

VERDI

KING FOR A DAY

(Un Giorno di Regno)

English Version by Donald Pippin

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Baron of Kelbar, a hot-headed father.

Giulietta, his daughter, engaged against her will to the Treasurer but in love with his nephew.

The Treasurer, an elderly man of vast wealth but eager for more.

Edward, his impoverished nephew, in love with Giulietta.

The Cavalier Belfior, posing as the King of Poland in order to protect the real king, and sworn to secrecy.

The Marchioness of Poggio, a young widow, Giulietta's cousin and close friend, engaged to the Cavalier.

An elderly Count, hoping to marry the Marchioness.

Servants

Act I

The Castle of Kelbar, in Brittany

CHORUS OF SERVANTS

Best day ever!
A king is honored guest
At the castle of Kelbar.
Gorgeous weather!
We're living on the crest:
It's a double wedding day!

Fun we guarantee,
Cheers and toasting,
Platters in the hands
Of servants hopping.

Feasting, revelry,
Sucklings roasting,
Wheezy brassy bands
Play till dropping.

Day no malcontent can mar
At the castle of Kelbar.
A day no disarray can jar
The castle of Kelbar!
A day of cheer no tears can mar
At the castle of Kelbar.

(The Baron of Kelbar enters with his elderly friend, the treasurer)

BARON

My revered and peerless treasurer
What a pearl your bride will be!
As for merit, simply measure her
By her noble pedigree.
Now I'll not be ceremonious –
That is not the way with me –
But I trust it not erroneous
To expect some progeny,
The best and brightest of progeny.

TREASURER

Baron, proudly I shall answer you.
Yes, I plan to be prolific.
Not a mere few, but such a retinue
That I dare not be specific.
Find your daughter, go and tell her
Not a piddling three or four.
As in years I far excel her,
It is I that call the score,
At least a dozen of progeny!

BARON

Just the son for me!

TREASURER

Dear father-in-law!

BARON

You and I agree as one!
I'm proud to say
We never, never disagree!

BOTH

What a happy bride!
High class wedding!
Gossip far and wide,
The word is spreading.
Presents they will bring
Showered upon her,
And the Polish king
Is guest of honor!

All inscribed on golden parchment
By the castle registrar,
By the designated, certified registrar.

(Enter Delmonte, squire for the presumed king)

DELMONTE His Majesty arises!
The valiant King of Poland
Is coming to say good morning
To his distinguished host.

CHORUS Honored by such a visitor,
All Brittany recognizes
News so fraught with meaning,
Our people preening
From coast to coast.
So proud from coast to coast!

(Enter the Cavalier Belfior, who for reasons not yet revealed is impersonating King Stanislaof of Poland)

CAVALIER No flourishes, no ritual,
I've little leaning toward 'em.
From curtesies habitual
I turn away in boredom.
Dear Baron, what a pleasure!
You make me feel at ease here,
And when I write the court,
You'll be proud of my report.
Were I at home, my gratitude
I'd show with more than word.

BARON Sir, you are far too gracious.
The pleasure's mine entirely.

CHORUS Yes, with such a guest
The sweet renown is our reward.

CAVALIER



(Fel- low sol- diers of the arm- y, you who thought me wild and zan- y,
Come, admit it's rather brainy
Of the clown to get the crown,
The lowly clown to get the crown.

As platoon buffoon you knew me,
But observe my transformation
Into sovereign of a proud nation.
To my question now reply:
Is there a wiser fool than I?

Rather brainy of the zany;
To the question I now reply.
Posing as sovereign of a proud nation,
Go find a wiser fool than I,
Find a wiser, smarter fool than I.)

(to all) Come, let's be democratic!
While guest, I find it cheerier
As equal, not superior,
With one and all to share.
Repeat: with one and all to share.

So join me as good companions,
And ward off the day more serious,
When trials of state may weary us
And the crown just a burden to bear.

CHORUS

We are of your opinion:
Here not as king, but companion.
Charm when combined with virtue
Proudly proclaims you the heir.

CAVALIER

With days to come more serious,
The crown a load to bear ...

CHORUS

We are your opinion:
Not a king, but companion.
Charm and savvy
Combined with virtue
Herald a royal heir!
Proclaim you the royal heir.

BARON

Sir, will we have the honor of your presence
At the double wedding we celebrate tomorrow?

CAVALIER

But of course! And the brides?

BARON

My lovely daughter weds the treasurer,
And though lately jilted by a blackguard,
My niece, Marchioness of Poggio ,,

CAVALIER Poggio! (How could she?)

BARON With my niece you're acquainted?

CAVALIER Very well ... by repute.
Now I must beg a few moments to myself.

