

RICHARD WAGNER

NO LOVE ALLOWED

English Version by Donald Pippin

Original Libretto by Richard Wagner, based on Shakespeare's **Measure for Measure**.

Wagner goes to Sicily. A priggish, prudish German tries (unsuccessfully) to impose his own stern morality upon the hot-blooded, pleasure-loving people of the south

Cast of Characters

Frederick	the Viceroy, a rigidly moralistic German governing Sicily while the king is absent
Claudio	a young Sicilian, condemned to die
Isabella	his sister, on the verge of taking the veil
Lucio	his light-hearted, somewhat roguish friend
Angelo	also a friend
Antonio	another friend
Danieli	a tavern keeper
Brighella	Chief of Police
Dorella	Isabella's former maid, now out of work
Mariana	Isabella's friend, also taking the veil
Pontius Pilate	not THE Pontius Pilate

People of Palermo, masqueraders and musicians

Scene: Palermo in the 16th century

ACT I

Pandemonium! Riot! Bedlam! A war on vice has been declared by someone who obviously means business and has put up the resources to back it. And in a most unlikely place -- the sun-drenched, pleasure loving land of Sicily. Here, in the outskirts of Palermo, the storm troopers are on the move -- evidently the work of Frederick, the new viceroy, a stern moralist from the North, a German, whose lofty ideals and uncompromising standards have made such an impression on the kindly if over indulgent king of Sicily that he has entrusted his kingdom into the energetic hands of the newcomer while he himself takes a leave of absence.

A man of zeal and determination, a disciplinarian, strong on law and order, Frederick is eager to make his mark, with the limited time at his disposal, to reshape his wayward subjects by means of a crash course in morality. We are about to see the first fruits of his frontal attack on human frailty -- a crackdown on the flourishing tavern trade.

Among the honest drinking folk who are being forcibly evicted, sent sprawling out into the street, we find three dapper young men who we suspect have much to learn about the noble ideal of austerity. Lucio, with his friends Antonio and Angelo, are guilty of idleness and frivolity. We might go so far as to admit that they are guilty of being young. Yet even they have not yet been accused of the most pernicious, the most odious, the most heinous crime of all -- the crime of making love. Wait.

Scene: in front of a tavern in the outskirts of Palermo where a crowd has gathered.

CHORUS You roughs and rowdies, have a heart.
 No need to tear the place apart.
 We honest folk can show our stuff
 And make it clear, enough's enough.

LUCIO & ANTONIO A free for all?

LUCIO The glass they knocked out of my hand.

ANTONIO I sent one sprawling on the floor.

ANGELO Brute force is all they understand.

ANTONIO I could have handled six or more..

ANGELO A fine display of utter gall.

LUCIO But why do they arrive *en masse*
 To badger, bully and harass?

CHORUS Oh, look!
(Danielli, Pontius Pilate and Dorella are brought out)
They've got them by the collar.

PONTIUS PILATE Hands off!

DANIELI Let go!

DORELLA I am a lady.

LUCIO All so absurd it must be true.

DANIELI I'll polish off the pack of you.

BRIGHELLA This way, you rascals, come with me;
My jail has room enough for three.

DORELLA Not I! My hands are also strong.
O holy virgin, help us out!

BRIGHELLA Your virgin, too, can come along.

CHORUS Just what is this hubbub about?

DORELLA Oh, Lucio, stand beside me now!
To me you made a marriage vow,
And though I gave my heart to you,
I'll free you of your obligation.
If you will come to my salvation
And beat these bullies black and blue.

LUCIO Why, here's a stroke of luck indeed,
If freedom be the price agreed.
(to Brighella)
Stand by and let the lady through,

BRIGHELLA Clear out! Be gone! You heard the order.

LUCIO If not, 'twill be the worse for you.

BRIGHELLA I want the handcuffs on this fellow.

LUCIO You lift a finger at your peril.

BRIGHELLA Clear out! Be gone!

LUCIO We've just begun. The battle's on!
Pitch in, my friends and join the action.
(to chorus) Come and join the action, come on, come on!
We'll drive them back to town.

TENORS & BASSES It's time to rise and strike them down.

LUCIO We'll drive the rascals back to town.

ANGELO By whose command do you appear?

LUCIO Who is so down on wine and beer?

ANGELO By whose command?

LUCIO Who sent you here?

DORELLA, PONTIUS PILATE & DANIELI
And why for us the ball and chain?

CHORUS This break and entry do explain.
Come on, why here?

LUCIO Who ordered you to make a scene?

CHORUS Tell us the man who sent you here.
What is the plan? What does he mean?

BRIGHELLA Hold! Hush! Here's what we need.
Strike, drum! You rank and file, take heed.
And hear! My orders I shall read.

CHORUS Let's hear what light these orders bring,
What new concoction from the king.

(Brighella reads his proclamation)

OTHERS Ha ha ha ha! You make me laugh.

LUCIO So now we know just where we stand.
Long may our viceroy rule the land!

OTHERS Our lofty leader of the land!

BRIGHELLA The gall of these ungodly folk.

DORELLA The king's idea of a joke.

LUCIO So! Wine and women both are banned!
And worst of all, no carnival.

ALL This German prude has much to learn
About the ways of Sicily.
To snow and ice he'd best return
And take with him his chastity.

BRIGHELLA The rule of law these hoodlums spurn;
They dare to laugh at chastity.
They look for trouble, and soon
I fear they'll take it out on me.
(Claudio is brought in under arrest)

ANGELO See who they bring. Oh, look!

LUCIO My friend! It's Claudio, now a prisoner.

DORELLA Claudio?

CLAUDIO A prisoner! Were it only that!
The tale continues.
Not a pretty story, as you will learn.

LUCIO Of what foul deed are you accused?

CLAUDIO So heinous I'm to die for it.

LUCIO & OTHERS To die! So was it murder?

LUCIO Are you a foreign spy?

OTHERS Foreign spy?

CLAUDIO Worse yet! My crime was love.

LUCIO And when was love a crime?

CLAUDIO Have you not heard
The stern fanatic's new decree?

LUCIO We laugh and take it as a joke.

CLAUDIO Tomorrow! Save the laugh till then.

OTHERS Tomorrow! Lord! All just for love?
Condemned to die, can this be real?

CLAUDIO Dorella! Why? Why are you here?
You, too, arrested? Speak!

DORELLA Ah, Claudio, I pity your distress,
But I as well am in an awful mess.
For when your sister Isabella
Renounced the world and took the veil,
No longer could she keep a maid,
So I found another line of trade.
Now captive, taken from the tavern,
They grab and haul me off to jail.

CLAUDIO As loyal friend, I'd help you out
But now I need just such a friend.

LUCIO What can we do?
Yet even he cannot mean
This trumped up decree.

