

## READINGS: ROCOCO

### Background:

In 1715 the French greeted a **new king** for the first time in seventy-two years. Louis XV, a boy only five years old, succeeded his great-grandfather Louis XIV, the Sun King, who had made France the preeminent power in Europe. For the next eight years the late king's nephew, the duc d'Orléans, governed as regent. His appetite for beauty and vivaciousness was well known, and he set aside the piety enforced by Louis XIV at Versailles. **France turned away from imperial aspirations to focus on more personal -- and pleasurable -- pursuits. As political life and private morals relaxed, the change was mirrored by a new style in art, one that was intimate, decorative, and often erotic.**

### THE ROCOCO STYLE

Louis XIV's desire to glorify his dignity and the magnificence of France had been well served by the monumental and formal qualities of most seventeenth-century French art. But members of the succeeding court began to decorate their elegant homes in a lighter, **more delicate manner**. This new style has been known since the last century as "**rococo**," from the French word, *rocaille*, for rock and shell garden ornamentation. First emerging in the decorative arts, the rococo emphasized pastel colors, sinuous **curves**, and patterns based on **flowers**, vines, and shells. Painters turned from grandiloquence to the **sensual surface delights** of color and light, and from weighty religious and historical subjects -- though these were never ignored completely -- to more **intimate** mythological scenes, views of daily life, and portraiture. Similarly, sculptors increasingly applied their skills to small works for the appreciation of private patrons.

#### *Antoine Watteau and the Fête Galante*

Though several painters of the preceding generation had experimented with the ingredients of rococo -- emphasizing color, a lighthearted approach, and close observation -- Antoine **Watteau** merged them into something new.

Born near the Flemish border, Watteau was influenced by the carefully described scenes of everyday life popular in Holland and Flanders. Arriving in Paris in 1702, he first made his living by copying these genre paintings, which contained moralizing messages not always fully understood by French collectors. He worked for a painter of theatrical scenes and encountered the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and its French imitators. The stock characters of these broadly drawn, improvised comedies appear often in Watteau's paintings, and the world of the theater inspired him to mingle the real and imagined in enigmatic scenes. Through work with a fashionable rococo decorator, Watteau came eventually to the attention of patrons and established artists. He began studies at the official Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture -- membership in which was necessary for important commissions -- and gained access to new art collections being amassed by aristocrats and members of the expanding bourgeoisie. Influenced by his study of **Rubens** and Venetian Renaissance artists, Watteau developed a free, delicate painting technique and a taste for warm, shimmering colors.

In 1717 Watteau's "masterpiece" submitted for admission to the Academy was accepted as a "**fête galante**." With this new category, the Academy recognized the novelty of his work. The immediate popularity of these garden scenes, in **which aristocratic young couples meet in amorous pursuits**, suggests how well the *fête galante* matched the **pleasure-seeking spirit of the early eighteenth century**.

Engravings made Watteau's subjects and manner widely known. Though the lyrical mystery of his own work remained unique, other painters who specialized in the *fête galante*, notably Pater and Lancret, also enjoyed international popularity.

### Background:

This style received its name in the nineteenth century from French *émigrés*, who used the word to designate in whimsical fashion the old shellwork style (*style rocaille*), then regarded as Old Frankish, as opposed to the succeeding more simple styles. Essentially, it is in the same kind of art and decoration as flourished in France during the regency following Louis XIV's death, and remained in fashion for about forty years (1715-50). It might be **termed the climax or degeneration of the Baroque**, which, coupled with French grace, began towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV to convert grotesques into curves, lines, and bands (Jean Bérain, 1638-1711). As its effect was less pronounced on architectural construction than elsewhere, it is not so much a real style as a new kind of decoration, which culminates in the resolution of architectural forms of the interiors (pilasters and architraves) by **arbitrary ornamentation** after the fashion of an unregulated, enervated Baroque, while also influencing the arrangement of space, the construction of the façades, the portals, the forms of the doors and windows. The Rococo style was readily received in Germany, where it was still further perverted into the arbitrary, unsymmetrical, and unnatural, and remained in favour until 1770 (or even longer); it found no welcome in England. In Italy a tendency towards the Rococo style is evidenced by the Borrominik Guarini, and others. The French themselves speak only of the *Style Régence* and *Louis XV*, which, however, is by no means confined to this one tendency.

**To a race grown effeminate** to the Baroque forms seemed too coarse and heavy, the lines too straight and stiff, and whole impression to weighty and forced. **The small and the light, sweeps and flourishes, caught the public taste;** in the interiors the architectonic had to yield to the picturesque, the curious, and the **whimsical**. There develops a style for **elegant parlours, dainty sitting-rooms and boudoirs, drawing-rooms and libraries**, in which walls, ceiling, furniture, and works of metal and porcelain present one ensemble of sportive, fantastic, and sculptured forms. The horizontal lines are almost completely superseded by **curves and interruptions**, the vertical varied at least by knots; everywhere shell-like curves appear to a cusp; the natural construction of the walls is concealed behind thick stucco-framework; on the ceiling perhaps a glimpse of Olympian enchants the view--all executed in a

beautiful white or in bright colour tones. All the simple laws and rules being set aside in favour of free and enchanting imaginativeness, the fancy received all the greater incentive to activity, and the senses were the more keenly requisitioned. Everything vigorous is banned, every suggestion of earnestness; nothing disturbs the shallow repose of distinguished banality; the sportively graceful and light appears side by side with the elegant and the ingenious. The sculptor Bouchardon represented Cupid engaged in carving his darts of love from the club of Hercules; this serves as an excellent symbol of the Rococo style--the demigod is transformed into the soft child, the bone-shattering club becomes the heart-scathing arrows, just as marble is so freely replaced by stucco. Effeminacy, softness, and caprice attitudinize before us. In this connection, the French sculptors, Robert le Lorrain, Michel Clodion, and Pigalle may be mentioned in passing. For small plastic figures of gypsum, clay, biscuit, porcelain (Sèvres, Meissen), the gay Rococo is not unsuitable; in wood, iron, and royal metal, it has created some valuable works. However, confessionals, pulpits, altars, and even façades lead ever more into the territory of the architectonic, which does not easily combine with the curves of Rococo, the light and the petty, with forms whose whence and wherefore baffle inquiry. Even as mere decoration on the walls of the interiors the new forms could maintain their ground only for a few decades. In France the sway of the Rococo practically ceases with Oppenord (d. 1742) and Meissonier (d. 1750). Inaugurated in some rooms in the Palace of Versailles, it unfolds its magnificence in several Parisian buildings (especially the Hôtel Soubise). In Germany French and German artists (Cuvilliés, Neumann, Knobelsdorff, etc.) effected the dignified equipment of the Amalienburg near Munich, and the castles of Würzburg, Potsdam, Charlottenburg, Brühl, Bruchsal, Schönbrunn, etc. In France the style remained somewhat more reserved, since the ornaments were mostly of wood, or, after the fashion of wood-carving, less robust and naturalistic and less exuberant in the mixture of natural with artificial forms of all kinds (e.g. plant motives, stalactitic representations, grotesques, masks, implements of various professions, badges, paintings, precious stones). As elements of the beautiful France retained, to a greater extent than Germany, the unity of the whole scheme of decoration and the symmetry of its parts.

