day.
The ship is at the dock, set to go.
Zulma, you too! She'll need a companion.
And I need lots of leisure, to enjoy *comme il faut*.

And adding spice to my pleasure

I'll give a demonstration
How a man can handle
The hotheaded beauties of that nation.

Out to conquer, I rise to the challenge!
With a charmer out of Parma or Perugia
I foresee a bright and sunny future.
My delight I can barely contain.

(to Elvira) Get a move on! Oh, there you go again!

(to Zulma) Stop the howling and scowling!
So unbecoming.
It's settled. You go with her.

(to Haly) Bring the new, bewitching beauty here before me;
Then stand by as I launch my campaign,
My sly campaign.

**Riding high on a tide of sweet impatience,
To an island of dreams I'm transported
Where my passion will not go unrewarded
And the goal I pursue I'll attain.**

(to Elvira) Get a move on! Don't annoy me.
Start the packing, stop the howling.

(to Zulma) You go with her.
Stop the howling and the scowling.
I have spoken!

**Riding high on a tide of sweet impatience,
To an island of dreams I'm transported
Where my passion will not go unrewarded
And the goal I pursue I'll attain.**

(Elvira, Zulma & Haly leave; a chorus of eunuchs enters)

EUNUCHS

Hail the scourge and the terror of women
Who has mastered the ways to seduce 'em.
Fellow men, he could show even you some.
Look and learn from the grand Mustafa.

HALY,
proudly entering, with Isabella

She awaits you, the stupendous Italian ...

MUSTAFA

Bring her, bring her! What a feast for the eye!

EUNUCHS

What a feast for the eye!

ISABELLA

What a tiger! What a donkey!
And he fancies himself a roué.
Here's a street not one but two-way.
When we meet the sparks will fly.

MUSTAFA

She's a dish to serve a sultan.
What a figure! She's enchanting!
She's enthralling! I am panting ...
I am fall ...
Like a serpent, shrewd and sly,
Subtle methods I'll apply.

ISABELLA

Lost at sea and tossed by tempest,
Taken captive, beset by danger,
At your feet a hapless stranger
Begs a friend to take her part.

MUSTAFA

(If my pulse beats any faster
I shall perish on the spot.)

ISABELLA

The noose is drawn and fastened;
This fox shall not go free. No, no, no!

MUSTAFA

They're more than I imagined,
These girls from Italy.
She's enchanting! She's enthralling!
Subtle methods I'll apply.

(Haly drags in Taddeo)

TADDEO

Does no one speak our language?
I tell you I'm her uncle,

Her uncle, nearest, dearest,
Her favorite relation.
Try harder! Oh try, sir!
Unc! Unc! Her uncle
Does no one understand?

(to Mustafa) Signor ...Monsieur ...
Buenos dios ... bon jour ... Hello!

(See how he eyes her! It clearly looks to me as
She's caught the Turk for sure.
But what of poor Taddeo?
What's in the cards for him?
Alas, O poor Taddeo!
Your future's looking grim.)

HALY

My lord ... this mangy mongrel ...

MUSTAFA

Don't bother me. Impale him.

TADDEO

God help me! Harpooned!
Isabella, darling! Help an old man, dear lady!

ISABELLA

Hands off my uncle!

MUSTAFA

Release him! She speaks. You must obey.

ISABELLA

Darling! You've learned already
To love the Italian way.

MUSTAFA

So that is how to woo her ...
"Darling!" I'm all athrob.

TADDEO

Impale me upon a skewer?
Taddeo, a shish kebab!

HALY

So thanks entirely too her

I'm left without a job.

(Elvira, Zulma & Lindoro enter together)

TRIO

**Soon to sail far away,
Sad now at parting,
We've fond farewells to say,
Sir, before starting.**

**Though far across the sea
We land in Italy,
Your grace and majesty
We'll not forget.**

ISABELLA, *seeing Lindoro*
(My love!)

LINDORO, *seeing Isabella*
(A vision?)

ISABELLA
(Magic?)

LINDORO
(Illusion? This Isabella?)

ISABELLA
(Is it Lindoro?)

LINDORO
(My heart stops.)

ISABELLA
(My knees give out.)

BOTH
(What lies ahead? Love, come and speak to me,
Come to my side.)