BARON Your wish is absolute,
So please Your Majesty. (*all leave except the Cavalier*)

CAVALIER Time is short. I must prevent her.
A note to the court, that's my first task.
Should the Marchioness enter,
Off comes the mask.

(*writes*) "The plot by now has possibly succeeded,
And the real Stanislaw has had the time he needed
To reach Warsaw and reclaim his power.
Your Highness, I beg you, within this hour,
Oust me from my throne, for I discover
To continue as King I must lose out as lover."

(*Enter Edward, nephew of the treasurer*)

EDWARD Your Highness, though here unbidden
I kneel to ask a favor.

CAVALIER Stand up. They say that you are smitten
With the baron's only daughter.
But it seems your uncle's bought her.
And so your mission I daresay is to save her.

EDWARD That hope is over,
So let me serve in your army,
March off to Poland!
Valor will guide me.
Fame, honor, both inviting,
With you beside me,
I'll gladly perish fighting.

When the trumpet calls to battle,
When the flags and banners flourish,
Clash of steel and sword will prove my courage.
I ask but one reward: to die for you!
A noble death, to die for you!

Let my wretched life conclude
And I'll feel only gratitude.
On a note of gratitude
Let my wretched life conclude.

CAVALIER

Your exalted thirst for glory
Brings to mind a favorite story
That I like to call Il Trovatore,
As you defy the force of destiny.
You choose the path that leads to death,
Like mad Macbeth.
Of your own life you're as careless
As the princecc Don Carlos,
But! Let us call a spade a spade:
War's no ball in masquerade.

EDWARD

Deal me a deadly, dangerous mission,
And to requite you, I'll fight with abandon.

CAVALIER

Good! I applaud your bold ambition.
(Such a madman I frankly never planned on.)

EDWARD

Sir, I'll serve always your debtor.

CAVALIER

No, a correction: as friend is better.
Your affection and fire endear me;
As my squire I want you near me.

EDWARD

Joy! O heaven! To be near *her!*
On the spot, each day to see her!

CAVALIER

And why not?
So down with tears and desperation -- all that rot!

EDWARD

Royal king, my adoration!
Words will not suffice
To thank you for such paradise.

May the stars look down and bless you,
O my gracious, glorious sovereign.
May no harm or hurt distress you,
May no trusted friend betray.

CAVALIER

(Though my crown will tumble down
And make the joke go up in smoke,
While I am king, I have clout

To help a lover out.
 Though the fiction lead to eviction,
 Though my reign is on the wane,
 Yet my reign is not in vain.
 I have to say I portray
 A good king for a day.)

(the two sing simultaneously)



EDWARD.
 With the heart of a war- ier un- swerv- ing, I will turn all my fur- ies to serv- ing.
 CAV.
 In the part of a war- ier un- swerv- ing, you will earn all the glor- ies of serv- ing.

EDWARD

With the heart of a warrior unswerving
 I will turn all my furies to serving.
 Into far lands, inspired by a hero,
 All the dangers of death I'll defy!

CAVALIER

In the part of a warrior unswerving
 You will earn all the glories of serving.
 And the garlands desired by a hero
 Shall adorn you, provided you die. *(exeunt)*

(enter the Marchioness, a young widow, who has overheard the latter part of the duet)

MARCHIONESS

So! No question about it!
 It is he! ... It *must* be!
 Why does he try to avoid me?
 I've crept in to unmask the mystery.

The word is spread of my intention
 To wed the old commander.
 So let's see if through deception
 We shall arrive at candor.

Like a child, now that I've found him
 I'd come running,
 And throw my arms around him.
 But instead, with craft and cunning,
 I conceal my hurt and my pain.

Love that summons and draws me hither,
 Plead for me and gain my uncle's pardon.
 For my love is like a garden
 That will not wither,

Even though I love in vain.

If romance entice the widow to relapse,
There's none that can defend her.
When I fall, it's neither halfway nor perhaps
But full and proud surrender.

My heart, no need to ponder,
My fate is all too plain.
Ah! Should the cavalier wander,
I'll never love again. *(exit)*

*Scene: the garden. Giulietta, the baron's daughter, is seated sadly on a bench.
A chorus of country girls enters, bringing her presents.*

CHORUS Laden with garlands, simple peasants
Come to lighten, hasten the hours.
Grateful servants bring you presents,
Baskets full of fruit and flowers.

Sweetest of all, our fairest flora,
Angel struck by Cupid's dart.
Crowned by a radiant, golden aura,
Fortunate man who claims her heart!

GIULIETTA Dear friends, how thoughtful!
I shall remember your gift tomorrow.
(They little guess my anguish,
My secret burning sorrow.
O Edward, love, I languish
And I shall die of longing
For your kiss. Darling!

CHORUS On that angelic, lovely face
Do shadows seem to fall?

GIULIETTA Enough with this pretending!
Let's drop the folderol.