OTHERS Mean it or not, we'll set you free.

CLAUDIO You know not Frederick's iron will.

LUCIO A bigot, never known to smile.
A mere machine without a soul,
Called on to play the leading role,
The king, who finds him true and loyal,
Unbending, firm and resolute,
Has chosen him as substitute.

CLAUDIO A man of principle!

LUCIO Of ice! But let him freeze
Beneath our hot Sicilian sun,
We burn the more!
Take warning! Fear our Southern fire!

CLAUDIO He knows no fear.
One ray of hope may yet redeem and save my life.
Hear me, dear Lucio!

You know that holy house of prayer,
The house of Saint Elizabeth.

My sister, now a novice there,
May save me from the jaws of death.

Oh, hurry, friend! So much at stake,
Go tell her of my dismal fate.
Beseech her, for a brother's sake,
To plead for me before too late.
A sister's words, her tears alone,
Will stir his sleeping conscience;
Reach within, and melt that heart of stone.
And say, if I have gone awry,
I want to live to make amends;
On her persuasion I rely;
On her appeal my life depends.

OTHERS How will this day of madness end?

BRIGHELLA To lock them up is my intent.

CLAUDIO Oh, hurry, friend, do not delay!

LUCIO I'll go and see her right away.
Your sister yet may find the path.

CLAUDIO Do not delay!

OTHERS I burn with righteous rage and wrath.

CLAUDIO In her my one salvation lies.

LUCIO And if she cannot make him bend,
Then I'll take on the enterprise.

CLAUDIO In her it lies.

OTHERS How will this day of madness end?
I burn with fury, rage and wrath.
I burn with rage and fury, rage and fury.
Our civil liberties we stand up to defend,
An outrage! One little man shall not destroy
Our native freedom,
All the freedom we enjoy.
All our rights, all our freedom,
The rights and freedom we enjoy.

BRIGHELLA

To lock them up is my intent.
I fear these folk so full of wrath.
They threaten in their fury,
In their rage and wrath.
If it were only up to me,
I'd lock them up and lose the key.
I'd much prefer a safer path,
Away from so much rage and wrath.
Who can predict the aftermath?
My duty I'll not fail;
The whole lot belong in jail.

LUCIO

I'll go to see her right away.
In her your one salvation lies,
Your one salvation.
I'll go to her, and right away.
If she appeals to no avail,
Depend on me, for I'll not fail.
Such a friend I shall not fail.
You'll enjoy your freedom.
A dear friend I shall not fail.

CLAUDIO

Oh, hurry, friend, do not delay!
In her my one salvation lies,
My one salvation.
Do go to her without delay;
On my behalf, she cannot fail.
Her love and fire will yet prevail.
Such a sister will not fail.
Thanks to her, I'll have freedom.
I depend on her, for she'll not fail.

We leave the tavern for the cloister, the House of St. Elizabeth, where Lucio is sent to summon Isabella, Claudio's sister, upon whose powers of persuasion his life now depends. Mourning the recent loss of both her parents, rejecting the world for a life of prayer and devotion, she has become a novice in this quiet retreat, before permanently taking the veil. By chance, she has found here a childhood friend, Mariana, similarly afflicted with misfortune, the nature of which till now she has kept secret, even from her intimate friend.

Scene: The House of St. Elizabeth.

ISABELLA & MARIANA

Safe in the cloister, gently time flows
Bearing the gift of peace and repose.
Here, safe in the cloister,
Gently time flows,
In peace, in peace and repose.

Frenzy and passion merit no place;
Prayer and devotion here we embrace,
We warmly, warmly embrace.
Prayer and devotion here we embrace.

ISABELLA

Has not the wound has time to heal
That for so long you've tried to hide?
Yet if you need some tender words of comfort,
Open your troubled heart to me.

From childhood we have loved each other,
And in these recent years apart
We both have suffered heavy blows.
I lost my mother and my father,
And to this cloister came for shelter,
Finding you here, alone and sad.
Yet not a word! Am I unworthy
To gain a sister's confidence?

MARIANA

O dearest, you and you alone
I seek for sympathy and solace.
Love, wasted love!
Why else do we poor women suffer?
He broke his word,
The man that I adored and worshipped,
And gone is hope of happiness.

The priest had made us man and wife;
We thought it best to keep it secret.
Yet he, a stranger from the north,
Entirely on his own,
Was favored by the King, and rose to heights
That spurred him on to greater heights.
With marriage weighed against ambition,
He left his wife without a word.

ISABELLA

What cowardice! Who was the man?

MARIANA

Our present ruler, Frederick!

ISABELLA

I know of him. The man pretends to virtue.
Oh, poor women, we
That wring our hands in tears and silence,
While scoundrels get away with it.

MARIANA

Leave me the tears that bring relief;
Through grace of God I bear my pain.
Instead of one that cast me off,
I've found a sister – who'd complain?

Safe in the cloister, *etc.*

ISABELLA

This wicked world I gladly leave,
This wicked world
Whose evil I cannot destroy;
Where true and good are bound in chains
While ruthless men pursue their gains
And seize their profits and their joy
While innocence and virtue grieve
While virtue, while virtue,
While innocence and virtue grieve.
Where men deceive without remorse --
Duplicity without remorse –
And women yield to brutal force.

The bell rings. Who will answer it?
Not you! I'll go myself. My angel!
It is a man. Stay here, I'll go.
Our portress will be glad to see you.

LUCIO

You best can help me ... Tell me, please,
If I may have a moment with a recent novice,
The lovely Isabella?

ISABELLA

Isabella you would see?
I'm the one you name.
But who are you that seem so eager?

LUCIO

Fortune is with me! I am Lucio,
Your brother Claudio's closest friend.

ISABELLA

Lucio! How well I know the name!
And you are said to be no angel.

LUCIO Now am I down to earth indeed.
Isabella, you must save your brother!

ISABELLA My brother stand in need?

LUCIO Hear me! Your brother loved fair Julia,
Too impatiently ...

ISABELLA Shame on him, shame!
So now he runs away?

LUCIO By no means! Now filled with remorse,
He wants to make it right and proper, yes!
He now would repair the wrong
Before the holy altar.
But you know not the savage law
That Frederick has of late decreed,
That those who love before they ought
Are straight condemned to death.

ISABELLA To death?

LUCIO Yes, Isabella, Claudio dies,
Unless you go by yourself to plead.
To cruel Frederick you must hasten;
With loving tears you'll plead for mercy
And try to melt that frozen heart.

ISABELLA This man of morals and religion!
I turn to God for strength to sway him.
(in her excitement, she unveils)

LUCIO O beauty come to light!

ISABELLA I'll go, for this one day returning to the world.

LUCIO Why not forever leave the cloister?
Why stash away such youth and loveliness?