MUSTAFA
A bombshell! I'm stumped and stupefied;
They look and barely see.
It's utter Greek to me,
This turn of tide.

LINDORO & ISABELLA
A marvel, a sudden thunderbolt!
A total mystery.
Love, come and speak to me,
Come to my side.

TADDEO
No, not another jolt!
Worse than calamity!
And is there no place
Where I can hide?

ISABELLA;
indicating Elvira
Tell me: who is that woman there?

MUSTAFA
Till lately my wife, no matter.

ISABELLA
Your wife?

MUSTAFA
I have got rid of her;
You, love, I like much better.
(indicating Lindoro)
She and my former slave here
Today will take the vow.

ISABELLA
You give your wife the shove
And hope thus to gain my love?
Such barbarous behavior
I mean to change right now.
I say your wife remains here.

MUSTAFA
No, no! Am not I the one that reigns here?

ISABELLA
(indicating Lindoro)
This man I'll have as *my* slave.

MUSTAFA

No, no! This I simply can't approve.

ISABELLA

To the devil! Go, don't pester me.
You don't know how to love.

MUSTAFA

Oh, no! Now listen ... please, quietly ...
(Ah, this girl has hold of me,
And look what's come to pass.)

ELVIRA, ZULMA & LINDORO

First time at bat she changes him
From lion into ass.

TUTTI

Upside down and topsy turvy,
I'm in shock and shook and shattered.
Tossed about, the boat is boat is battered,
Bound to sink into the sea.

ELVIRA, ZULMA & ISABELLA

In a tinkle, m teeny tiny,
Ting a ling a hear din din ...

LINDORO & HALY

Hitting heavy with a hammer,
Imps are beating tsc ta ...

TADDEO

Up for plucking like a turkey
I could cackle ca ra cra ...

MUSTAFA

Burst of bomb and ball of cannon
Beat a basso low boom boom ...

End of Act I

ACT II

As the second act opens, we are not alone in noticing a drastic change that has come over Mustafa. No longer the boss accustomed to pushing people around, he is finding his pursuit of the Italian girl a good deal more strenuous than he had expected.

Scene: a small chamber in the Bey's palace

CHORUS OF EUNUCHS

Not a nincompoop more stupid
Can you find than Mustafa.
As a devotee of Cupid
He but simpers ooh and ah.

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY

That Italian girl has talent;
She's a talented Italian.
She has got him in her clutches.
There's a charm in all she touches
And a certain *je ne sais quoi*.

MUSTAFA

You ladies! Go, give the Italian girl a message:
I shall meet her alone for coffee in half an hour.

ZULMA

Gladly we serve you.

ELVIRA

To give you any pleasure
We would do all in our power. (*they exit*)

ISABELLA, *entering, alone*

Does life get any lower?
My home, my honor, almost my life I forfeit;
I reach this desert, find my Lindoro,
And find myself – forgotten.

LINDORO, *joining her*

At last, together! Ah, no! Don't leave me!
My adored Isabella, how have I offended
That you turn, run away?

ISABELLA

You dare ask me, newly wed to Elvira?

LINDORO

Never! I agreed to serve as her escort, not husband,
My only motive, the sweet hope to embrace you.

ISABELLA

Can I believe you??

LINDORO

May I be struck by lightning
If ever I was fickle or unfaithful.

ISABELLA

Then listen: our love is all-important?
You're not a coward?

LINDORO

How shall I prove it?

ISABELLA

We'll escape this place together
Aboard that very same boat.
But we must not be seen while plotting,
Meet me in the garden.
There, undetected,
We'll plan a bold maneuver.
I shall go first and scout.

LINDORO

I need no prodding. *(Isabella leaves)*

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**My darling I recover
And hope soars up again.**

**The suffering was worth it.
The savor of this moment
Is more than fair repayment
For weeks of trial and pain.
I find my Isabella
And all is right again. *(exit)***

Ever on the lookout for an entree to Isabella, Mustafa lights upon Taddeo, Isabella's aged companion and supposed uncle. His plan is to elevate him to the exalted rank of Kaimakan -- a glory not entirely to his liking, all too aware that honor carries with it certain . . . obligations. But the alternative of being harpooned and carved into

mincemeat is even less appealing. We now see him reluctantly on his way to the ceremony, escorted by palace guards bearing spears and scimitars, weapons that do not go unnoticed.