Hang that old booby!
I'm not so stupid,
And I've another plan,
Counting on Cupid.
I spot a younger man
I much prefer.

No joy is sweeter than
Those April moments
Of budding romance,
When love starts to stir.

CHORUS

O God, be merciful!
Come to her rescue.
Angels of heaven,
Smile upon her. *(the chorus leaves)*

(enter the baron with the treasurer)

BARON

Well, well, so here we find you!
His Majesty waiting, your fiancé searching,
And more expected – what folly
Possesses you to hide out here in the garden?

GIULIETTA

Dear father, you know my nature;
Aloof and timid, prone to melancholy.

TREASURER

Rubbish, rubbish, little hussy!
Claiming to be so bashful and demure!
Good news! For your complaint I've got the cure.
After tomorrow you'll not be quite so fussy.

(enter the cavalier, with Edward)

CAVALIER

Come, don't be shy now.
I myself will make the presentation.

TREASURER

(Did I not get rid of him?)

GIULIETTA

O my Edward! I could die now!

CAVALIER

We bring you, dear Treasurer,
A surprise that will call for celebration.
May I introduce your very own nephew;
As of now, my personal squire.

TREASURER

Squire! I'm overwhelmed!
My nephew so distinguished?

EDWARD *(modestly)*

Sir, it's what the king wished,
And I shall never lack for
A hero to admire.

CAVALIER Recognizing talent
 Is what I've got the knack for.
(to baron and treasurer)
 About you both, I am ecstatic!
 Your gifts are so self-evident, how could I miss you?
 In short, right now, to be precise,
 I've urgent need of expert advice
 On problems military and diplomatic.

BARON Your Highness flatters

TREASURER Tush, I'll not be affected.
 On weighty matters
 My opinion is indeed respected.

CAVALIER *(to Edward)* But as for you, no need to join us.
 On military strategy it's plain
 That your experience is scanty.
 Why don't you go entertain
 Your future auntie?

TREASURER (I smell a trap!
 I don't like them so close.)

CAVALIER *(turning him away from the lovers)*
 Far best to ignore them.
 Take a look at this map;
 We would just bore them.

(While the Cavalier spreads out a map for the Baron and the Treasurer to study, Edward and Giulietta take advantage of the situation)

EDWARD Dearest, finally together
 After painful separation!

GIULIETTA My sweet, for every moment parted
 Now at last full compensation!

BARON Majesty, the operation
 Calls for cannon at the station;
 Countercharge across the lowlands
 And the victory is Poland's.

CAVALIER *(watching the lovers)*
 Sir, the enemy appear
 To take off in their own direction.

GIULIETTA (*to Edward*) All our hope lies in my cousin.

TREASURER (Ah! The rascal's getting closer,)

CAVALIER Sir, your mind appears to wander.

TREASURER I am watching blow by blow, sir.
(Now he's got his arm around her!)

CAVALIER This requires detailed inspection.

EDWARD (*to Giulietta*) Love when tested grows profounder.

TREASURER Yes, your Majesty is wise.

BARON Now the enemy advances.

TREASURER Right before my very eyes!
Billing, cooing, heaving sighs.
Right before my very eyes!

BARON & CAVALIER We delay the west maneuver
Till the front line has retreated;
Wait until they gather forces.
Then we halt them at the river.
They will scatter as we're advancing
And the battle we have won.
Strike with cavalry advancing
And we've got them on the run.

TREASURER Sir, I fear – (they're in a fever) –
Large artillery is needed!
(On that rogue an uncle's curses!)
Straight assault is in our favor.
(Like an acrobat he's prancing!
He'll repent his stolen fun.)

GIULIETTA & EDWARD Ah, bliss so long denied a lover!
Joy at last, rapture long awaited –
Unforetold new universes
Where true love flows on forever.
Heart of hearts! O dream entrancing!
Love, our lives have just begun.

CAVALIER That's all for now,
And no decision till further study.

TREASURER (Released!)

SERVANT(*entering*) The Marchioness just arrived this very minute.

BARON & GIULIETTA To her a welcome greeting.

CAVALIER (I can't avoid a meeting!)

GIULIETTA Ah, she is here already!

CAVALIER (Too late, I've no escape.
No matter what, I'm bound by oath.)

(the Marchioness enters)

BARON My niece!

MARCHIONESS Uncle! Dear cousin, let me embrace you both.
Well, my dears, say nonetheless that
You're surprised I came so promptly.
(Dear Giulietta, you can guess that
My concern for you alone has brought me here.)

BARON Now is not the time for chatter;
You must hail the King of Poland

MARCHIONESS Really! The king? ...

BARON ... has come to flatter
This proud castle, here in person.