This style needs not only decorators, goldsmiths, and other technicians, but also painters. The French painters of this period reflect most truly the moral depression dating from the time of Louis XIV, even the most deliberated among them confining themselves to social portraits of high society and depicting "gallant festivals", with their informal frivolous, theatrically or modishly garbed society. The "beautiful sensuality" is effected by masterly technique, especially in the colouring, and to a great extent by quite immoral licenses or mythological nudities as in loose or indelicate romances. As for Watteau (1682-1721), the very titles of his works--e.g. Conversation, Breakfast in the Open Air, Rural Pleasures, Italian or French Comedians, Embarkment for the Island of Cythera--indicate the spirit and tendency of his art. Add thereto the figures in fashionable costume slim in head, throat, and feet, in unaffected pose, represented amid enchanting, rural scenery, painted in the finest colours, and we have a picture of the high society of the period which beheld Louis XV and the Pompadour. François Boucher (1703-770) is the most celebrated painter of ripe Rococo.

For the church Rococo may be, generally speaking, compared with worldly church music. It lacks of simplicity, earnestness, and repose is evident, while its obtrusive artificiality, unnaturalness, and triviality have a distracting effect. Its softness and prettiness likewise do not become the house of God. However, shorn of its most grievous outgrowths, it may have been less distracting during its proper epoch, since it then harmonized with the spirit of the age. A development of Baroque, it will be found a congruous decoration for baroque churches. In general it makes a vast difference whether the style is used with moderation in the finer and more ingenious form of the French masters, or is carried to extremes with the consistency of the German. The French artists seem ever to have regarded the beauty of the whole composition as the chief object, while the German laid most stress on the bold vigour of the lines; thus, the lack of symmetry was never so exaggerated in the works of the former. In the church Rococo may at times have the charm of prettiness and may please by its ingenious technic, provided the objects be small and subordinate a credence table with cruets and plate, a vase, a choir desk, lamps, key and lock, railings or balustrade, do not too boldly challenge the eye, and fulfil (sic) all the requirements of mere beauty of form. Rococo is indeed really empty, solely a pleasing play of the fancy. In the sacristy (for presses etc.) and ante chambers it is more suitable than in the church itself--at least so far as its employment in conspicuous places is concerned.

The Rococo style accords very ill with the solemn office of the monstrance, the tabernacle, and the altar, and even of the pulpit. The naturalism of certain Belgian pulpits, in spite or perhaps on account of their artistic character, has the same effect as have outspoken Rococo creations. The purpose of the confessional and the baptistery would also seem to demand more earnest forms. In the case of the larger objects, the sculpture of Rococo forms either seems pretty, or, if this prettiness be avoided, resembles Baroque. The phantasies of this style agree ill with the lofty and broad walls of the church. However, everything must be decided according to the object and circumstances; the stalls in the cathedral of Mainz elicit not only our approval but also our admiration, while the celebrated privileged altar of Vierzehnheiligen repels us both by its forms and its plastic decoration. There are certain Rococo chalices (like that at the monastery of Einsiedeln which are, as one might say, decked out in choice festive array; there are others, which are more or less misshapen owing to their bulging curves or figures. Chandeliers and lamps may also be disfigured by obtrusive shellwork or want of all symmetry, or may amid great decorativeness be kept within reasonable limits. The material and technic are also of consequence in Rococo. Woven materials, wood-carvings, and works in plaster of Paris are evidently less obtrusive than works in other materials, when they employ the sportive Rococo. Iron (especially in railings) and bronze lose their coldness and hardness, when animated by the Rococo style; in the case of the latter, gilding may be used with advantage. Gilding and painting belong to the regular means through which this style, under certain circumstances, enchants the eye and fancy. All things considered, we may say of the Rococo style--as has not unreasonably been said of the Baroque and of the Renaissance--that it is very apt to introduce a worldly spirit into the church, even if we overlook the figural accessories, which are frequently in no way conducive to sentiments of devotion, and are incompatible with the sobriety and greatness of the architecture and with the seriousness of sacred functions.

**Further resources:**

<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTH18thcentury.html>

<http://martyw.best.vwh.net/Rococo.html>

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**ROCOCO**

A decorative style of the early to mid-18th century, primarily influencing the ornamental arts in Europe, especially in France, southern Germany and Austria. The character of its formal idiom is marked by asymmetry and naturalism, displaying in particular a fascination with shell-like and watery forms. Further information on the Rococo can be found in this dictionary within the survey articles on the relevant countries.

**1. Beginnings of the Rococo, to 1715.**

In the last decade of the 17th century there was a stylistic shift in the court art of Louis XIV (*reg* 1643–1715). The death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1683 and the waning of Charles Le Brun's influence brought to an end the stylistic hegemony of the rich Italian Baroque interiors of Pietro da Cortona, first introduced to Paris by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli in his work of 1644 for Cardinal Jules Mazarin. Despite the depleted state of the French royal treasury, the remodelling of rooms at Versailles continued, although now on a smaller scale and using more informal materials, such as *boiserie* and mirror glass, rather than the precious metals and marble that had characterized the Grands Appartements. An early experiment in single-storey apartment planning—a theme that was to be particularly important in the first half of the 18th century—was the Trianon de Porcelaine (1670; destr. 1687), built at Versailles after the model of the Imperial Palace of Beijing, as recorded in Jan Nieuhoff's *L'Ambassade de la compagnie orientale des provinces unies* (Paris, 1665). As Tadgell maintained (see Blunt, 1978), it would be misguided to talk about 'Rococo planning', but the almost universal replacement of rooms arranged *en enfildade* by the apartment with its suite of small, comfortable rooms must have been congenial to the adoption of the Rococo, a style ideally suited for the intimate interior. The extent to which Chinese art might have influenced the development of the Rococo has not yet been fully elucidated. One particular enigma is the inspiration for André Le Nôtre's Bosquet des Sources in the grounds of the Trianon de Porcelaine, a small enclosed garden riddled with irregular streams and rivulets, thus demonstrating an interest in asymmetry and 'naturalism' several decades before the Rococo proper.

The office of Premier Architecte du Roi was revived for Jules Hardouin Mansart in 1683, and in his studio the new generation of designers enjoyed much greater individual freedom than had hitherto been allowed. From a careful analysis of personal styles Kimball showed that, although all decorative schemes bear Mansart's signature, specific motifs and innovations can be identified in the work of particular designers in his team; the two most important were Pierre Lassurance I and Pierre Le Pautre (†). There exist numerous designs by Lassurance from the period 1684–99: one of the earliest of these (1685) was a project for the Petite Galerie at Versailles to be revetted in mirror glass, with small consoles placed against the glass to support a myriad of miniature vases. This failed to be executed, but designs by Lassurance were realized in the left wing of the Trianon de Marbre and in the Salon Ovale in the main château. In contrast to the rigid geometry of these, the rooms that were commissioned from him for the young Duchesse de Bourgogne, her chamber at the Trianon and the Appartement d'Été at the Ménagerie (1698–9), were panelled in *boiserie* of unprecedented liveliness, with tall, arched mirrors and circular panels in place of a dado.