ISABELLA No, NO! The world I've left behind.

LUCIO I understand, but that can wait.
This time I beg you – come!
You can save your brother's life.

ISABELLA To save my brother? Yes!

My brother's life in danger!
I'll do what must be done.
The key to his survival
He hands to me alone.
To turn around the tyrant,
Down on my knees I'll plead,
And trust to God and heaven
To find the words I need.

LUCIO

(This lovely bride of heaven
I yearn to call my own.
Her eyes compel surrender,
Though turned to God alone.

Can passion be diverted,
The will of destiny denied?
Or destiny denied?
No tidal wave can smother
This fire that burns inside.)

From the cloister to the courtroom, where Frederick, the Teutonic viceroy, presides as administrator of justice, where Isabella is to attempt the uphill task of thawing his frozen heart, and where Brighella, chief of police, restlessly coming at the bit, decides to play the magistrate and administer a bit of his own brand of justice.

BRIGHELLA

My Lord so late?
These higher ups have no regard
For lesser mortals.
Oh, what a day of toil and sweat!
And what is my reward
For bowing to Milord?
If only I might play the justice –
Just for once to operate as magistrate –
Magistrate!
I'll show them what the legal thrust is – Yes, sir!
And well within the going rate.
Why not? A kindly man of heart and soul,
I want to play tyrant's role,
Play the tyrant, play the tyrant!
My Lord not here? I'll take his place!
Today I itch
To make the switch.

Watch me as I take on a case.
Bring me the prisoners!
Come, bring them in –
Not all at once, you donkeys!
Each one I'll handle face to face.
Come closer, wretch, step over here.

PONTIUS PILATE I'm close enough – too close, I fear.

BRIGHELLA I start with basics: what's your name?

PONTIUS PILATE You want my name? That I can provide.
Yes, Pontius Pilate I am called.

BRIGHELLA Not *the* Pontius Pilate? Murderer!
I ought to have you crucified!

PONTIUS PILATE But sir! Am I the one at fault?
Am I the one to blame?
My parents picked that awful name.
No cause for rage and indignation!
Nasty the name, but all the same,
I hope to mend its reputation.

BRIGHELLA Your reputation adds more pollution;
You deal in vice and prostitution.
Your wicked ways have come to light;
You rent to couples for one night.

PONTIUS PILATE That is a lie! One hour only!
And often less.

BRIGHELLA One hour, one hour only!
Pontius, that hour may cost you your neck.
But this one time your life I'll spare;
A lighter sentence you shall bear.
Your civil rights no longer stand;
I order you to leave this land.

PONTIUS PILATE To exile! To exile! Lose my civil rights?
Your honor! Sir, I shall appeal it.
My Lord, a man without a country!
How can it be? Sir, why pick on me?
To exile! To exile! Sir, why pick on me?

BRIGHELLA Too lenient! Too lenient!

Go, take this parasite away!

PONTIUS PILATE

Oh, Sir, a word ...

BRIGHELLA

I've heard enough! You've had your say.
Away, away!

PONTIUS PILATE

But just a word! A word! A word!
At least allow a small delay.
Without a country, how can it be?
To live in exile!
How can it be? Why pick on me?

BRIGHELLA

Away with him! Take him away!
A judge has need of expertise, yes!
But I could handle ten of these.
(Pontius Pilate is thrown out as Dorella is brought in)
Again we meet! Come here, come here!
Come closer, closer yet, my dear.

DORELLA

So close? Well, well!
Alone and tête-à-tête ...
I am as close as I can get.

BRIGHELLA

Oh, closer yet!

DORELLA

If you insist ...

BRIGHELLA

Lovemaking, carnival and wine
Our viceroy has expressly banned.
How dare you openly decline
To honor his distinct command
By tempting men along the path
Of folly and its aftermath?
I warn you not to laugh at me!

DORELLA

Who, I?

BRIGHELLA

Good Lord, what happens next?

DORELLA

Why so perplexed?
Take your time, and we shall see,

BRIGHELLA

Roguish eyes and subtle glances
May endanger my career.
In these awkward circumstances

I forget to be severe.

DORELLA

Roguish eyes and subtle glances
Prick and puncture his veneer.
As my forward drive advances,
I need only persevere.

Be light! Be quick!
With sly and subtle glances
I'll prick, I'll prick
And puncture his veneer.

BRIGHELLA

Watch out, my friend,
For sly, subtle glances.
They will put an end,
Will put an end to your career.

(Oh, I'm forgetting that decree!
Watch it! Watch it! Or it's the noose for me.)

DORELLA

Signor Brighella, do go on.
Your every word I hang upon.
Tell me more, tell me more!
What have I done that you deplore?

BRIGHELLA

Confess, confess, you godless child.
How many men have you beguiled?

DORELLA

And what gives you the right to know?

BRIGHELLA

It seems you've not an ounce of shame
For lawless deeds I blush to name.

DORELLA

How dare you take that nasty tone
When you yourself have done the same?
You donkey, you boor, you so-and-so!
Look to yourself, leave me alone.

BRIGHELLA

I call for order in the court.

DORELLA

So what?

BRIGHELLA

I try to wear a frown
While tingles turn me upside down.

DORELLA I have won without repentance;
Justice in my net is caught.
Overcome by charm and beauty,
To my sentence, to my sentence
He'll not give a second thought.

BRIGHELLA She has won without repentance;
Justice in her net is caught.
Overlooking claims of duty,
To her sentence, to her sentence
I'll not give a second thought.

It has to be admitted,
You're far too much for me.

DORELLA And so I go acquitted,
At large, footloose and free.

BRIGHELLA You charming Jezebel!
The case can go to hell.

DORELLA Delightful!

BRIGHELLA In return...

DORELLA Go on ...

BRIGHELLA But dare I ask?

DORELLA For what?

BRIGHELLA I'm going mad.

DORELLA How come?

BRIGHELLA Ah, ah! So round, so fair!

DORELLA Now, now ...

BRIGHELLA I can't resist!

DORELLA Away from me, you moralist!

BRIGHELLA Dorella, Oh, hear me!

DORELLA Come, try the case, or case dismissed.

No more of this!

BRIGHELLA I'm on the spot!

DORELLA (It serves him right.)

OTHERS (*from outside*) Unlock the door!
Unlock the door! And let us in!

BRIGHELLA Oh, what to do? I'm on the spot!

DORELLA (What can he do? It serves him right!)

OTHERS Unlock the door! And let us in!
How long are we to wait?
Open up! We'll wait no more.

DORELLA From there, from there,
Duty calls outside the door.
From here, from here,
Love draws him even more.

BRIGHELLA Duty's call, love's allure
Have me in a tug of war.
Hot and bothered, furthermore
With people pounding on the door.