MARCHIONESS Guest of such renown and luster!
I was rude, Your Majesty.
But I had no way of knowing.
As your crown is barely showing.

CAVALIER (Ever onward!) Tush, no matter!

MARCHIONESS (Rascal! The imposter! Or am I mad?)

 (I'm all a-tremble. His every feature!
A freak of nature? It must be he!
Or am I so obsessed with love betrayed

I see every face imprinted with his perfidy?)

GIULIETTA , EDWARD, BARON & TREASURER

Who can explain her look of dismay?

CAVALIER

(I can explain her look of dismay.)

Lovely ladies, if you'll excuse me,
My new squire will do the honors!
Able masters, don't refuse me;
More advice I need to hear.
(If I manage these maneuvers
It's the crown of my career!)

MARCHIONESS

(His own accent! Feature and manner ...
Oh, that cavalier is clever!
Why they honor, label him royal,
Is entirely Greek to me.
For the moment I'll not quibble,
But shall hold my tongue and see.)

GIULIETTA & EDWARD

(Guessing only from our demeanor,
Oh, the king performs a favor.
With the monarch as a foil
We shall have some moments free,
For his maps and plans enable
Us to speak at liberty.)

BARON & TREASURER

(King's adviser, what an honor!
A distinction all would savor.
Who would not be true and loyal
To a king as wise as he?
It confirms that we are able,
If sought by royalty.)

(The Cavalier leaves, taking with him the Baron and the Treasurer. The two lovers eagerly surround the Marchioness, who paces up and down, lost in her own thoughts.)

GIULIETTA

You're just in time, wise cousin!

EDWARD

We're in your hands, and trust in you entirely.

GIULIETTA

Come! We need a suggestion.

MARCHIONESS Not so hasty! Giulietta,
Was that really King Stanislao?

GIULIETTA That's not the question!
Do concentrate on *me* for now.

MARCHIONESS (*absently*) There's some solution ...

GIULIETTA I knew you'd find it!
Oh, hurry let's hear your flash of genius.

MARCHIONESS (That beastly cavalier!
How he's toyed with my affections!)

EDWARD Though rather late,
We still can hope if you provide directions.

GIULIETTA Tell us, don't make us wait!

MARCHIONESS Please! I'm annoyed!

GIULIETTA & EDWARD (Our future disappearing ...
Darling, the end is certain;
Now falls the final curtain:
We've lost our only friend.)

MARCHIONESS (Oh, why do I persist in caring?
How simple, if I could just ignore him
And face the end.
Though all too clearly I adore him,
What message does he send?)

EDWARD Excuse us if we bore you.
Your patience has been tested.

GIULIETTA If so disinterested,
It means you care no longer.

MARCHIONESS Forgive me, dear, I'm sorry.
In truth, I'm rather troubled
By private worries, coupled
With passions even stronger,
But I'm entirely for you.
What I can do, I will.

GIULIETTA Ah! I again adore you!

EDWARD Ah! We are grateful still.

GIULIETTA His uncle's old as Moses.

MARCHIONESS We'll bring him to his senses.

EDWARD Her father still opposes.

MARCHIONESS We'll start by mending fences.
By now you've surely found me out:
Like you, I burn with love!
Oh, what to do?

TRIO As lovers united
We challenge destiny,
Our hopes relighted
In glow of solidarity.

For us, it's roses
When fate opposes,
Love is ever our ally.
By trial incited
To greater constancy,
Our hearts are plighted
To do or die! *(exeunt)*

Scene: The gallery, as at first. Enter the Cavalier and the Treasurer.)

CAVALIER All your ideas show stupendous talent!
You're a mastermind, a virtuoso!

TREASURER Sir, I'm by nature modest, and you are gallant,
But in managing finances
My gifts are not just so-so.

CAVALIER Ah! If only your commitment to the baron
Were not so binding,
I'd say simply:
Come and be my finance minister.
Wed the Princess Ineska!
Take over her estate and her titles
With their enormous revenue.

TREASURER My liege! Your vast esteem for me I never knew!
I shall get my freedom.

CAVALIER

And so obliging! (*he leaves*)

TREASURER

All on account of charm and brilliance!
The baron can't object when I make excuses
When he learns how much my new estate produces.
In worldly matters one must cultivate resilience.
What a future! Serving a sovereign
I make off with the Princess,
Claim a fortune.
It's clear to me these reasons are so compelling
Even he's bound to see it,
But there's no telling ...

BARON (*entering*)

Beloved son-in law!
A pleasure to meet here.
At last, at leisure,
We can complete here
The marriage contract.
All the arrangements
In impeccable resume,
Are here intact.
So I insist
You study the list,
Peruse away!

TREASURER

A father unsurpassed!
(This calls for butter.)
Your daughter's virtues
Tongue cannot utter.
And such an honor,
Mine to have won her,
No round of compliment
Can half convey.
But news unexpected
Arrived today.