The use of these tall, arched mirrors over chimney-pieces was rapidly adopted in royal residences, for example by Jean Berain I in the Cabinet du Dauphin at the château of Meudon (destr.) in 1699, and in the remodelling of the Grand Salon at the château of Marly (partly destr.) in the same year. Here the chimney-pieces were designed by Le Pautre; and in contrast to Lassurance's geometric framework, the decorative elements, which previously were restricted to mouldings and friezes, now extended across the surface of the woodwork. Most notably, the acute angles of the panels over the mirrors were truncated by C-scrolls ending in a flourish of acanthus, a device adapted from the painted arabesques of Berain. In 1700 several such chimney-pieces were installed at Versailles in private apartments, and in 1701 the long-overdue remodelling of the Appartement du Roi was undertaken: two rooms in the south-west corner of the Cour de Marbre were combined to create the Salon de l'Oeil de Boeuf, thus providing a suitable antechamber to the central salon of the Petit Château, which now became the Chambre du Roi. Le Pautre was responsible for the extant drawings in both cases. In the Salon de l'Oeil de Boeuf a deep coving, scored with a fine network of gold lines, formed the background for a frieze of gambolling infants; here youthfulness was triumphant. In the last years of Louis XIV's reign, the new style was adopted in numerous interiors that betray Le Pautre's involvement, ranging from Parisian hôtels particuliers, such as the Hôtel de Pontchartrain (interiors 1703), to ecclesiastical architecture, most notably the chapel at Versailles (1706–10), throughout which the stone piers and vaults are carved as though in *boiserie* with arabesques and asymmetrical *trophées d'église*.

**2. Régence style, 1715–c 1730**

On the death of Louis XIV in 1715, Philippe II, Duc d'Orléans, was appointed regent for the five-year-old Louis XV. Although the regency lasted only until 1723, the characteristic phase of Rococo decoration identified as the [Régence style](#) continued until the end of the decade. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Premier Architecte of the Duc d'Orléans, was given the lead in architecture with the remodelling of the Palais-Royal, Paris, the seat of the regency. Here he terminated the gallery with a magnificent oval hemicycle, at the centre of which a huge mirror rose from the mantel to the entablature. This was crowned by figures of Victory holding a shell cartouche, from which folds of Baroque drapery cascaded over the mirror. On either side, fluttering ribbons and acanthus leaves scrolled outwards from monumental military obelisks that were carved in relief on the panels.

In 1718 a similarly bold scheme was prepared for the gallery of the Hôtel de La Vrillière (now the Banque de France), Paris, by François-Antoine Vassé (1681–1736), who became the chief designer at the Bâtiments du Roi on Le Pautre's death in 1716. Vassé's first scheme exactly paralleled Oppenord's, except that the military trophies were not confined to obelisks but ran freely the length of the wall, appearing to deform the panels on which they were carved. Instead of framing the opening of the fireplace with a stable ellipse, as Oppenord had done, Vassé adopted a boldly curvaceous design, in which two rippling S-curves met to form the outline of a bow. When executed, the designs were fractionally tamer, but the entablature was interrupted above the chimney-piece by a ship's prow thrusting out of the wall-mass. In both these works, the new freedom of ornament introduced by Le Pautre was coupled with a newly displayed plasticity. When Oppenord worked on a

smaller scale, as at the Hôtel d'Assy of 1719, the carved ornament regained its characteristic linearity and playful lightness and lost almost all trace of rectangular geometry.

Further developments in interior decoration were made by the favourite architect of the house of Condé, Jean Aubert, who was employed on the rebuilding (1718–22) of the Grand Château at Chantilly. In the Chambre de Monsieur le Prince and the Salon de Musique (1722), he extended gold filigree across the expanses of white panelling in a manner that had by then become conventional; in adventurous contrast, however, spidery scrollwork frothed out on to the ceilings above the cornice at the corners and mid-points of the walls.

A rare parallel in the field of contemporary pictorial art can be noted in the late masterpieces of Antoine Watteau. His first *fête galante*, *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera* (Paris, Louvre; see Watteau, (1), fig. 1), was accepted by the Académie Royale in 1717. He had previously worked for [Claude Gillot](#) and Claude Audran III, both masters of the Arabesque style; and it was in the medium of this purely decorative work that Watteau developed his charming pastoral scenes. He was also one of the earliest to exploit the asymmetries inherent in Chinese art, in his designs for painted panels (1720) in the Cabinet du Roi at the Château de La Muette, which are known only from the series of engravings *Figures chinoises et tartares*.

### 3. Genre pittoresque or rocaille, after c 1730.

Before 1730 there had been little development from the essential innovations of Le Pautre, and decorative motifs remained on the whole well behaved and conventional, although in the 1720s Thomas Germain had begun to incorporate vegetable motifs, for example cauliflowers, into his silverwork. Now a new unruliness set in, the responsibility for which has been variously attributed to Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier and Nicolas Pineau. Trained as a goldsmith, in 1726 Meissonnier was appointed Dessinateur de la Chambre et du Cabinet du Roi, a post formerly held by Berain. At this date he had already begun to experiment with the asymmetry or *contraste* that was to transform the decorative arts of 18th-century Europe. In his design for a monstrance (1727) for the Carmelites of Poitiers, the Glory is borne aloft by vigorously spiralling clouds, from which ears of wheat, bunches of grapes and cherubs sprout asymmetrically. In the following year he designed a candlestick (see fig. 1) of such convoluted form that it required three separate engravings (figs 10–12) in the *Oeuvre de Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier*, posthumously published by Gabriel Huquier (1742–51), to convey its form. (For an illustration of his silver tureen of c. 1734–40 see [Meissonnier, juste-aurèle](#).) Although Meissonnier was anxious to obtain architectural commissions—he seems to have volunteered his extraordinary design for the façade of St Sulpice, Paris, in 1726, while Oppenord was still the architect—he was responsible for only a single building, a house (1733) for Léon de Brethous in Bayonne, and a handful of interiors, such as the cabinet (1734) for Count Franciszek Bieliński in Dresden and the apartment (after 1736) for the Baronne de Bézénval in Paris.

Pineau, having returned from Russia, worked in Paris in association with the architect Jean-Baptiste Le Roux, being responsible for important interiors at the Hôtel de Rouillé (c. 1732), Hôtel de Villars (1731–3; for illustration see [Pineau, nicolas](#)), Hôtel de Roquelaure (1733) and Hôtel Mazarin (1736). While Meissonnier had invested his work with a robust plasticity, giving fluidity not only to the ornament but also to the wall-mass, Pineau confined his creative energy to the feathery network of gilt filigree that became ever more playful. He stopped short of the flagrant asymmetries in individual panels introduced by Meissonnier, but it was this *contraste* that was to be vital to the spate of ornamental engravings that appeared in the 1730s. These had been foreshadowed, in theme if not in form, by the *Dessins à plusieurs usages* (c. 1716) of Bernard Toro, which include a series of grotesque cartouches that harked back to the etchings of Stefano della Bella. In Meissonnier's own *Livre des légumes* (1733) and *Livre d'ornemens* (1734), the fantasy is not restricted to cartouches but applied to a wide range of objects, from silverwork to fountains, producing the most extreme and characteristic expression of the Rococo, known as *genre pittoresque* or rocaille. Similar suites of engravings were produced by Jacques de Lajoüe, in his *Recueil nouveau de différens cartouches* (1734) and *Livre nouveau de douze morceaux de fantaisie* (1736); by Jean Mondon (*fl* c. 1736–45) in *Premier livre de forme rocaille et cartel* (1736) and *Ornements chinois* (1736); by François de Cuvilliers I in *Livres de cartouches* (1738); and even by [françois Boucher](#). It was through the medium of these and similar prints issued in Augsburg and Nuremberg that Rococo ornament was rapidly diffused throughout Europe, creating an international style in the decorative arts.

In addition to *boiserie* and metalwork, crafts that were immediately influenced by such prints were furniture and porcelain—minor arts that rose to a new pre-eminence. The demand for furniture decorated in the manner of André-Charles Boulle with inlaid woods, usually in patterns of scrolling bandwork and arabesques, was such that in 1723 the Parisian guild of *ébénistes* had been founded. In the work of the great designers Charles Cressent and Jacques Caffiéri, the lines of chairs and commodes became extravagantly curvaceous. Although porcelain—now made in Europe—did not play an important role in the actual development of the style, its reflective glazes, small scale and easily moulded forms ensured its rapid adoption for the manufacture of Rococo ornaments.