OTHERS Make haste! Make haste
Before we break the door.

CROWD (*entering*) Come, it is time, it is time!
Bring on the man so hard on crime,
The self-appointed demi-god.

DORELLA Ha! He's afraid they're out for blood.

BRIGHELLA What a riot!
What a riot! What an angry mob!
Sheer bedlam, what an angry mob!
I'm afraid they're out for blood.

FREDERICK (*entering*) Come to order!
Why this pandemonium?
Brighella! What's going on?

BRIGHELLA I ask your pardon.

Just to spare you, I took command,
But ran aground.

FREDERICK

Hereafter, keep your place;
No more of this overbold presumption. No!
And you! I want the law respected.

CROWD

We'll stay in line without a word.
(From him a laugh is never heard,
A laugh is never, never heard.)

FREDERICK

Let us proceed. I stand for justice.

ANTONIO

Sir, from the people I present
A truly urgent signed petition:
Restore to us the carnival!
We humbly beg for your consent.
Palermo needs its round of pleasure.

CHORUS

He speaks for all throughout the land.
Oh, give us back what you have banned!
Restore to us the carnival.
We humbly beg for your consent.
Palermo needs its round of pleasure.

FREDERICK

(tears up the petition)

Here is the answer that you ask for.
You slaves of vice!
Am I to let you drown in the filthy sewer
Of animal desires?
Feasting and drinking,
Sloth and self-indulgence,
Debauch and folly –
These are what you live for.

Your wanton, wicked ways I found appalling
When first your gracious king required my service.
Of my dismay and shock I made no secret,
And found him in complete accord with me.
When later on the king was called away,
He ordered me to govern in his place,
Entrusted me to lift you from the gutter.

The terms of my decree are clearly stated,
And I'll not tolerate the least transgression.
Your baser leanings I must hold in check;
Your overheated blood I'll douse with water

Before you burn in everlasting fire.
Fine, clean, purified –
The king will see some changes.

CROWD

(A man of zeal, a pious fraud!
In him the devil walks abroad.)

FREDERICK

(Claudio is brought in)

Now to the case! Bring in the prisoner.
So! You are Claudio!
I recognize that scornful look
That makes sheer mockery
Of everything that decent people prize.

CLAUDIO

Can you be Christian, yet void of mercy?
You would take my life for such a tiny error?
Youth knows no season.
When love begins to ripen,
Led on by Nature, we but follow.

FREDERICK

Oh, desecration from a shallow mind!
Such words of wisdom but compound the crime.
I'll not budge an inch.
The law will take its course.

CLAUDIO

How can the law reckon with love?

FREDERICK

Yes, you and Julia both must die!

CROWD

Condemned to die! The rule of force!

CLAUDIO

How can it be? No love allowed?

ISABELLA *(entering)*

I must be heard! I am his sister.

CROWD

Hear his sister! Let her speak.

CLAUDIO *(to Isabella)*

You have the power of persuasion.

LUCIO *(to Claudio)*

Her voice alone can set you free.

ISABELLA

Bear up, and trust a loving sister.
I shall do all that I can do.
Sir, hear me out, I ask no more.
Please! Just a word or two in private.

FREDERICK

No, I've no time for women's tears.

But stay, I'll hear you. All shall hear.

ISABELLA

Sir, I implore you, I want to speak
To the man of feeling, to the inner person,
Not the public.

FREDERICK

That you cannot!

ISABELLA

Are you afraid of one weak woman?

FREDERICK

Go, all of you!

CROWD

We'll leave them here to talk alone.
Pray that she melt that heart of stone. (*exeunt*)

FREDERICK

Speak, I'm waiting. What have you to tell me?

ISABELLA

Can you reject a grieving orphan,
Come for a brother's life to plead?
Could you be so cruel, to sentence her to suffer
The empty years that lie ahead?
The lonely life,
The life that lost survivors lead,
Who can but weep,
But weep in silence for the dead?
You'd sentence her to suffer
The empty years that lie ahead?
Then open your heart to a sister's fervent prayer;
Through gentle mercy,
Through mercy ease her despair.

FREDERICK

A sister's love I like to see,
But mercy you'll not find in me.

ISABELLA

The course of love that none can measure
From God to man and woman flows.
Void is the life, like a long stretch of barren desert,
Without the verdure that love bestows,
The leafy verdure that love bestows.
The gift of beauty nature gave
Along with hunger for its pleasure,
And only fools or martinets
Would cast away this mortal treasure.

Then open your heart,
Let your heart lie open to love and earthly delight,

Through mercy, but through gentle mercy,
Gentle mercy, not through might.

FREDERICK

(Her words are winged;
How they soar and sing!
Am I so frail? Can I be weakening?)

ISABELLA

Have you not felt the thrill of danger,
As winds of passion sweep the heart?
Has love remained a silent stranger
That dwells aloof, in worlds apart?

A woman's voice, sublime and tender,
May melt the cold and solid core;
The paradise of shared surrender
Lies not beyond a distant shore.

A woman's voice, sublime and tender,
May melt that cold and solid core;
If you aspire to shared surrender,
If you would reach that hallowed shore,
Then open your heart,
Sympathize, and then forgive.
Render him mercy.
Through mercy, allow my brother to live.

FREDERICK

(The lips are sweet that pour such music;
It reaches deep, it stirs my blood.
I ought to nip it in the bud.)

ISABELLA

Have mercy, mercy on my brother!

FREDERICK

My icebound heart begins to thaw;
I go beyond the rule of law.
Arise! I should be kneeling.

ISABELLA

I'll stand when you promise mercy.

FREDERICK

Your brother shall go free!
For you have stirred a secret fire inside me;
Now it's for you to quench that fire.

ISABELLA

What do you mean?

FREDERICK

You rouse a passion I have never known before.
You talk of love, and as I listen,

Your breath ignites that spark of love.
You can save your brother
If with me you'll take
That same dark path to heaven.

ISABELLA

Do I understand you?
What a monster of hypocrisy is here!
In plain words, say what you demand.

FREDERICK

To me, allow one night of love,
And free, free goes your brother Claudio.

ISABELLA

(calling to outside)

Oh, loathsome man! Abominable!
Return! Return!
Return and hear the truth.
Break down the doors!
Hear me out, come all, come all!
And I'll unmask a scoundrel,
The foulest fiend in all Palermo.

FREDERICK

Stop! This is madness!

ISABELLA

I'll tell them all! Come all, come all!
You have to hear, you people all!

CHORUS

What's going on? Why does she cry?

ISABELLA

A vile hypocrite I must expose.

FREDERICK

Think twice before you speak.

CHORUS

What does she mean? What will she say?

ISABELLA

I will unmask a man beneath contempt.

FREDERICK *(to Isabella)*

Hear me!