BARON

That for the moment is unconnected.
Quickly! Time passes,
So put on your glasses
See nothing's neglected.
Read all the particles
Set in these articles
As I directed:
I, the undersigned Gasparo Antonio ...

TREASURER It's now irrelevant,
A waste of time!

BARON Better a settlement
That puts it plainly,
The dowry, *et cetera*,
What's yours and what's mine.
Now is the document
Ready to sign.

TREASURER I am not signing.

BARON Ha ha! You're joking!

TREASURER On the contrary.

BARON Don't be provoking!

TREASURER Terribly sorry.

BARON Mad as a hatter!

TREASURER Baron, be patient. It's all for the better.

BARON But it's unheard of!

TREASURER I cannot marry ...

BARON What rhyme or reason?

TREASURER Because ... because ... (Embarrassing spot for me!)

BARON Out with it, hurry!

TREASURER I feel the girl is just ... not for me.

BARON What! My own daughter! You dare reject her?

TREASURER No, not exactly ...

BARON So you accept her!

TREASURER Matter of fact, I ...

BARON Go ahead! Say it! Say it! Say it!

TREASURER The King has chosen me to recognize ...

BARON (An outrage! My family!
Forefathers, RISE!
To vile disgraces
Revenge replies!
The blood in my arteries
Erupts and races,
My hands are ravenous
To tear out his eyes.
To nine generations of noble relations
I solemnly promise to tear out his eyes.
Watch out! Watch out!
I swear I will tear out his eyes!
To flagrant betrayal revenge replies.)

TREASURER Though your genealogy, like an anthology,
Sparkles with luster that no one denies,
Great opportunity beckons but once --
Preposterous folly to forfeit the prize.
Facing the crisis, I know your advice is
That passing up profit can never be wise.

BARON Sir, I realize you're jesting;
From the start 'twas my suspicion.
(menacingly) Otherwise ...

TREASURER (How most unpleasant!
He goes off like ammunition.)

BARON Answer! Or I swear to heaven ...

TREASURER I must run, it's nearly seven.

BARON Wait! We'll settle with my saber.

TREASURER Later on! ... Later on!
Urgent errands I'd forgotten.

BARON You've betrayed us, you've disgraced us!
You're a cur, a core that's rotten,
You've two-faced us!
I swear to God, if rapier fails,
I'll slice and tear your dastard heart out
And do it with my nails.

TREASURER Aie! Aie! Aie! Oh, help me!
Oh, hurry! Somebody! He'll stab me!
I'm a dead man. He's got me!

(Edward, Giulietta and the Marchioness enter precipitously, with chorus)

TUTTI What a roar! What a blast!
A shriek of terror!
Pandemonium, to say the least.
Cry of man or howl of beast?

TREASURER Save me, nephew! I'm a goner.
Thank the Lord, you're here at last.

BARON He has stained the family honor.
I will kill him, let me past!

MARCHIONESS Stop and listen ...

GIULIETTA Whatever's happened?

EDWARD Tell us all. Be calm and try to keep it quiet.

BARON You will tremble, you will shudder!
Oh, the wretch cannot deny it!
My own family he abuses,
And my daughter he refuses.
He has jilted my Giulietta!

GIULIETTA *(in ecstasy)* Hallelujah!

BARON Now vendetta!

MARCHIONESS I can recommend the very best vendetta:
Why not hurry up and marry Giulietta
To another man who might agree?

GIULIETTA Now you're talking! Here's the nephew!
He will solve it perfectly.

EDWARD Sir, I gladly will assist you;
I will fill the vacancy.

BARON No, no, never would noble lineage of Kelbar
Resort to barter!
I refuse now to be the starter.

Blood I choose now,
Blood and vengeance!

TUTTI Softer, softer!

CAVALIER (*enters*) Oho! Put down your sword!

TUTTI It's the sovereign!

CAVALIER What goes on? (*everyone freezes*)

BARON

BAR.



Awk-ward mo-ment for his ap-pear-ance. I'll sur-ren-der if the king runs in-ter-fer-ence,
For to wrangle before the royal
Brings dishonor to the throne.)

TREASURER

TRES.



Just in time the king has spok-en; now my bones will stay un-brok-en.

With his hand up, I can stand up,
For he's bound to save his own.)

MARCHIONESS, GIULIETTA & EDWARD

(These unexpected circumstances
Smile on us, restore our chances.
Even-handed, serene and steady,
Thus a king can set the tone.)

CAVALIER

(Terrified, with cautious glances,
Lo, the Lord of high finances!
So the uncle has already
Made his new intentions known.)

Out with it, Baron. No hemming and hawing.
How come the sword?
And what reason for drawing?