By the late 1730s the Rococo reached its apogee in France: it was universally accepted and underwent no further development. The most important works of this late period were those undertaken at the late age of 69 by Germain Boffrand. For most of his career he had produced buildings of a restrained classicism, but the corner pavilion (1735–9) he added to the Hôtel de Soubise, Paris, housed two oval salons with immensely rich and animated interiors. In the Salon Ovale (Salon de la Princesse; see fig. 2), the rhythmic succession of arched mirrors, doors and windows was united by Charles-Joseph Natoire's series of painted panels in the spandrels and by the undulating coving, which both supported putti and, at intervals, extended tentacles of filigree to the central rosette.

It is not surprising that after several decades of popularity, so extreme a style should provoke a critical reaction. As early as 1731 Voltaire voiced criticism in his *Temple du goût*; and in 1737 Jacques-François Blondel railed in *De la distribution des maisons de plaisance et de la décoration des édifices en général* (1737–8) against the 'ridiculous jumble of shells, dragons, reeds, palm-trees and plants' in contemporary interiors. The Abbé Jean-Bernard Le Blanc published in 1747 a letter to the Comte de Caylus criticizing the loss of 'noble simplicité' in French decorative arts. In 1749 he read two papers on the same theme to the Académie Royale and continued his attack in a review of the Salon of 1753. In the next two years there appeared in the *Mercure de France* two famous articles by Charles-Nicolas Cochin *le fils* ridiculing the current taste; the first was entitled 'Supplication aux orfèvres', while the second ironically purported to be by a group of Rococo architects. Although it was to be another decade before the *Goût grec* provided an alternative style for interior decoration, it was there, in the circle of the Marquis de Marigny, that the first stirrings of the reaction to the Rococo in France were felt, foreshadowing the return to classicism in the later part of the century.

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## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Based on play, *The Crazy Day or The Marriage of Figaro* by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais  
Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

### SYNOPSIS

#### ACT I.

Figaro, valet to Count Almaviva, is to marry Susanna, the Countess' maid. Susanna tells Figaro that the Count has been making love to her. Bartolo and Marcellina enter. Figaro once promised to marry the elderly Marcellina, and these two now plan how they will force him to keep his word. Cherubino, the page, appears and tells Susanna of his troubled love life. Having been caught alone with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter, he is to be sent away and begs Susanna to intercede. A knock is heard, Cherubino hides behind a large chair; the Count enters and asks that Susanna meet him in the garden. As another knock is heard the Count makes for Cherubino's hiding place, while the page jumps into the chair, where Susanna covers him with a cloth. Basilio enters. He speaks of Cherubino's attentions to the Countess and the Count reveals himself. Cherubino's presence is then revealed and the Count sends him away to join his regiment in battle.

#### ACT II.

Susanna and the Countess are in despair over the Count's infidelity. Figaro suggests a plan to make the Count jealous and goes to find Cherubino, who is to be disguised as Susanna. A knock is heard at the door. It is the Count, and Cherubino runs into the other room. The Count demands to know who is there. He decides to break the door down, and goes out, taking the Countess with him, to get the tools. While they are gone, Susanna takes Cherubino's place in the other room; the page exits through the window. The Count is surprised on opening the door to find Susanna. He is about to repent when the gardener arrives to tell of a man jumping through the window. Figaro asserts that he was the man. The gardener produces a paper dropped by Cherubino, but the Count takes it before Figaro can get it. Figaro, coached by the ladies, saves the situation by saying the paper is Cherubino's commission and he had it for scaling. At that moment Bartolo enters with Marcellina. They acquaint the Count with the old promise of Figaro to Marcellina.

#### ACT III.

Susanna and the Countess decide that the latter will impersonate Susanna at the garden rendezvous. When the Countess retires, the Count accosts Susanna who finally promises to meet him in the garden. Figaro is brought to trial in the Count's court and turns out to be the long-lost son of Bartolo and Marcellina, which means, of course, that he cannot marry her. The peasant girls come in and Cherubino, disguised, is with them. He is discovered, and the Count, angrier than ever, becomes confused when Barbarina asks to marry the page.

The scene changes to the wedding hall. As the Count places the bridal veil on her head, Susanna slips him the invitation to meet her in the garden.

#### ACT IV.

The scene is the garden at night. Figaro, learning a part of the plan between the Countess and Susanna, becomes angry and jealous. He conceals himself as the two enter, disguised in each other's clothes. The Count arrives to find Cherubino trying to kiss the Countess, whom they both believe to be Susanna. Then the Count makes love to the supposed Susanna. Figaro comes upon Susanna disguised as the Countess and tells her where the Count and Susanna are. He suddenly realizes who it is, but decides to keep silent to pay her back for her trick. He pretends to make passionate love to the Countess until Susanna jealously reveals herself. They put on an act for the Count, who arrives at this moment, and he seizes Figaro and calls his servants. Everyone then appears except the Countess and they all take Susanna to be their mistress. She implores forgiveness but the Count is adamant until the real Countess appears. All is forgiven and the opera ends with the Count much subdued.

### ACT ONE

(Scene: An incompletely furnished room, with an armchair in the middle. Figaro has a ruler in his hand; Susanna is seated at a mirror, trying on a small, flowered hat.)

#### No. 1 DUETTINO

FIGARO (measuring) Five. Ten . . . twenty . . . Thirty . . . thirty-seven . . . and forty-three . . .

SUSANNA (looking at herself in the mirror)

I must say, it's to my liking, just the very thing for me. Won't you look, my darling Figaro. Turn around, turn around. Isn't this a lovely bonnet?

FIGARO Five. . . ten . . . twenty . . . thirty . . . etc.

SUSANNA (continuing to look in the mirror)

Tell me frankly, my dear Figaro, Do you like me in this bonnet? Don't you love the trimming on it?

FIGARO Yes, my sweet, the way you've done it, It's a pretty sight to see, And it suits you to a T.

SUSANNA Just look at it!

FIGARO Yes, my sweetheart. It's very charming

SUSANNA I must say, it's to my liking, Very smart and very striking just the very thing for me.

FIGARO Very smart and I very striking,

And it suits you to a T.

BOTH I (you) have made it myself (yourself) for the wedding. As your (my) bride I am (you are) planning to wear it. I'm so happy, I hardly can bear it! What a wonderful day that will be!

FIGARO Susanna, my Susanna!

SUSANNA My darling, my beloved!

BOTH What a wonderful day that will be!

RECITATIVE

SUSANNA Will you tell me, my precious, what on earth you are doing?

FIGARO I was just making sure that the space I have been measuring is sufficient for the bed the Count will give us.

SUSANNA You mean we'll sleep here?

FIGARO Surely! The Count was kind enough to make this our bedroom.

SUSANNA You can have it, for my part!

FIGARO Why, don't you like it?

SUSANNA I should say' that I don't.

FIGARO Then why not I speak out and say what is wrong?

SUSANNA I just don't want to. Must you know all I'm thinking?

FIGARO But I can't fathom why you find it so distasteful that we're getting the best room in the castle.

SUSANNA Because I am Susanna, and you are stupid.

FIGARO Thank you, I like your frankness. Look around, then, and perhaps you can find us better quarters.