CHORUS

Who is the man you mean? Who do you mean?

ISABELLA

You all shall know his name. And more!

FREDERICK

A waste of breath! Consider well
My reputation and renown.

ISABELLA

Take your hands off me!

FREDERICK

Foolish girl! Go on, speak out.
But who'll believe you?
I can explain that all I said
Was but a pretext, calculated
To take the measure of your virtue.

ISABELLA

The truth will out, and it will conquer.

FREDERICK

If you should call me rigid, ruthless,
If you accused me of cruelty,
You may be sure they'd all believe you.
But say I burn with passion,
They'll call you crazy.

ISABELLA

A checkmate! I'm defeated.

FREDERICK

Come, be sensible and hold your tongue,
Or you'll have reason to regret.

CHORUS

Speak, Isabella, tell us all.
We heard you call and came in haste.
No word? Why do you say nothing?
She suffers in silent grief;
What warnings did she hear?
Forebodings of mystery
Fill me with nameless fear.

Silent, full of grief, *etc.*

FREDERICK

Silent, in shock and grief,
How fair does she appear!
My heart bounds in ecstasy
To feel her warmth so near.

ISABELLA

With rage and shame my cheek is burning!
So weak, so weak, what power have I?
On his head I would bring destruction!
His villainy must cost him dear.

BRIGHELLA

Silent, full of grief –
Oh, what warning did she hear?
Behind the screen of smoke
That whisper was no joke.
No, not a joke.
The case is far from clear;
The case remains unclear.

ISABELLA

Could I but set a trap for him,
And by that law he decrees
And now abuses, render justice.
For that must I be sacrificed?
How he deceived poor Mariana!

Maria! Ah, I see the light!
Yes, I have found the perfect plan!
Instead of me, his lawful wife
Will keep that midnight rendezvous,
And there we'll catch the fox red-handed.
At last! At last! You are outwitted!
The wife you left will spread the net.

FREDERICK

Come, Isabella, on what course have you decided?
Yes or no?

ISABELLA

A woman yields unto the master;
What can I do but what you will?

FREDERICK

On second thought, you've come to reason?

ISABELLA

You have the power, I am weak.

FREDERICK

Have I your promise?

ISABELLA

Yes, I promise.

FREDERICK

So tell me where we meet and when.

ISABELLA

I'll write to you.

FREDERICK

I wait with impatience!

ISABELLA

And then my brother ...

FREDERICK

Your reply will guarantee
A prompt reprieve.

ISABELLA

Then I am yours!

FREDERICK

You'll come to me!

ISABELLA

(Caught in a trap, the fox is taken;
He'll not escape my fatal snare.

Until cold water curbs his passion,
The pains of love, the searing pains of love,
He will have to bear.

The beat of prey I'll out maneuver
And turn the tables in the dark of night.
Revenge is mine! Revenge is mine!
For I shall carry on the fight
And rid the city of a blight.)

FREDERICK

O sweet delight! On wings of rapture
I reach the goal of my desire,
Where pounding ocean waves of passion
Will quench this ever raging fire.

Defiant both of death and danger,
I hurtle down that steep decline;
My soul's salvation I shall hazard
To make her for one moment mine,
For a moment, for one moment mine.

OTHERS

Stark raving mad! Where can it lead?
This tidal wave there's no resisting,
Though soon we'll be as mad as she!
But sink or swim, we all enlist
To break the bonds of tyranny,

This surging tidal wave we can't resist,
Though its momentum pulls us out to sea.
Tonight we revel and scoff at tyranny
The hated bonds of tyranny.
Tonight Palermo's proud and free.

ISABELLA

Tonight will bring the fiend to justice
And break the bonds of tyranny.
Revenge will be to set you free
And break the bonds of tyranny.
Tonight Palermo shall go free!

ACT TWO

From the courtroom to the courtyard of the prison where Claudio, far from resigned to the death penalty imposed upon him, paces anxiously, waiting to hear the outcome of Isabella's appeal for mercy. Although she has contrived a possible way out of this horrible situation, by passing off Mariana as herself, Isabella succumbs to a flair for the dramatic. Stunned, perhaps even momentarily disoriented by the monstrous hypocrisy of Frederick's vile proposition -- Claudio's life in exchange for her honor -- instead of revealing her plan, one can only suppose that she is eager to show off her brother's incorruptible courage by putting it to the test. Her confidence that he will rise to the occasion and live up to the role of self-sacrificing hero is to receive something of a jolt.

Scene, the yard outside the prison.

CLAUDIO My sister not yet here ...
She will deliver my dreadful sentence
That may be final. Death?

Julia, beloved, must I leave you
To bear your grief alone?
Where can you turn for consolation
When we are torn apart?
Where can you turn for consolation
When golden dreams of love are gone?
Oh, Isabella, dearest sister!
Am I to live? What is my fate?

(Isabella enters)

ISABELLA Resolve and manly fortitude!
A chance to prove yourself a hero.

CLAUDIO What are you saying?

ISABELLA Hear me out.
Our viceroy is beneath contempt.
Though he would kill and call it lawful,
No greater hypocrite is living
Than he himself.

Yes, hear the truth!
As I was pleading at his feet,
An evil lust enflamed his heart.
At the price of my dishonor,
He will release and pardon you.

CLAUDIO The man's a monster! What a scoundrel!

ISABELLA (Aha! How well he meets the test!
A brother noble and courageous!
Yet I must prove his fortitude,
So I'll say nothing of my plan.)

CLAUDIO Oh, Isabella, how abhorrent!

ISABELLA Claudio, could you accept the price?

CLAUDIO To purchase life with your dishonor?

ISABELLA To save your sister you would die!

CLAUDIO I must with courage face my death.

ISABELLA And find in heaven your reward.

CLAUDIO I must with courage face my death.
I choose the path of love and honor,
Although it leads through fire and ice.
And I embrace the role of hero,
Prepared for the noble sacrifice.

ISABELLA My life for you I'd proudly offer;
To gain your freedom I would die.
But manly courage and devotion
Are bound to find reward on high,
To find reward on high.

CLAUDIO Your life for mine you'd proudly offer
Yet honor claims that I should die;
All earthly goals I here surrender
In hope of just reward on high.

ISABELLA My brother, wait! I've more to say.

CLAUDIO Isabella, take my last embrace;
We part, never to meet again.
Farewell to life and all its wonder,
The life I thought had just begun.

ISABELLA Not over yet!

CLAUDIO Could I but see her once again before I die!
Before that icy hand is on me,

That icy hand that puts an end
To tears and laughter
And the joy that life can lend.

ISABELLA

You must be brave.

CLAUDIO

To die for love!
You ask too much, O Isabella!

ISABELLA

Do you retreat?