BARON

I was insulted ...

TREASURER

I was assaulted ...

OTHERS

Little dispute, no harm has resulted.

BARON Jilted my daughter!

TREASURER Ready to kill me!

BARON Promises broken!

TREASURER Case of aggression ...

OTHERS Nothing significant, merely a bicker.

CAVALIER One at a time, you will drive me to liquor.
Calm and collected, preferably slower,
Tell us your story, *you* take the floor.

BARON Sir, my ancestors demand satisfaction.

TREASURER Flew off the handle with no provocation.

BARON I want apology, followed by action.

TREASURER I want protection!

CAVALIER That is enough!!!
This would stump a Socrates.
For now, leave in quiet.
If threat or fisticuff
Renew this riot
Prior to processes
Lawful and legal,
My regal wrath
You will incur.

TUTTI Pardon, O pardon, sir!
To you we defer.

Trust a king so sagacious and moral;
Justly he'll weigh the claims of the quarrel.
Sorting out both the good and the evil,
Probing deep to the roots of the wrangle,
Rival claims he can wisely untangle;
Justice will never plead in vain.
Past the storms of a transient upheaval,
Brotherhood and love shall reign.

ACT II

Scene: the gallery, as before. A chorus of servants exchange gossip.

TENORS Then it's all off for the wedding?

BASSES It is out, burst like a bubble.

TENORS A dispute between the couple?

BASSES Why do all wear such long faces?

TUTTI O these crazy upper classes!
So it goes, if you have money.
I believe them all half loony.
Loves they change like changing gloves.



We're the vas- sal of the cas-tle. Oh, it's luck-y to be a lack-ey!

Never catch me trading places
With a bunch of basket cases.

We are poor, but far more joyous
Than the wierdies who employ us.
All congenial, though but menial,
And our hearts are true enough,
Even if our hands are rough.
All congenial, though but menial,
Our hearts are made for love;
Of lowly rank but made for love.

EDWARD (*enters*) Faithful friends, you have shared my pain;
So freely have I confided.

CHORUS All along with you we've sided,
But the world is mean and sordid.
It's the rich that get rewarded,
And the poor only get stung.

EDWARD All behind me! My stars are shining!
Hope comes after days of pining.
I'll tell you in my native tongue.

(he sings the aria in Italian)
Pietoso al lungo pianto, *etc.*

CHORUS You say at last you've got her?
That sunshine follows rain?
Your rapture and relief
Describe again, describe again!

EDWARD Deh! Lasciate a un'alma amante, *etc.*

Scene: Edward with Giulietta and the Treasurer. Enter the Cavalier.

CAVALIER Squire! How lucky, finding here together
You and Giulietta with my new minister.
Tell me, why is Edward such a dead word with the Baron?
Why's he so set against the marriage?

GIULIETTA It's simple! My darling has no money.
His uncle has it coming out his ears.

CAVALIER I can help, so dry the tears.
No fuss, no hassle.

EDWARD You have the answer?

CAVALIER The treasurer gives *you* his land and castle,
Plus an income of five thousand scudi;
Paid yearly.

TREASURER Hold on there! Let's review it ...

CAVALIER Ah! You wish to add more to it!
Words cannot say how my heart melts.
But you must decide right now, or else! ...

TREASURER *(after an agonizing hesitation)*
All right ... I'll do it!
(all leave in triumph except the treasurer)

TREASURER My land and castle!
Plus five thousand scudi!
But my reward comes later.
Ay, me! Here comes the Baron!
He seems a trifle moody ... *(enter the Baron)*

BARON Ha! All alone here! Viperous traitor!

For your betrayal I now demand an answer.

TREASURER

(Come, courage!) You want a battle?
I am your man, sir!

BARON

Name your weapon! Choose an arsenal!
Go the limit, all that you can handle.
I will snuff you like a candle,
I will crack you like an egg.
Like a scruffy, dirty sandal
I will hang you up on a peg.
I will crush you like a wafer,
I will strike you like a match.
There will be nothing left to stay for
When I toss you down the hatch.
There will be nothing left to stay for when I'm through.
I'll see you pay for what you do.

TREASURER

Prattle! Prattle!
Here is matter you might contemplate
As you await the fatal battle.
Leave directions with your lawyer
Where you wish your grave to be;
Make a will before you draw your
Sword. Leave some to charity.

For according to projections
You will soon be scattered sections,
So your lawyer needs directions
Where you wish your grave to be.
Go, tell your lawyer
Who can draw your legacy.
Take care, make clear
Where your grave's to be.
Take care, make clear
Where your grave awaits.

BARON

Bury me, huh?

TREASURER

That's just the way it goes.

BARON

Scattered sections ...

TREASURER

It's in the stars.