Mustafa ushers in Taddeo, who is dressed in elaborate Turkish attire.

CHORUS

Viva, glorious Kaimakan,
Champion of the Mussulman.
Strong as lion, proud and savage,
Shrewd and crafty as the serpent,
Blessed by hand of fortune lavish,
Tongue soft-spoken, tooth well sharpened.
Viva, glorious Kaimakan!

TADDEO

Kaimakan? One of your local orders?

MUSTAFA

It means right hand lieutenant.

TADDEO

A pretty compliment to my dear little niece.
To flatter her,
Your highness has assigned me this prize position?

MUSTAFA

Exactly. I aim to please.

TADDEO

Thanks. Very touching.
But I, sir, ... your Highness ...
This calls for utter candor.
I would disgrace the name of Turk.
The fact is, I'm the world's biggest jerk.

MUSTAFA

The bigger, the better.
Your niece I find attractive.
You will go get her,
Speak to her in my favor, help me to land her.

TADDEO

(What it comes down to,
I am appointed royal pander.)

**Though an honor overwhelming,
I'm unhappy with my forehead bound and turbaned.
Sir, I'm more an ass than serpent.
Kaimakan – no offense intended,
But I must decline this privilege so splendid.
My reluctance, sir, you will excuse;
As you see, I'm less a lion than a goose.**

**(He is snorting ... O Lord! Those eyebrows!)
Sir, O pity me. Oh, it's far too grand.
Do consider. Try and understand.**

**(Oh, that scowl makes me shiver in my shoes,
When I see that sharpened stick
I'm unsure which path to pick.**

**Here I'd best add up the options:
Two alternatives, or fewer.
I refuse it – they serve me on a skewer.
I accept it – to him I hand her,
I am pimp and play the pander.**

**O Taddeo, how will this wind up?
On a skewer, or as pander?
Taddeo, heads or tails? Which to choose?
Kaimakan! I've made my mind up!
I shall join and pay my dues.)**

**Kaimakan! I've made my mind up!
Gentlemen, such glory how could I refuse?
Kaimakan! Though unorthodox and pagan,
Better than cut up for bacon.
So I'll join and pay my dues.**

CHORUS

Viva, glorious Kaimakan,
Champion of the Mussulman.

TADDEO

So much bowing, so much scraping ...
Sir, I'm honored! (No escaping!)

Sir, my gratitude can hardly be expressed.
Oh, 'twould be the greatest pleasure!
To my niece I'll go this moment

And exert a little pressure,
Ask her to receive a guest.

Ah Taddeo, all things considered,
Maybe drowning would have been best. (*all exit*)

Isabella, at her dressing table, prepares to meet Mustafa for coffee. But for whom is her lavish adornment really intended -- the Turk or the tenor?

Isabella is at her dressing table, surrounded by Elvira, Zulma, Lindoro and maids.

ISABELLA

So any minute Mister Mustafa
Drops in for coffee and perhaps a chat?
How very cozy! The superb Mustafa!
Slave! Come to life!

LINDORO

Signora wishes?

ISABELLA

Better service!
One has to call you twice? The coffee!

LINDORO

For how many?

ISABELLA

At least for three.

ELVIRA

'Twas my understanding
Alone, just *tete a tete*,
Was what he had in mind ...

ISABELLA

You can't be serious!
And his wife acts the go-between in person?
For shame! Your consent makes me blush.

ELVIRA

You don't know him!
That man of mine's a tiger.

ZULMA

And every effort to please him
Only brings out the beast in the jungle.

ISABELLA
But if that is the case,
It is your own fault.

ELVIRA
But how can I improve him?

ISABELLA
I can teach you much.
So for the moment
Just stay within and watch.
This scene's entitled
"The Taming of the Tiger."

Maids assist Isabella at toilette, while Mustafa, Taddeo and Lindoro eavesdrop.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

**More lovely render me
For him I adore.**

**In pearls and diamonds,
O Goddess, attire me.
Turn his eye tenderly,
Loving evermore.
Tender, loving evermore.**

Look and listen, pay close attention;
Some may wonder and some may doubt;
Pantalone or Turk or tenor,
Only one will be the winner,
But no one has it figured out.