No. 2 *DUETTINO*

FIGARO Some night if your mistress should ring for assistance, Ding dong ding dong. In a wink you could answer the call. Suppose I am needed to wait on my master, Dong ding dong ding. I could be there in no time at all.

SUSANNA Suppose your dear master Should send you on an errand, Our dearest, our generous master, Ding dong ding dong On an errand sonic three miles away, Ding ding, dong dong In no time he would stand in my doorway.

Before I could stop him . . .

FIGARO Susanna, hold on, Susanna, no more.

SUSANNA While you are on an errand . . .

FIGARO No more.

SUSANNA And further . .

FIGARO Let's hear it.

SUSANNA I'll tell you the story, the whole of the story, But cast all suspicions and doubts from your mind.

FIGARO I must hear the story, the whole of the story, For doubts and suspicions still torture my mind.

*RECITATIVE*

SUSANNA All right, then, but listen calmly.

FIGARO (worriedly) Tell me, what is your story?

SUSANNA Our noble master, tired of pursuing foreign beauties as partners for romances, has decided his castle will provide better chances. It's not his own dear wife, though, I can tell you, who has captured his fancy.

FIGARO Well then, who is it?

SUSANNA I give you three guesses!

FIGARO (surprised) Not you?

SUSANNA You're right the first time, and he is hoping that having us so near him will go far to advance his little project.

FIGARO Perfect! We're making headway.

SUSANNA That's why he seems so kind, therefore so thoughtful in respect to the bridal couple's comfort. FIGARO Just think of that! Such overwhelming kindness!

SUSANNA But listen, now comes the best part: Don Basilio, who teaches me singing, acts as his mouthpiece, and during ev'ry lesson he keeps harping forever on the subject.

FIGARO Who, Basilio? How revolting!

SUSANNA Did you imagine the Count promised me a dowry on the strength of your good looks?

FIGARO I was inclined to think so!

SUSANNA He wants to bribe me to grant him his feudal right as lord and master on the night of our wedding.

FIGARO What? Did he not abolish that right when he got married?

SUSANNA He did, but now he's sorry and he would like to restore it for me.

FIGARO Would he? Who wouldn't? A truly noble gesture. How amusing, indeed! But I will show him. (A bell is heard.) Who's ringing? It's the Countess.

SUSANNA I'll have to answer. Fi-Fi-Figaro, darling!

FIGARO Goodbye, my love, be cheerfull

SUSANNA And you, be careful. (Exit Susanna.)

FIGARO (striding forcefully up and down the room, and rubbing his hands) Splendid, my dearest master! Now I'm beginning to unscramble this puzzle and see your purpose in its proper dimensions. We're off to London. You as envoy, I as courier, and my Susanna . . . ambassadress in secret! That shall never be so . . . Figaro has spoken!

No. 3 *CAVATINA*

FIGARO Should my dear master want some diversion, I'll play the music on my guitar, Should he, for instance, wish to go dancing, He'll face the music, I'll lead the band. And then I'll take my cue, without ado, And slyly, very, very, very, very slyly, using discretion, I shall uncover his secret plan. Subtly outwitting, innocent seeming, Cleverly hitting, planning and scheming, I'll get the best of the hypocrite yet, I'll beat him yet! Subtly outwitting, innocent seeming Cleverly hitting, planning and scheming, Teach him a lesson he'll never forget. This time I shall upset his plan. Should my dear master, etc.

*RECITATIVE* (Enter Bartolo and Marcellina.)

BARTOLO Why did you have to wait till the morning of their wedding to appoint me as your lawyer?

MARCELLINA (holding a contract in her hand) I am well able, even at the last moment, to separate a couple engaged to be married. All I need is a pretext. And as for Figaro, he has made me commitments for some money I lent him. Therefore, our strategy is only too clear. If we succeed in making Susanna reject the Count's advances, then, for the sake of vengeance, he will favor our project and Figaro will thus become my husband.

BARTOLO (He takes the contract from Marcellina.) Splendid! I'll do all I can, sparing no efforts to accomplish your object. (to himself) How I would love to arrange a match for my old servant Marcellina with the rogue who foiled my marriage to Rosina. (Exit Marcellina.)

No. 4 *ARIA*

BARTOLO Taking vengeance,. yes, taking vengeance! That's the peak of exultation For a man of rank and station. Bearing shame without opposition; Taking insults with submission, That's behaving, in basest form, That's behaving just like a worm, A frightened worm. Do it my way, take they sly way, Spread confusion, and distraction. Give them action, give them action! I will show you how to function, Using strategy and unction, Show no pity, no compunction, And before they know what hit them You will outwit them! Take my word, it can be done, And

the case can still be won. Always proceeding with utmost legality I shall discover a fine technicality, I shall equivocate, argue and litigate Until a loophole I can produce. I have ability, mental agility, Legal facility and versatility, With my experience and infallibility Any opponent surely will lose. Oh, what confusion I shall produce! All of the city knows Doctor Bartolo. As for that Figaro, I'll cook his goose. (Exit)

*RECITATIVE*

(Marcellina enters; then Susanna, with a night-cap, a ribbon and a dressing-gown.)

MARCELLINA With such expert assistance I'm confident of winning. If it isn't Susanna! (to herself) I shall pretend that I don't even see her. (aloud) And that's the little gem he has chosen for a wife!

SUSANNA (aside, remaining in the background) She speaks of me.

MARCELLINA After all, from a Figaro, one can't really expect much, but, "money talks."

SUSANNA (to herself) Old spinster! It's too bad that she could not find a husband.

MARCELLINA Really! I can't imagine what he sees in this female. She's all skin and bones. I wish I . . . (Both are about to leave but meet at the door.)

SUSANNA How do you do?

MARCELLINA How nice to see you!

No. 1 *DUETTINO*

MARCELLINA (curtsying) To greet you, my lady, I'm honoured supremely.

SUSANNA (curtsying) By your recognition I'm flattered extremely.

MARCELLINA (curtsying) Please enter before me!

SUSANNA (curtsying) No, no, you go first!

MARCELLINA (curtsying) I beg you, ignore me!

SUSANNA (curtsying) No, no, you go first.

MARCELLINA (curtsying) I know my position, Bow to tradition, Fine and patrician, With all due respect.

SUSANNA (curtsying) Your noble position, Fine and patrician, Inspires respect.

MARCELLINA (curtsying) I know my position, Bow to tradition, And my ambition is being correct. The bride of the hour!

SUSANNA (curtsying) A lady of station!

MARCELLINA (curtsying) The Count's little flower!

SUSANNA (curtsying) The pride of the nation!

MARCELLINA (to herself) Her attitude! Her poses!

SUSANNA Dignified! Mature!

MARCELLINA (infuriated) I swear I shall fly at her In one, in one minute more.

SUSANNA (mockingly) Decrepit old battle-axe, I'll settle your score.

MARCELLINA (curtsying) I praise your deportment without reservation!

SUSANNA (curtsying) And I, your experience and broad reputation.

MARCELLINA (curtsying) So young and so pretty!

SUSANNA (curtsying) The belle of the city!

MARCELLINA (curtsying) What distance between us!

SUSANNA (curtsying) The true Spanish Venus!

MARCELLINA So innocent! So simple!

SUSANNA (infuriated) Durable! So old!

MARCELLINA How dare she make fun of me,

It is a disgrace!

SUSANNA (mockingly) So old, so old, so old! Decrepit old battle-axe, I'll laugh right in her face! (Exit Marcellina angrily.)

*RECITATIVE*

SUSANNA Conceited old spinster! Do you think you can snub me just because, in the old days, you taught my mistress her ABC's?