BARON

(He's a cream puff, but a good bluff.
The effect jars when he said stars.
For it takes me by surprise how
Such a coward's changed to Mars now.)

TREASURER

(So it's no fun for the Baron
To reflect on going under,
Undergoing going under
Is a prospect dear to none.

BOTH

Undergoing going under
Is a prospect dear to none.
Unappealing, it's a prospect dear to none.

BARON

Go ahead, no time to weaken.
Name the weapon that you choose.

TREASURER

You want to hear it?

BARON

Name your weapon.

TREASURER

I have chosen what we'll use.



And a soldier never lingers
With a fuse between his fingers.
Any warrior would deplore your weapon;
He would choose the sword.
Stout and manly are the means applied
When honor is restored.

TREASURER My proposal's more efficient.
Mine wins the laurel!

BARON Puf! Outrageous! Let's go forward.

TREASURER With the fuses!

BARON Sword or saber!

TREASURER Load the barrel!

BARON You're insane!
I'll reduce you to a suet,
But I'll have my servants do it
With a plain and simple cane!
With a cane, with a cane, with a cane!

TREASURER I have servants myself
Who can also in like manner,
In like manner entertain.

BARON Fury enough'll
Blow my brain, oh
Who can snuffle
A live volcano.
If I stay, no
One else can say, no
None tell how this (the) fire goes out.

TREASURER Thanks to me, there'll be today no
Further action with the cane. O
Connoisseur of sword and scuffle,
Notice well who won the bout! *(exeunt)*

(The Marchioness and the Cavalier enter from opposite sides)

MARCHIONESS (What's behind this regal masquerade?
Does he cast me as the fool?
O Cavalier, your escapade,

I fear, is in peril. You are heading for a fall.
Cavalier, you'd best be careful
Or I'll have you confessing all.
O beware! O beware!
Cavalier, O come, be careful
Lest I entice you to confess, yes, yes,
Confess it all!
Cavalier, look where you're treading,
As you're heading for a fall, all, all
For a fall!

CAVALIER

(Hurt inside, her feelings fluctuate,
Though her anger's all too plain.
O Cavalier, not yet to abdicate!
Though transparent, still I daren't
End my reign.
I dare not abdicate! Though transparent,
Still I daren't end my reign.)

All alone, dear Marchioness?

MARCHIONESS

Yes, sir. Alone, but with my thoughts.

CAVALIER

For your thoughts here take a penny.
I suppose you're thinking of your Cavalier.

MARCHIONESS

True, true! Deciding on which of many
Is the best way I can punish
That unbending, wayward lover.

CAVALIER

Heaven help me! I'm astonished.
A passing mood you'll soon get over ...

MARCHIONESS

Having pondered, I've just concluded
He's not the man I want to marry.

CAVALIER

Said in anger.

MARCHIONESS

You're mistaken, for I find us quite unsuited.
I can bear the man no longer.

CAVALIER

(What an actress! A star performance!)

MARCHIONESS

(Surely now he will unbend,
He will unbend.)

CAVALIER (Star performance! Star performance!)

BOTH (Tense is the contest,
Untold it's conclusion;
My resolution
Will tally up to his/hers.)

CAVALIER You'll then refuse him?

MARCHIONESS Nothing more certain.

CAVALIER You'd not excuse him?

MARCHIONESS Now falls the curtain!

CAVALIER (On stage this star would shine!)

MARCHIONESS (What was that line?)

(Bound and determined,
I shall not weaken.
So instead, I'll seek
Another man to wed.)

CAVALIER (Bound and determined,
I shall not weaken.
Even though she'll seek
Another man to wed.)

BARON (*entering precipitously*)
Get ready!
A message just arrived from the Count Commander!
Expect him any minute.
He is now on the way. (*hurried exit*)

MARCHIONESS The Count I value. His love doesn't vary,
And so today we shall marry.

CAVALIER What of the Cavalier?

MARCHIONESS The Cavalier is merry,
But his jokes tend to make me weary.
Rather than be his plaything,
I'll take the Count.

CAVALIER No! Wait and see!

Your words are scathing,
But he'll return to win you.
Alone, he'll out count all the counts of Brittany!

MARCHIONESS

Then what's he waiting for?
How come? And how long?

As summer rain
Falls on the flower,
Restoring the faded petal,
He'll see in that sweet shower
My love reopen, reopen again.

(We'll find out if he's human.
If this won't do the trick
The talents of a woman
Need liberating quick.)

And so you still are silent? Answer ...

CAVALIER

I have no answer.

MARCHIONESS

So to the Count, then,
I'll offer both my hand, sir,
And my pledge.

CHORUS

Hurry, now the Count's arriving
With his equipage appearing.
Hurry, hurry! Hurry, hurry!
You can see his horses rearing.

CAVALIER

(No surrender!)