LINDORO, TADDEO & MUSTAFA
She's a woman without a rival
She would stir a heart of stone.

ISABELLA, *to her maids*
But the plume's a bit off-balance ...
Shift the tiara just so slightly.
No, like this ... to speak politely,
I'd do better on my own.
For that someone I would summon all my talents;
Greater loveliness I seek for him alone.

**Clad me in splendor;
Venus, inspire me!
More lovely render me
For him I adore.**

**(Darling Turk, you start to totter
And will topple with but a tap.
Not a tiger but a kitten,
Oh, the rugged Turk is smitten.
And will topple and will topple with a tap.)**

LINDORO, TADDEO & MUSTAFA
(What's this woman's fatal secret?
Men fall right into her lap.) *(exit Isabella)*

Mustafa's private tête-à-tête with Isabella will not be precisely what he had in mind. In fact, it will become a strikingly cosmopolitan affair, including as it does her lover, her other suitor, and his own wife.

MUSTAFA
I shall die on the spot!
Dear Isabella! She's bewitching.
For a fact, I cannot do without her.
Go fetch her. Hurry, bring her here. *(he sends Lindoro out)*

Listen, Kaimakan: when I sneeze,
It means disappear, get lost, you're one too many.

TADDEO
(Worse and worse for Taddeo! Forced now
To place her in the arms of a lecher.)

MUSTAFA
O my God! What delays her?

LINDORO
Here, at your pleasure.

MUSTAFA, *to Isabella*
I present the new-made man,
Sir Taddeo Kaimakan!
In your honor we bestow the royal seal.
From this token you can reckon
What a Mustafa must feel.

ISABELLA

Kaimakan! Step up, come closer.
This new title I would call most apropos, sir.
Kaimakan! It's you all over.
This promotion shows remarkable devotion.

I am grateful, as you must know, sir,
For this proof of love so real.
I am grateful, past requital,
For this proof of love so real.

TADDEO

All on your account.
My own merits little mattered.
Though upgraded;
I am far from feeling flattered.

What's the motive?
As he stated, I am slated
As the pimp to intercede.
And the motive? I am slated
To deliver guaranteed.

LINDORO, *to Mustafa*

Such adornment! All so splendid!
Most revealing,
One can hardly help but notice.
What an obvious show of feeling!
For you only is it intended.
Oh, it's clear to all with eyes
And it means that you're the one to win the prize.

ISABELLA

O my darling!

MUSTAFA

Ecci!

ISABELLA & LINDORO
Gesundheit!

TADDEO

(The signal! Drop dead. I'm staying.)

MUSTAFA

Ecci! Ecci! Curses on that stupid moron!
Why, O why is he so slow?

TADDEO

Sneeze away, we've got a war on,
And I'm not about to go.

LINDORO

So two boobies enter battle
And it's better than a show.

ISABELLA

One atremble, one aquiver,
Both are headed down the river.
So two boobies enter battle
And it's better than a show.

ISABELLA, *to Elvira,*
who has retreated into the background
Ah, Milady, join our party.
Come, your husband is insisting.
Is there something I can get?

MUSTAFA

(Who invited her? Could this be accidental?)

ISABELLA

To your wife be kind and gentle ...

MUSTAFA

(Plague could not be more displeasing.)

TADDEO

(Notice now he isn't sneezing.)

LINDORO

(This becomes a grand ensemble.)

MUSTAFA

(I had planned a tete-a-tete.)

ISABELLA

Give your hand to her.

MUSTAFA

You vixen!

ISABELLA

Such a darling ...

MUSTAFA

(Could she be teasing?)

ELVIRA

Just for a moment ...

MUSTAFA

Don't annoy me.

LINDORO

He's a sweetheart.

ISABELLA

Have compassion.

ELVIRA

Husband dearest ...

ISABELLA

Treat her kindly.

TADDEO

(No more sneezing, no more sneezing.)

QUARTET

Feel the love my/her heart contains.

MUSTAFA

You dance me round a circle;
I'll not be made a monkey.
You dance me round a circle,
But pushed too far a Turk'll
Stand up and show some spunk. He
Will not be made a monkey.