CLAUDIO

You in your convent
Can hardly know this lovely world.
Sweet sister, let me live!

ISABELLA

What's this? You vacillate? You waver?

CLAUDIO

You hold my fate within your hands.
A brother's life is worth so little?

ISABELLA

And what about a sister's honor?
O coward! Hide your head in shame,
Unworthy of a brother's name.

CLAUDIO

Dear sister!

ISABELLA

Pity I have none!
So little courage you have shown.

CLAUDIO

Forgive a moment's loss of nerve.

ISABELLA

Go, you have got what you deserve.

CLAUDIO

I now repent my fall from grace.

ISABELLA

I trust you not; you fell too far.
Come, jailer, do your dirty work.
Take back the prisoner, lock him up!

CLAUDIO (*to Pontius Pilate*) Unhand me. Let go.

PONTIUS PILATE

Come with me.

ISABELLA

Take him to prison.

PONTIUS PILATE

Lend assistance! Hey! Assistance!

CLAUDIO

But for a moment overpowered –
I'll prove myself a man once more,
And facing death with calm and courage,
Rub out the stain that you abhor.

ISABELLA

By fear of death so overpowered –
Oh, where's the man I knew before?
A man of straw, devoid of courage,
A trusted friend I now abhor!

(Claudio is taken back to prison) So there!

He must atone for cowardice.
I shall relieve the load that lies so heavy,
But not until he's suffered more than this.
And – O most unlikely Prince of Lovers! –
I've set a trap, sweeter than roses,
To show you to the world in your true colors.

Here is the plan: I'll first tell Mariana
How she can snare the bird that's flown away.
His faithful wife, she'll gladly do her part
And share with him a charming rendezvous.
Today begins the carnival that he would ban.
As masquerader, he'll attend it.
And break a second time his own decree.

Instead of me, he'll meet with Mariana,
Who will entice him to a private place,
And there reveal herself at her own leisure.
The hypocrite, displayed for all to see,
Will have to recognize his wife again.

Next, the reprieve I've wangled for my brother.
It should arrive no later than this evening.
But I shall keep it secret a little while.
Too weak, unwilling, he must pay for it.
The game is on! I'll see it to the end.
And though I play with death, I'll not retreat.
Through care and courage, my triumph will be complete!

(Dorella enters)

Dorella, now that I have set you free,
May I depend upon your help?

DORELLA Your words have worked a major miracle;
I'll gladly do whatever you propose.

ISABELLA Then hear: first go and take this letter to Mariana,
Then deliver another to the viceroy.
But can you gain admittance?

DORELLA Of course! Signor Brighella
Is head over heels in love.

ISABELLA Brighella! Lord and lackey!
Pretty couple!
You've not seen Lucio?

DORELLA Not for a while.
Lord knows who he is chasing.

ISABELLA Is he such a butterfly
As people seem to say?

DORELLA He's even worse!
There's not a woman living in Palermo
Whom he has not flattered with promises of love.
How well I know!

ISABELLA You also?

DORELLA With a passion! But believe me,
His kisses and promises
Are nothing but a pack of lies.
He's the worst of the lot!

ISABELLA You paint a pretty picture, I must say.
But someone is approaching.

DORELLA Speak of the devil and he's bound to appear –
In person!

LUCIO (*entering*) My pleasure, lovely Isabella!
What a stroke of fortune, finding you.

ISABELLA Fair words.

DORELLA And you have none for me, sir?

LUCIO (That pleasure I could do without.)

(to Isabella)

ISABELLA About your brother – what has happened?
What hope of rescue lies ahead?

ISABELLA Good news I offer! I've only this to tell you:
This evening he'll again be free.

LUCIO Your prayer was heard by God above!
A saint whose inner light I love.

DORELLA So reverent now, and so devout!
With me, though, you played another tune.

LUCIO How can you say a thing like that?

DORELLA You ask me how? I'll tell you why.
You forget whispered pledges, kisses,
Sweet promises and pretty phrases.

LUCIO So long a list! Could any man remember?

DORELLA You make a promise just to break it.

LUCIO Malignant gossip! Don't believe it.

ISABELLA So false! So now the truth appears.

LUCIO With you? Not in a million years.

DORELLA A thousand times we've heard that number.

LUCIO But I have come for information.
Just how and when is Claudio free?

DORELLA Hold on! You're not yet done with me.
To prove your vows mean not a thing,
You know this letter? You know this ring?

ISABELLA These tender tokens call for candor.

LUCIO Misunderstandings! Lies and slander!

DORELLA You cast me off!

LUCIO I know you not!

DORELLA Too bad!

ISABELLA To me you offer marriage,
Hand and heart you dare bestow upon me,
Though pledged and plighted to another.

DORELLA How sweet of him!

LUCIO I can explain!

ISABELLA To trade my cloistered life for love –
Can you deny it?

DORELLA Blasphemy!

LUCIO Can you return to cold storage?

ISABELLA I must! I must indeed return,
Devote my life to prayer and penance,
To wash away a mortal sin,
A sin I must commit tonight.

LUCIO Under compulsion? Who can force you?

ISABELLA I must! To buy my brother's freedom
His captor asks of me that sin
For which my brother's held.

LUCIO The monster! How outrageous, how revolting!
And you?

ISABELLA His terms I have to meet
This very night. There's no way out.

LUCIO No, never! Not while I live!
My life I'll trade for your defense!

ISABELLA (He loves! Now I know how sincerely.)

LUCIO If I survive this mortal struggle
From house to house, from roof to roof,
I'll tell the tale with living proof
Until his villainy is known
And till the tyrant's overthrown.

ISABELLA I thought of that, but what's the use?
The charge would bring but ridicule.

Who can conceive the viceroy loving?
Be wise, be calm. You rage for nothing.

DORELLA A clever man will heed advice.

LUCIO To hell with peace for such a price.

ISABELLA (In storm of rage and wave of passion
The signs of love begin to show.
Though he may weep in desperation,
I'll laugh it off and let him go.)

DORELLA (And why the storm, the wave of passion?
A fine display, put on for show.
And though he weep in desperation,
She's wise to laugh and let him go.)

LUCIO (My storm of rage is stirred by passion
True love has set my heart aglow.
Yet though I weep in desperation,
She'll laugh at me and let it go.)

From the prison to the palace, where Frederick confronts his inner demons and broods upon the paradox of his own personality -- hitherto immune to passion, now overpowered by it, yielding to its irresistible tide.

(Scene, a room in the palace)

FREDERICK So late, and still no word from Isabella ...
She's more to me than heaven and the life hereafter.
Can woman's wiles so change my heart?
How weak am I!
Where is the structured life,
The discipline and order I revere?