CHERUBINO (entering in haste) Ah, Susanna, it's you!

SUSANNA Come here, what's the matter?

CHERUBINO Ah, he caught me! What misfortune!

SUSANNA He caught you? Who has caught you?

CHERUBINO Yesterday the Count found me visiting alone with Barbarina, and for that he dismissed me. And if my dearest Countess, my kind benefactress, cannot obtain my pardon, (anxiously) I have to leave and won't see you again, my dear Susanna.

SUSANNA You won't see me again? How dreadful! But I always thought it was the Countess who was the object of your secret affection.

CHERUBINO Ah, my lady is much too high above me! Oh, lucky you! You may always see her when you want to; you dress her each morning, you undress her each evening, you may fasten all her pins, tie her ribbons . . . (with a sigh) Were I in your place . . . What is that? Let me see it.

SUSANNA (imitating Cherubino) Ah, that is one of tier favourite ribbons and belongs to her night-cap.

CHERUBINO (snatching the ribbon from her) Oh give it to me, Susanna, please, you must let me see.

SUSANNA (trying to get it back) What are you doing?

CHERUBINO (Circling the chair) O sweetest, O loveliest, O most divine of ribbons! (covering the ribbon with kisses) Not for the whole wide world will I return it.

SUSANNA (following him, but then stopping, as though exhausted) How dare you take that ribbon?

CHERUBINO Don't get excited! I'll give you my new love-song in exchange. That will make the bargain even.

SUSANNA What shall I do with love-songs?

CHERUBINO Sing it to the Countess, sing it to yourself, sing it to Barbarina, to Marcellina, (in an ecstasy of joy) sing it to all the ladies in the castle

SUSANNA You must have lost your mind, poor Cherubino!

No. 6 *ARLÀ*

CHERUBINO I can't give you a good explanation For this new and confusing sensation. Ev'ry lady I see makes me tremble, Makes me tremble with pleasure and pain. When of love there is merely a mention, I am spellbound and rapt with attention. I weave romances and daydreams together, Filled with longing I cannot explain. If I knew what it is I'd confess it, But I am at a loss to express it, Yet I know that it always excites me, That it thrills me again and again. Love is my inspiration, Only consideration. In rivers, woods and flowers, I feel its magic streaming, Awake, asleep and dreaming. In gentle winds and showers, I hear its mellow tone. Love is my conversation,



Theme without variation, I tell my love-song To glens and mountains, To rivers and fountains, To moon and stars in heaven. The gentle breezes echo my ev'ry word and tone. And if no one will listen . . . Then I will talk alone of love, Talk to myself alone.

*RECITATIVE*

(As Cherubino is leaving, he sees the Count in the distance, turns around in fright, and hides himself behind the arm-chair.)

CHERUBINO Wait, I hear footsteps.

SUSANNA (trying to screen Cherubino) It's the Count! Hide quickly or you are lost!

COUNT (entering) Susanna, you seem nervous, so confused and excited.

SUSANNA My lord, you must excuse me, but if someone should come in now beg of you, don't stay here.

COUNT (seats himself in the arm-chair and takes Susanna's hand) It will take but a minute. Listen.

SUSANNA (pulling her hand back) I will not listen.

COUNT Just two words. You know the king has appointed me ambassador to London, and I arranged for Figaro to go with me.

SUSANNA (timidly) If I dared ask you-

COUNT (rising) Ask me, ask me, my darling, and with that right you exert over me, (tenderly, and trying to take her hand again) now and always, ask me, compel me, command me.

SUSANNA (angrily) I do not wish that right, I ask no privilege, I don't want to exert' it. I'm so unhappy.

COUNT No, no, Susanna, I want you to be happy. You must know how much I love you. I'm sure Basilio told you already! Now listen, if you only consent to meet me tonight in the garden of the castle, I will amply repay you for this favor.

BASILIO (offstage) He left not long ago.

COUNT Basilio !

SUSANNA Good heavens!

COUNT Hurry, don't let him enter.

SUSANNA (very agitated)

I should leave you alone here?

BASILIO (off stage) He can't be very far, perhaps with the Countess.

COUNT (pointing to the chair) I'll step behind this chair.

SUSANNA No, that's too risky.

COUNT Quiet, get rid of him quickly.

SUSANNA Oh, Lord, how awful! (The Count tries to hide behind the arm-chair; Susanna stands between him and Cherubino; the Count draws her gently away. Meanwhile the page passes in front of the chair, and crouches in it. Susanna covers him with the dressing-gown.)

BASILIO (enters) Susanna, heaven bless you! Do you by chance know where the Count is?

SUSANNA And what on earth should the Count do here? Go now, I'm busy.

BASILIO Just a minute, it seems that Figaro wants to see him.

SUSANNA The Count, the one man who hates him more than you do?

COUNT (aside) Let's see how he will serve me.

BASILIO That: is not so. There is no such conclusion, that if one loves the wife, one must hate the husband. In fact, my master loves you.

SUSANNA Get out of here this minute with your hints and suggestions. (resentfully) I have no interest in your lectures on morals, in your master, in his love.

BASILIO Don't take it that way, I don't mean to offend you. I was just thinking that you would prefer the type of lover which most women admire, a lord who is liberal and prudent, to a young pipsqueak, a pageboy.

SUSANNA (anxiously) Not Cherubino?

BASILIO Yes, Cherubino, Cherubin the Cupid, who earlier this morning was prowling near your door, trying to enter.

SUSANNA (forcefully) You're a villain, who tells malicious falsehoods!

BASILIO To have eyes in one's head, is that malicious? For instance, this lovesong . . . tell me, just between us, I can be trusted, and will breathe it to no one . . . is it for you or the Countess?

SUSANNA (in consternation, to herself) Who the devil could have told him?

BASILIO Apropos, my dear girl, you should train him much better. When he serves at table, he gazes at the Countess with such obvious longing that if the Count should take notice you can imagine, in that case, what's bound to happen.

SUSANNA Oh, you liar! Have you nothing more to do than to spread vicious gossip?

BASILIO I? You're mistaken. I just sell what I purchase, I echo what they all say, not adding in the slightest.

COUNT (.steps forward) Really! What are they saying?

BASILIO (to himself) Delightful!

SUSANNA Ah, heavens!

No. 7 TRIO

COUNT (to Basilio) That's the limit! Go this minute, Find the culprit and throw him out.

BASILIO How ill-chosen was my story, just a rumor, without a doubt.

SUSANNA We'll be ruined by the scandal If this gossip gets about!

COUNT Don't delay any longer, Go and throw the scoundrel out.

SUSANNA This is awful! What will happen? Heaven help us! (half fainting) I am feeling very faint.

COUNT AND BASILIO (Both support her.) Ah., poor girl her strength is failing! We must help her, revive her fast, Or, good Lord, she might not last.

BASILIO (approaching the arm-chair to sit down in it)

Let us put her in this arm-chair.

SUSANNA Ah, where am I? Am I dreaming? (recovering) You insult me, (repulsing them both) Go away, leave me alone.

BASILIO AND COUNT We are only here to help you, I assure you, we meant no harm

BASILIO (to the Count) What I told you Was a rumor, mere suspicion, With no foundation.

SUSANNA He is vicious and malicious; It's a lie, it is not true.

COUNT Order him to leave the city.

BASILIO AND SUSANNA What a pity!

COUNT (ironically) What a pity! I have caught him once before!

SUSANNA Caught him?

BASILIO How?

SUSANNA How?

BASILIO Did you?

SUSANNA AND BASILIO Really? Where?