You think you're so much smarter,
But these are my domains.
The fire of Turk and Tartar
Are burning in my veins.

TUTTI

From faint rumbling a storm comes upon us.
I'm all shaken, afire and aflutter;
My tongue fails me, my knees turn to butter.
Sense and reason have taken to flight.
With such passion and peril inside me,
Who can guide me and set me aright? *(all exit)*

HALY *(alone)*

For all his swank and swagger,
This is one time the Bey becomes the beggar.
I like it! Serves him right for chasing an Italian.
For the ladies of that land all
Should be marked "Too hot to handle."
Here's a trip where at least
He pays for the ticket.

**In games of love and romance
The Italian girls are smartest,
Each one a peerless artist
And I am told self-taught.**

**Elusive and alluring,
O beware, you men that linger!
She'll wrap you round her finger
Will-power goes for naught.**

**Graceful, enchanting, charming,
In wit there's none to match her,
Take care if you would catch her;
You instead may wind up caught.**

**Elusive and alluring,
O beware, you men that linger!
She'll wrap you round her finger;
Iron will-power goes for naught.**

**You men beware! You'll wind up caught!
Watch out, beware! You'll wind up caught! *(exit)***

Taddeo and Lindoro enter

TADDEO

So your scheme is to rescue Isabella
From the jaws of the Bey?

LINDORO

We mustn't bungle. Your helping hand is crucial
To make the get-away.

TADDEO

You doubt me? Good grief,
You've not an inkling who I am?

LINDORO

You're not her guardian uncle?

TADDEO

A cover!

LINDORO

Most mysterious.

TADDEO

This uncle business is the merest sham.
And has she not confided
That she worships and adores a secret lover?

LINDORO

Nor is that love one-sided!
The many long frustrations ...

TADDEO

You're talking to the man!

LINDORO, *half-heartedly*

Congratulations ...

MUSTAFA, *entering*

A plague upon your niece, sir!
Does she take me for an ass?
Napoleon or Caesar
Would never let it pass.

LINDORO

You've got it wrong!
She's so in love she's ecstatic!

TADDEO

And you're complaining?

MUSTAFA

You really think so?

LINDORO

Her plan is still a secret:
To express Italian thanks
And to make you worthier yet of her surrender,
She will raise you to exalted ranks,
With song and ceremony, pomp and splendor,
Mid flickering light,
While the hours keep amorous watch, she
Will acclaim you tonight her Pappataci!

MUSTAFA

Pappataci! How impressive.
Pappataci! Rather catchy.
European recognition!
That was always my ambition.
But I'm puzzled.
What's the meaning of this title from afar?

LINDORO

Back at home that is how we praise and honor
Him who never, never argues with the fair sex,
Neither sees, nor hears, nor cares,
Excelling in the art of acting unaware.

TADDEO

Me you honored with rank and title.
Reciprocation we feel is vital.
Kaimakan and Pappataci!
Turnabout, tit for tat.
Are we not square?

MUSTAFA

You Italians have such breeding!
I adore your *savoir faire*.

LINDORO

(Were I home again and told it
They would put me up for mayor.)

MUSTAFA

Pappataci! ...

LINDORO

The rules are rigid ...

TADDEO

Though quite simple for a ruler so urbane.

MUSTAFA

Point them out to me. Do explain.

LINDORO

Mid the banter of light flirtation,
Mid the game of love and tender greeting,
He says nothing, but goes on eating.
Eats and drinks, and like the sphinx
Says not a word.
Pappataci only eats, Pappataci only sleeps;
Then the sign says "Do not disturb."

TADDEO

Pappataci only sleeps,
Pappataci only eats.
Only sleeps, only eats.

MUSTAFA

Sounds delightful!
There's nothing to it.
It's the life, the very life
I've long preferred.

LINDORO

If the girl runs off with us ...

TADDEO

Guess what Pappataci does.
Only sleeps, only eats ... (*exit Mustafa*)

Isabella's determined
To wangle all the Italians from the Bey, then?

LINDORO

She's a girl I've got faith in.

TADDEO

All very funny, but on what grounds,
What rationale?

LINDORO

To help out in the ceremony.

TADDEO

Ih! Ih! Ih!