I caught the fragrance of her living breath,
And in that moment winter turned to summer.
Bah! I'm reduced to slavery by passion,
False to my holiest convictions,
Victim of its blind, avenging power.
So cold till now! Married to Mariana,
I cast her off without regret.

Gazing at Isabella, I learn the fever of love;
My frozen heart dissolves in tears of rapture.

The melting breeze of Southern skies
Stirs dormant ashes into fire.
And though the way of death there lies,
I revel in this fierce desire.

(Brighella brings in Dorella, who gives Frederick a letter)

From Isabella! And tonight! At the end of the Corso!
What! In a mask? She will be there!

O wondrous surge of bliss unbounded!
She waits for me this very night.
My pride and principles surmounted,
I'll luxuriate in love's delight.

Transported on a wave of passion,
I go beyond the formulas of wrong and right,
Far beyond the formulas of wrong and right.

But ... must I set her brother free?
Can rule of law be discarded
Though I give way to love's command?
No, no! The law must yet prevail,
Though by that law I die as well.
Claudio must die, though I go next.

What are the demons that pursue me?
What is the fever so enthralling?
The blood is boiling in my veins;
I can contain the fire no more!

O cruel joy, delicious torture!
When death so close to love can dwell,
My cup of overflowing rapture
Obliterates both God and hell!

Carnival night on the Corso!

ANTONIO

Come on! This evening will determine
How long we cater to a German.
Despite his life and death decree,
We'll have a night of song and glee.

TENORS

We're on the loose and in the mood
To break the bonds of servitude.

ANGELO Palermo's women will be proud
To join our merry-making crowd

DANIELI Come, gather round and listen well:
For once, my aim is not to buy or sell.
My beer and wine tonight are free,
So step inside and take your fill!
Enjoy my generosity;
Let Frederick pick up the bill!

ANGELO Why are we waiting?

ANTONIO Let's begin with celebrating wine and beer.

ANGELO Then down the Corso fearlessly.

DANIELI But first a friendly round of cheer!

TUTTI Let banners wave and fiddles play!
Tonight we revel, come what may.
No prude or preacher can put down
A gala night out on the town.

LUCIO A merry crowd is what I like.

ANTONIO It's Lucio!

ANGELO One of us!

TUTTI Come, join us!

LUCIO All set to go! Up on your toes
To make a night of carnival
As rousing as the wine that flows.
Fair ladies make it all the more so.
But first, a giddy Carnival song
Before we venture down the Corso.

TUTTI Provided we can sing along,
Sing out, sing out!

LUCIO You Columbines and you Pierrots,
Discard your dingy working clothes;
Lay down the dull and daily task
And don the visor and the mask.

We start the Carnival tonight
And law surrenders to delight.
Come on, come on! And play your part,
We welcome all the young of heart.

As law and order step aside,
The doors of pleasure open wide.
Let others sleep when day is done;
We Southern folk are out for fun.

We start the Carnival tonight
And law surrenders to delight.
Come on, come on! And play your part,
We welcome all the young of heart.

Forget the Dutchman and the Ring;
We'll give you songs that you can sing,
And send the critics into shock
By harking back to Offenbach.

You slugs that lie at home in bed
Deserve a place among the dead.
Come on, come on! And play your part,
We welcome all the young of heart.

BRIGHELLA

Hold! Break it up there!
What a riot! What a pack of louts and loonies!

ANTONIO

He's just the man we want,

ANGELO

Come on!

BRIGHELLA

No masquerading!

ANTONIO

Send him sprawling!

BRIGHELLA

You're aware that the law does not allow
This stupid masquerade?

ANGELO

And what of that?

ANTONIO

Let's fight it out.

OTHERS

You're right! It's what he's asking for.

LUCIO Friends, wait a moment. Not for now!
You play into his hands that way.
So put away the masks, avoid all dispute,
Obey the scoundrel's orders,
Stay cool and calm, no matter what.
We'd best disperse, each homeward heading.

BRIGHELLA Now there's a sensible young man!

ANTONIO What's this? Why spoil our sport?

ANGELO What's on your mind?

OTHERS What's going on?

LUCIO Let's head for home in peace and quiet,
Without resistance, without a rumpus.
You'll understand me soon enough.

BRIGHELLA Young man, for this you deserve a medal!

OTHERS Though mystified, we'd best obey.
We're going, but not too far away.
Not far away. not far away.

(Enter Isabella and Mariana)

ISABELLA Stay till he comes and don't be nervous.

MARIANA My cheek is red, I blush for shame.

ISABELLA Be bold, for that alone will serve us.

MARIANA This man I know not how to face.

ISABELLA Take heart, and greet him as a bride;
Your wedding night draws on apace.

MARIANA I throb and tremble at the thought,
Longing to see the end in sight.

ISABELLA Resolve and strength God will provide;
On my largess no need to dwell!
Sweet bride, be happy! Now farewell!

MARIANA Dear loving sister! Now farewell! (*Isabella withdraws*)

MARIANA I wait in fear and wonder,
With mingled joy and pain,
As understudy, luring
My husband home again.

One ray of hope consoles me,
That heaven yet may yield
And bring him back repentant,
His heart and spirit healed.

FREDERICK (*entering*)
Here is the spot. Can she be hiding?

LUCIO It's he! The mighty man himself!

FREDERICK Who is the dog who sniffs me out?

LUCIO A mask! He's come to join the party.
(*to Frederick, pretending not to recognize him*)
My friend! Come meet the merry crew.

FREDERICK A crew of louts and libertines!

LUCIO Why not? I'm sure you're not unworthy
To line up for the Carnival!

FREDERICK You'd make a fool of me?

LUCIO To your mother goes the credit.
But sir, why the mask?

FREDERICK (*highly embarrassed*)
The mask! Well, well, Of course I'll come!

LUCIO That German fool we'd stuff with straw --

FREDERICK That German *what*?

LUCIO If you or I laid down the law.

FREDERICK Ha ha ha ha ha!

LUCIO So unlike you.
They say his urine comes out ice.

FREDERICK I wonder ...

LUCIO Frederick is a fraud!
He does not practice what he preaches.

FREDERICK Indeed?

LUCIO But even worse,
He's first to break his own law.

FREDERICK I don't believe it!

LUCIO He is a weasel and a rat, combined.

FREDERICK Yes, yes! But now I beg –
Leave me! I feel not quite myself.
I'll join you later on the Corso.

LUCIO Very well! I take you at your word.
We'll have you lead the mad parade!

FREDERICK Till then I need to be alone.
I've shaken off the leech at last.
No sign of Isabella?
Ha! A woman! Is it she, or not?
That was the signal. Sweet surrender!
My love, you promise to be mine!
(he leaves with Mariana)

LUCIO She came! She's sold herself! So pure!
The rendezvous I'll make a threesome.
(starts to pursue them, but is stopped by Dorella)

DORELLA Why now the hurry?