COUNT At Barbarina's. Yesterday I went to see Antonio. I knocked, Barbarina opened and looked extremely nervous. I began to grow suspicious and examined every corner. When I gently drew the cover from the table, I found beneath it . . . (showing how he found the page, he lifts the dressing-gown from the chair and discovers Cherubino; astonished)

Cherubino! Ha! What does this mean?

SUSANNA (agitated) Ah, this is awful!

BASILIO (laughing sardonically) Ah! this is priceless!

COUNT Now at last my eyes are open!

SUSANNA Nothing worse than this could happen!

COUNT Now I see how matters stand!

SUSANNA This affair is out of hand. How will this end?

No one knows how this will end.

BASILIO That's the way all women do it,

They will never show their hand.

COUNT Now at last my eyes are open, Now I see how matters stand.

*RECITATIVE*

COUNT Basilio, go right away and tell Figaro I want him. (pointing to Cherubino, who does not move from the spot) He has to see this.

SUSANNA (animatedly) Yes, and hear this. Hurry.

COUNT No, wait. Are you brazen? How dare you face him, if your guilt is so obvious?

SUSANNA I have nothing to hide, for I am blameless.

COUNT What about Cherubino?

SUSANNA He was with me when we heard you approaching. He came to beg me to plead for my lady's gracious intercession. And your arrival completely upset him, so he hid in that chair in desperation.

COUNT But I sat in that arm-chair when entered the room.

CHERUBINO (timidly) At that time I was hiding behind it.

COUNT But when I stepped behind it?

CHERUBINO Then I slipped into the seat, under this cover.

COUNT (to Susanna) Confound it! Then he has heard the whole of our conversation.

CHERUBINO I tried my very best not to listen.

COUNT Oh, you rascal!

BASILIO Someone's coming, be careful!

COUNT (pulling Cherubino out of the armchair)

And you stand up at once, you little serpent.

NO. 8 *CHORUS*

(Enter Figaro, carrying a white veil in his hand, and peasants, dressed in white, who strew flowers from small baskets before the Count.) Strew in his praises Roses and daisies, Let us all honor him, Master and lord. He has respected, Nobly protected Maidenly honor, Virtue's reward. He is sagacious, Friendly and gracious In his benevolence, Loved and adored, Our noble lord.

*RECITATIVE AND CHORUS*

COUNT (surprised, to Figaro) What's the meaning of this nonsense?

FIGARO (aside to Susanna) The fun is beginning! You bear me out, Susanna.

SUSANNA (aside) I am discouraged.

FIGARO My lord, we beg your pardon, do not reject this token of our loyal affection. You abolished a custom, so repulsive to all who love sincerely.

COUNT That custom has been annulled, why do you worry?

FIGARO We are the first ones to reap the fruits of the new decree. We have already set the time for our wedding, and call upon you to place this symbol of virtue on the head of my bride, chaste and spotless, thanks to your noble deed, your generous action.

COUNT (aside) What devilish cunning! But I will play along. (aloud) I'm truly grateful for your keen understanding; but I merit no credit, neither tribute nor praises for changing laws which were unjust and immoral. I am bound to uphold the rights of nature.

ALL Three cheers for our generous master

SUSANNA (sarcastically) He is great!

FIGARO He is noble!

COUNT (to Figaro and Susanna) You have my promise to celebrate this marriage. Give me a little time, though. I need it to gather my faithful subjects; then, with fitting pomp and circumstance I shall unite you. (aside) I will send for Marcellina. (aloud) Farewell, till later.

*CHORUS* (The peasants strew the rest of the flowers.) Strew in his praises, etc.

(Exeunt)

*RECITATIVE*

FIGARO Let's cheer him!

SUSANNA Let's cheer him!

BASILIO Let's cheer him!

FIGARO (to Cherubino)

Why don't you join the cheering?

SUSANNA Poor fellow, he's dejected because the Count has banned him from the castle.

FIGARO What? On this festive occasion?

SUSANNA When the whole world admires you?

FIGARO On the day of our wedding?

CHERUBINO (kneeling) Forgive me, noble lord.

COUNT You don't deserve it.

SUSANNA He is only a child.

COUNT Don't belittle his talents.

CHERUBINO I may be little, but I hear like a grown-up.

COUNT (raising Cherubino from his knees) Enough. I will forgive you. And I will do even more. I need a captain in my regiment stationed at Seville. The post is yours, depart at once. (The Count prepares to leave; Susanna and Figaro detain high.) Good-bye.

SUSANNA AND FIGARO Please let him stay today.

COUNT No, you have heard me.

CHERUBINO (sighing with great feeling) I'm prepared to obey your lordship's order.

COUNT For the very last time, kiss Susanna good-bye. (Cherubino embraces Susanna who is still confused.) (aside) That was a stroke of genius!

FIGARO Well, mister captain, (Exeunt the Count and Basilio) best of luck on your journey. (softly, to Cherubino) Despite his

order, stay till tomorrow. (with feigned joy) Good-bye, now, dear little Cherubino! What a glorious future lies before you!

No. 9 *ARLA*

**FIGARO** (to Cherubino) From now on, my adventurous lover, No romantic philand'ring excursions. Such diversions are done with and over, Cherubino, my young cavalier. You had better forget all your fin'ry, Feathered caps which you wore to perfection, Powdered ringlets and creamlike complexion In the army will soon disappear. From now on etc. Off with soldiers coarsely swearing, Long mustaches proudly wearing! With a rifle and a saber In the army you will labor, Trumpets clashing And helmets flashing, Lots of fame, but not much money, And instead of minuetting, Through the mud you'll stagger sweating up the stony mountains wheezing, Sometimes broiling, sometimes freezing, To the tune of trumpets wailing, While the cannon-balls are hailing And the rifle bullets sailing, Whistling; by your pretty ear. You had best forget your fin'ry etc. From now on, my adventurous lover etc. Cherubino on to glory, On to glory and to fame! (Exeunt in military style.)

## ACT TWO

(Scene: A luxurious room, with an alcove and three doors.)

NO. 10. *CAVATINA*

**COUNTESS** Pour, O love, Sweet consolation On my lonely, my broken heart. Give me back his lost affection, Or, I beg you, let me die. Bring me comfort in my suff'ring, Hear my broken-hearted sigh. Give me back my lord and husband, Or, I beg you, let me die.

*RECITATIVE*

**COUNTESS** Come, Susanna, sit down here and finish the story.

**SUSANNA** (entering) That's all there is to it.

**COUNTESS** And you say that he loves you?

**SUSANNA** Oh, no, my master doesn't pay such a compliment to a girl of my station; he thinks he can buy me with money.

**COUNTESS** So he loves me no longer?

**SUSANNA** How is it, then, that he's jealous of you?

**COUNTESS** It is the same way with all modern husbands, by nature unfaithful, by character capricious, and conceited enough to be jealous. But if Figaro loves you, he might be able . . .

**FIGARO** (enters singing) La, la, la, etc.

**SUSANNA** There he is! (to Figaro) Come, my darling, my lady is waiting.

**FIGARO** (with casual gaiety) No need to worry, there's no reason whatever. The matter's very simple: my noble lord takes a fancy to my Susanna, so he decides in secret that he'll restore a custom he has lately abolished. The thing is very possible and very natural.

**COUNTESS** Very possible?

**SUSANNA** Very natural?

**FIGARO** It is most natural, and, if Susanna wants it, is most possible.

**SUSANNA** When will you ever finish?

**FIGARO** I have already. That is why he decided he needs me as his courier and that Susanna should become his ambassadress in secret; and because she has stubbornly refused to accept the assignment, he's offended and threatens to take sides with Marcellina. That's the gist of the story.