LINDORO

To serve as decoys,
Some will be outfitted as Pappatacis,
So others undetected
Can board the anchored vessel.

TADDEO

Ih! Ih! Once they're aboard,
We're all set to go.
But here she comes. Good Lord!
She's got her band of slaves in tow.

LINDORO

I never doubted.

TADDEO

That girl has something special.

LINDORO

Whatever you think her,
Show her a fool
And she's got him round her finger.

Isabella enters, leading a chorus of Italians

CHORUS OF ITALIANS

Sword in hand, with hearts of valiance,
We shall join you in your flight,
And as stalwart proud Italians
We'll muster all our might.

ISABELLA

Companions, whatever happens,
I trust you entirely
But soon, if luck is with us,
Without hazard or opposition,
We shall conclude
Our home-directed mission.

Are you laughing, Taddeo?
The hour is early;
Let us see who laughs last.

(to Lindoro)

And why so pallid, my handsome slave?
If my own plight and peril have stirred you to pity,
Learn instead to be brave.
Remember our traditions:
Homeland, and duty, and honor.
Through pride unflinching, prove yourself an Italian.
Stand strong and sturdy,
Though fortune fall or flourish.
Let a woman inspire you
To act with courage.

Think of our country, and stout of heart,
Find there your inspiration.
Throughout our fractured nation
The fire of our forefathers
Again we shall relight.

(to Taddeo)

Blockhead! You simper!
Blockhead! You think I'm joking?
Leave me! No time for laughter!

(to Lindoro)

Darling! Darling!
May love with valor unite.

(to all)

Companions, let's take our chances,
So onward! The hour advances,
And should the game go badly ...

ITALIANS

There's none that can divide us!
We follow where you guide us.
Let freedom light the way!

ISABELLA

QuickTime™ and a
H.264 decoder are
required to see this picture.

Soon to see my native valley.

**Blind to danger, love shall rally,
Rouse our hearts to win the day.**

ITALIANS

We are stalwart proud Italians,
All set for the fray.
We are stalwart proud Italians,
And shall muster all our might.

(all leave except Taddeo)

TADDEO

She's a girl in a million!
Now who would imagine
That she felt such a passion
For poor old tired Taddeo?
Lead a rebellion,
Turn the Bey upside down.
Risking all, just to be all mine?

MUSTAFA, *entering*

Kaimakan!

TADDEO

Signor?

MUSTAFA

What's become of your niece?

TADDEO

Busy with preparation,
Last minute touches for the solemn celebration.
Here comes her slave, who has been told to arrive
With no less than a score of Pappatacis.

MUSTAFA

But why the rush to do me such favors?
Why all so sudden?

TADDEO

That's the way with young lovers ...

MUSTAFA

Ah, right on the button!

Lindoro enters with a chorus of Pappatacis

LINDORO

Rise, Pappatacis! Each individual
Come forth united in solemn ritual,
Hail a new member into the club.

PAPPATACIS

Horns must accompany our jubilate,
Sung by a chorus of forty castrati.
Hail an initiate into the club.

TADDEO

(Bellies protuberant show that one eats a
Generous portion of pasta and pizza.)

LINDORO & TADDEO

(If I don't laugh at it I shall crack up.)

MUSTAFA

Friends, fellow company, all of Algeria
Share the applause if I meet your criteria.
Show me the rules and I swear to abide.

CHORUS

Do as in Italy, let life just happen.
Throw out the turban, put an old cap on.
Pen your collar and loosen your belt,
Shrug, take it easy and roll with the tide.
Lounge and do nothing;
Let us be your guide.

MUSTAFA

No doubt the latest code of society.
I see already -- me with the greatest of title and pride.

LINDORO & TADDEO

(This I could not invent, not if I tried.)

ISABELLA, *entering*

Are you not the one selected
To the coveted rank of Pappataci?
As a member, you will have to be protected
From the ladies, for you'll set their hearts afire.
But before this can transpire
You must swear a sacred oath.

MUSTAFA

I shall follow to the letter
Every rule that you require.

CHORUS

Bravo! Cheers! A man to admire!
He's the one, he's the man you must admire!

LINDORO

Be attentive and silent
For this grave and solemn rite.
(to Taddeo) Take this, read it ...
(to Mustafa) And you, repeat it.
Every word you must echo firm and clear.
As a hopeful neophyte
You now must prove yourself sincere.