LUCIO Let me by!

DORELLA Oh, not so fast! You'll not escape.
First you must pay me on the spot
For love you gained but soon forgot.

LUCIO (The girl is mad! Oh, what to do?)
What crazy bug is biting you?

ISABELLA She holds the victim in her clutches.

BRIGHELLA I've caught the hussy at the trade.
So here is how I am repaid!

DORELLA You call this fair and honest dealing?
Have you no trace of former feeling?

LUCIO Let go at once! I've had enough.

ISABELLA I fear that both will leave on crutches.

LUCIO The time has come for getting rough.

ISABELLA She pays him back for what he's done.

DORELLA You call this fair and honest dealing?
Have you no trace of former feeling?
No remorse, not an ounce of shame?
No scruple, not an ounce of shame?
Are love and candor just a game?
You brute, just try to get away!
I'm not about to set you free.
So fickle and faithless, but you'll not get away.
I've got you, I've got you like a fox at bay.
Your huffing and puffing pull no weight with me.
Because of your skulduggery.
They pull but little weight with me.

LUCIO Let go at once! I've had enough.
The time has come for getting rough.
She's driving me to lunacy.
She's got me like a fox at bay.
What can I do to get away?

ISABELLA No model for a future nun.
She pays him back for what he's done.
She's got him like a fox at bay
And will not let him get away.
And while he struggles to be free
His rage is no hypocrisy.
A scene of no concern to me;
No, not to me.

BRIGHELLA I shake with rage from top to toe;
She gives no sign of letting go.
Not a sign of letting go.

But while he struggles to be free,
This girl will be the death of me.
My helpless rage and fury grow,
Each moment grow.
How can a man be treated so?

LUCIO

Dorella, darling, just a word!
Your doubting me it too absurd.
I love you still, you surely know.
So take a kiss! Now let me go.

ISABELLA (*emerging as Lucio runs out in confusion*)

He calls her darling in my presence!

BRIGHELLA

This is too much!
You wild and wayward wanton wench,
You Jezebel!

DORELLA

Oh, help! A monster! Or a ghost! (*she runs out*)

PONTIUS PILATE

Signora Isabella, hey!
Here's the reprieve. I saw him sign it,
But no one saw me steal it.

ISABELLA

My thanks! And is the seal unbroken?
Claudio, you have not long to suffer.

BRIGHELLA

How can I leave?
How follow her yet stay on guard
As I am ordered? Hey, Pontius!

PONTIUS PILATE

Sir, you're looking odd.

BRIGHELLA

My friend, you're just the man I need.
I have to leave with double speed.
If you would stay and take my place,
If you would stay,
Just stroll around and look about;
Let no one in, let no one out.
Not that! Yes, yes! No, no! The devil!
Collar the cur and go for blood.
He wears a mask. Arrest him!

PONTIUS PILATE

That was just clear as mud.

BRIGHELLA

So stay, and I will give you half my wages.

That way! The devil take him! Off! (*he runs off*)

PONTIUS PILATE

The man's bewitched! For half his wages?
I'm in the dark on what to do,
But I can do with half his pay.
"Just stroll around and look about
Let no one in, let no one out.
Not that! Yes, yes! No, no! The devil!
Collar the cur and go for blood.
He wears a mask. Arrest him!" Well!
One thing at least is clear:
I know that I am here.

ISABELLA

Now quick, to read the joyful news!

PONTIUS PILATE

"A mask! Arrest him!"
"A mask! Arrest him!"

ISABELLA

O holy saints! What villainy!
No pardon, no reprieve!
Instead, an order for his instant death.
Before sunrise! O happy fortune,
That leads me to my brother's rescue!
But wrath and vengeance on the traitor!
Come all, stand by, bear witness!
All Palermo must prepare to strike!
Come all! Revolt against the tyrant!
Hear what I say. Come all! Come all!

OTHERS

Who cries? Who calls for help?
Speak out! Why do you call?
Let us hear what you have to say.

ISABELLA

O horror, horror! Hear me, help me!
Men, to your weapons! Arm for vengeance!
Down with the oppressor, down with the tyrant!
O Lucio, be my champion now!

(*Lucio appears*)

OTHERS

Is she mad?

LUCIO

I'll have none of her!
All rave and ranting! Never trust her!

OTHERS

What's this?

ISABELLA

Lucio, hear me speak!

We both are betrayed by this monster.

LUCIO Betrayed, indeed! Betrayed by you!

OTHERS Some explanation we could use.

ISABELLA I speak the truth, he tells you lies.
Of life and death a woman cries!

LUCIO I speak the truth, she tells you lies.
Trust not the faithless woman's cries.

OTHERS Which is the truth?
Who speaks the truth? Who tells us lies?
Why trust a frantic woman's cries?

PONTIUS PILATE *(returning with Frederick and Mariana in tow)*
Hold! Hold! I've caught my man,
A reveler, carousing with a woman.
Hold! Hold! Come on! Come on!

OTHERS Who is the man? And why this noise?

LUCIO Who is the man? Come, we can soon find out.

ANTONIO Let's see! *(Frederick's mask is removed)*

TUTTI Ha!
Frederick here! Our Lord and Master!
In masquerade! Breaking the law!

ANGELO And who is she?

TUTTI Remove her mask!

MARIANA Mariana, and his lawful wife.

FREDERICK Mariana!

LUCIO Heavens! Mariana!

OTHERS So here's the man so down on loving!
To death he'd sentence Claudio.
Come on! We'll tear his palace down.
We'll turn his hated laws to ashes.
Come on! Come on! Come on, let's go!

ISABELLA Not yet! You shall hear all the story.
He promised pardon for my brother,
But at the price of my dishonor.

OTHERS Outrageous!

ISABELLA Instead, I laid a trap and sent Mariana,
Mariana who is in fact his wife
Whom he deserted,
Shamefully abandoned.
But wait! The worst is yet to come.
The pardon promised Claudio
Became demand for instant death.

OTHERS Unspeakable!

FREDERICK I am resigned,
By my own law to be condemned.

OTHERS No, your law is null and void.
We must be more humane than you.

ANGELO First, let us set the prisoner free.
Bring Claudio forth in victory!
(Brighella and Dorella are led in)

OTHERS Ha! Here's the captain of the watch!

DANIELI A A woman , too, and both in mask.

OTHERS Signor Brighella! Ha ha ha!
For Columbine, a fine Pierrot!
(Claudio is brought in)

ANGELO Make way! He's free again!

CLAUDIO Thank God, and thanks to my sister.

OTHERS All is well, for all is ending as it should.

LUCIO O noble heart! How blind I was and stupid!
I misjudged you so.

ISABELLA I must depart, the convent calls.

LUCIO The convent?