MARCHIONESS

I shall go now to my husband
And my new life!



I'll for- get the faith-less bound- er. Such con- tempt I take from no man,
Nor a demon, less than human.
Dearly indeed he'll pay the price.
(All the fervor of a woman
Cannot melt a heart of ice.)
(they leave, in opposite directions)

(enter Giulietta, alone)

GIULIETTA I've never been so happy!
The king's a sweetie.
Because of him my father yielded
And I'll wed my darling Edward.

EDWARD (*entering in agony*)
Ah! Dearest heart!
Bad news! Be brave and bear up.
The king must depart.

GIULIETTA Then God go with him ...

EDWARD That's only half. He's taking me!

GIULIETTA He's taking *you*? How could he!

EDWARD This he commanded.

GIULIETTA Then I command you to remain here with me.

EDWARD You forget, my angel,
The claims of duty can be grim.
The king requires the squire.

GIULIETTA But you're not married to *him*!
My claim is prior.

EDWARD A pledge I swore to serve him
And fight for fame and splendor.
You tempt me to surrender,
To love and forget my vow.

GIULIETTA Who cares if you are famous?
Call me an ignoramus,
But who on earth could blame us
Living for love here and now?

You also gave me your oath,
One that you can't ignore.
If you cannot keep them both,
Then let's make love, not war.

EDWARD But think a bit ...

GIULIETTA Why think a bit? I know my mind already.

Has discarded him completely,
Scorns him for his double dealings.

MARCHIONESS

I am quite ready to marry you, sir,
But on one condition,
A scruple that I owe to my former feelings.

COUNT

Here I stand, in your power.

MARCHIONESS

Unless the Cavalier returns within one hour ...

CAVALIER (*entering*)

Gentlemen!

COUNT

At your call.

BARON

Your Highness!

CAVALIER

How galling! Crisis back in Warsaw requiring
My prompt departure.

MARCHIONESS

On the eve of marrying Count Ivrea,
I hoped you'd attend my wedding;
With your royal presence we'd be enchanted.

CAVALIER

Though sadly, your wish, Madame,
Cannot be granted.

MARCHIONESS

Let the contract of marriage be drawn up without waiting.

CAVALIER

My news is grating.
But orders from the highest court
Command the Count
On an immediate secret mission
To come along as my escort.

MARCHIONESS

What next!

BARON

A pity.

MARCHIONESS

(It's the last straw that undoes me.
Cavalier, your clever coup has overthrown us.
So unlooked for, too late he's shown us
'Tis the unforeseen that hurts.)

CAVALIER

(Her confusion does amuse me;
And I add it as a bonus.

Though a momentary onus,
She'll concede that these indeed
Are just desserts.)

OTHERS (Such a setback could yet induce me
To believe an evil eye is cast upon us.
And the King knows he's outdone us
With the power he exerts.)

DELMONTE(*entering*) Sir, a message most important,
Of the greatest interest:
An urgent letter from the court and
To the King it is addressed.

CAVALIER Come, let's have it. (*he reads*)
(Ah! Luck is with me!
Here's a note that ends the jest.)
News that explains a mystery
And most affects my rule ... yet
Give first the hand of Giuliette
To my young squire in marriage.
Recall, you once were their age.
No further shilly shally,
(*to treasurer*)
As witness, join the king.

EDWARD & GIULIETTA
Our truest friend and ally!
From him our blessings spring.

BARON I'll not oppose it. Here, take her hand;
We yield when kings command.

TUTTI Long live the lovers!

CAVALIER And now the news –
Get ready for the sting.

(*reads*) "Finally Stanislaw has arrived in Warsaw. The court has declared in his favor, and you can abdicate whenever you please. But the loss of a throne is only partial, as you thereby acquire the title of Marshal."

BARON But you? Who *are* you?

CAVALIER The Cavalier Belfior!

TUTTI Belfior!

MARCHIONESS At last!

CAVALIER (*embracing her*) Now faithful evermore!

TREASURER Count!

COUNT What happened?

BARON I fell for it.
So now what's to be done?

COUNT, BARON & TREASURER

Let's be good sports and mum's the word.
Admit the king has won.

TUTTI

Now it's settled, forgive and be forgiven.
You who forfeited, forget your disappointment;
Love provides a soothing ointment.
Hail the king this happy day,
But toast the king who had his day.

So two weddings are at hand,
If not the ones that were planned.
We will count his reign a model
If wrongs are righted
And two young and happy couples are united.
Now your turn to applaud our play.

To the weddings herein plighted
Sweethearts all are now invited.
Wrongs are righted, loves requited,
Love at last has found the way!

To the weddings herein plighted
Welcome all who liked our play.
Wrongs are righted, loves requited,
Kings should all have such a day!

THE END