TADDEO, *echoed by Mustafa*

I'm to see and not to see.
I'm to hear and not to hear.
Live to eat and live to drink,
Never fuss nor interfere.
These are rules I swear to follow, Pappataci Mustafa!

CHORUS

Bravo! Cheers! The man is in!
One of us! He is fully qualified.

TADDEO, *echoed by Mustafa*

I swear further on occasion ...
Ridicule and scorn to swallow.
At the slightest violation
Let no hair enrich my chin.
These are rules I swear to follow,
Pappataci Mustafa!

LINDORO

Bring the table! Bring the table!

ISABELLA

Be seated side by side, Kaimakan and Pappataci.

CHORUS

Come what may, you stand invincible.
You must eat up, drink up, say nothing.
That's the first and foremost principle

Of our esoteric creed.

LINDORO & TADDEO
'Tis a noble, 'tis a mystic,
'Tis a lofty cult indeed.

ISABELLA
Our new member must be tested.
Is he resolute and steady? (*to Lindoro*) Darling!

LINDORO
(*to Isabella*) Darling!

MUSTAFA
Ei! What's going on?

TADDEO
You've not forgot already?
You allow your mind to ramble?
Look at me. Simply follow my example.
I shall lead.

ISABELLA
(*to Lindoro*) Come, my darling.

TADDEO
Pappataci goes on eating.

LINDORO
(*to Isabella*) I adore you!

TADDEO
Pappataci goes on eating.

MUSTAFA
Now I get it! Do as *you* do.
Clear as crystal, plain as daylight
Look at me. Your example I can beat.

LINDORO & TADDEO
Such a donkey, such a dodo
Is a new and novel treat.

ISABELLA
So the Pappataci's basic

Education is complete.

CHORUS

The sea softly billows,
A south wind prevailing,
The tide right for sailing –
Come on if you're coming.
We mustn't delay.

LINDORO

O come, my beloved!

ISABELLA

Together, Lindoro ...

BOTH

Our thoughts now for homing,
We head for the sea.

TADDEO

Lindoro! My rival!
They both have deceived me!
Outwitted! Deluded!
O sir, they have tricked us!
They have made fools of us,
Both you and me!

MUSTAFA

I'm Pappataci ...

TADDEO

The traitors!

MUSTAFA

I say nothing ...

TADDEO

I'm serious!

MUSTAFA

Not to see ...

TADDEO

You jackass!

MUSTAFA

Not to hear ...

TADDEO

Alas! What to do?
To follow, or remain?
To go, or to stay?
If I stay, the skewer ...
If I go, the chagrin.

Adapt! That's the motto.
You'd best be resigned.
And like it or not, oh
You take what you find.

ISABELLA & LINDORO

Oh, hurry! Or else we must leave you behind.
Oh, hurry! Or else stay behind.

Elvira, Zulma & Halv enter

ZULMA & HALY

O my master!

ELVIRA

My husband!

ALL THREE

What's the matter? Don't you see them?

MUSTAFA

Pappataci eats, says nothing.
He's to see and not to see.
He's to hear and not to hear ...
These are rules I swear to follow.
Pappataci! Mustafa!

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY

He is cracking!

ISABELLA, LINDORO & TADDEO

And we succeeded!

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY

The Italian girl is gone!

MUSTAFA

I've been swindled! Rogues and traitors!
Stop them! Flunkies! You soldiers! Eunuchs!

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY

All so drunk they barely stagger.

MUSTAFA

Now the light begins to dawn.

CHORUS OF ITALIANS

Fools, beware! We stand with dagger,
Saber, sword and pistol drawn.

MUSTAFA

Dearest wife! I'm through with Italians!
I return to you, forgive me.

ELVIRA, ZULMA & HALY

Deaf to insult, blind to dalliance,
She is yours, so take her arm.

TUTTI

Aboard all! They're sailing.
Companions! Goodbye now.
With courage unfailing,
Undaunted they fly now

Through waters that threaten
No danger, no harm.
The girl of our story
Sails homeward in glory.

She taught tyrant lovers
And maybe some others:
Watch out when confronted
By courage and charm!

THE END