**SUSANNA** How can you treat such a serious business as a matter of joking?

**FIGARO** Aren't you happy that I don't take it seriously? Here is my project: through Basilio I'll send a little note to the Count to inform him about an appointment (to the Countess) that the Countess supposedly made with a lover.

**COUNTESS** Good Lord! How risky! With a husband so jealous!

**FIGARO** So much the better. Because we can more readily attack him, and baffle him, disconcert him, get him wholly bewildered, inflame him with suspicion, and make him grasp that what he does to others they will do unto him, and even with interest! While he is losing time as well as his bearings, our wedding hour will come before he ever finds an opportunity to hinder us from getting married, (indicating the Countess) or has a chance to make any effective opposition.

**SUSANNA** That's true, but in his stead Marcellina will oppose us.

**FIGARO** I know it, so therefore, you give the Count a hint that late this evening you'll meet him in the garden, and little Cherubino (on my advice he has not yet departed) dressed up as a woman, will keep the rendezvous in place of Susanna. That's the only solution whereby his lordship, surprised by my lady, can be forced to accede to all her dictates.

**COUNTESS** How is that?

**SUSANNA** Good enough.

**COUNTESS** All things considered . . .

**SUSANNA** If he thinks it will work . . . But is there time left?

**FIGARO** The Count has gone hunting and won't come back here for at least sev'ral hours. I'll go now and (about to go) send you Cherubino immediately. You have ample time to get him ready.

**COUNTESS** And then?

**FIGARO** And then?

Should my dear master want some diversion,

I'll play the music on my guitar. (Exit

Figaro.)

*RECITATIVE*

**COUNTESS** How it grieves me, Susanna, to think that Cherubino heard all the nonsense my wayward husband told you. Ah, you don't know yet . . . but for what earthly reason didn't he see me in person? Where did you put his love-song?

**SUSANNA** Here it is. As soon as he comes we'll have him sing it. Listen, who is it? Our hero! (enter Cherubino.) Come in, come in, most worthy major genial!

**CHERUBINO** Please do not call me by such a fatal title, for it reminds me that soon I must leave her, my dearest kindest lady . . .

..

**SUSANNA** Who is so pretty! I

**CHERUBINO** (sighing) So sweet! So lovely!

**SUSANNA** (mocking him) So sweet! So lovely! You little hypocrite! Now quickly sing that lovesong which you gave me this morning so the Countess may hear it.

**COUNTESS** Who wrote the song?

**SUSANNA** (pointing to Cherubino) Who wrote it? Look at his face and see him blush like a school-girl.

**COUNTESS** Take my guitar, Susanna, and accompany. -

**CHERUBINO** Today I'm not in voice, but if Madame desires . .

SUSANNA She surely does. Come on, no more preambles.

No. 11 *ARIETTA* (Susanna plays on the guitar.)

CHERUBINO You know the answer, you hold the key.

Love's tender secret, share it with me, Ladies, I beg you, share it with me. This new sensation I undergo, It is so different from all I know. Filled with excitement, walking on air, First I am happy, soon I despair. Now I am chilly, next time aflame, Not for a moment am I the same. I am pursuing some sunny ray, But it eludes me, try as I may. I can't stop sighing, hard as I try, And then I tremble, not knowing why. From this dilemma I find no peace, And yet I want it never to cease. You know the answer, etc.

*RECITATIVE*

COUNTESS Bravo, your voice is lovely. I did not know you were such an expert singer.

SUSANNA To tell the truth, all he does he always does well. Now come here, handsome soldier. Figaro told you all?

CHERUBINO Every detail.

SUSANNA Then let me see your height. (measuring herself with Cherubino) It will go splendidly . . . you are just about my size. Take your coat off. (takes off his cloak)

COUNTESS Be careful!

SUSANNA No need to worry.

COUNTESS If somebody should enter?

SUSANNA Let him, what harm are we doing? (locking the door) But I must lock the door. What shall we do so his hair will not show?

COUNTESS Get him a bonnet out of my wardrobe dresser, hurry! (Susanna goes into the small room to get a bonnet. Cherubino approaches the Countess and shows her the commission, which he carries in his pocket. She takes it, opens it and notices that the seal is missing) What have you got there?

CHERUBINO My commission.

COUNTESS They didn't waste a moment.

CHERUBINO I got it from Basilio.

COUNTESS (returns the commission to him) In their hurry they even forgot the seal.

SUSANNA (returning with a cap in her hand) The seal on what?

COUNTESS On his commission.

SUSANNA How could they be so careless? Here is the bonnet.

COUNTESS There you are. That's perfect! How disastrous for us if the Count came home now!

No. 12 *ARLÀ*

SUSANNA

Come here and kneel in front of me, (She takes Cherubino and makes him kneel a slight distance from the Countess, who has seated herself.) And let me try my skill. Don't wiggle, don't wiggle! For Heaven's sake, stand still, Be patient and stand still. (She combs his hair, first from one side, then takes him by the chin and turns him as she combs the other side.) Now slowly turn your head around. Bravo, that's very nice. (While Susanna is dressing his hair, Cherubino regards the Countess tenderly.) Now turn your face the other way,

And look me in the eye! (Continues to dress his hair; she places the bonnet on him.) Hold still and let me try. Look straight at me, not ev'rywhere. The Countess is not sitting there, So wait till by and by. If you would keep your mind on this We'd get it over

soon. The more you play, the more delay. At this rate we'll take all afternoon. Can't you be quiet?

Don't be so fidgety! Behave yourself! That's it! The motions slightly slower, The skirt a little lower, The glance a trifle shyer, The motions slightly slower, Now you must walk around. We'll give you some suggestions While you are passing by. (aside to the Countess) Just see our prima donna! he plays his part with honor. The clever little shammer Is full of charm and glamour. No powder or cosmetic would better his complexion. His glance is so poetic, his figure is perfection! If women fall in love with him, they know the reason why, Oh, certainly, they know the reason why. Yes, yes, I see it clearly, The reason why etc.

*RECITATIVE*

COUNTESS My, you are worse than children!

SUSANNA He looks so sweet I could almost be jealous! (takes Cherubino by the chin) You little rascal, where do you get the right to look so pretty?

COUNTESS I wish you'd stop this nonsense. I think you'd better roll up his sleeves past his elbows. Then, when we put his dress on, it will not fit so tightly.

SUSANNA (doing so) This way!

COUNTESS Up farther, like this. (discovers a ribbon wrapped about his arm) What is that ribbon?

SUSANNA The one he stole this morning.

COUNTESS Why is it bloodstained?

CHERUBINO Oh, really, I can't imagine. Just before, when I stumbled on the gravel, I guess I scraped my elbow, and I bandaged the wound with this ribbon.

SUSANNA Let's see it. That's not bad! Good gracious! His arm is much whiter than my own, just like a woman's!

COUNTESS You still keep up this nonsense? Go and look in my closet, and get a piece of adhesive plaster. Quick, it's in the dresser. As for that ribbon, you know, I like the color, I would hate to part with it. (Susanna dashes off; the Countess contemplates her ribbon; Cherubino, kneeling, observes her attentively.)

SUSANNA (gives the plaster and the scissors to the Countess) I found it, but don't we need a bandage?

COUNTESS Another ribbon! Bring it along when you come back. (Susanna leaves through the door at the back, taking with her Cherubino's cloak.)

CHERUBINO Ah, the old one would have healed it much quicker!

COUNTESS And why? This one is better.

CHERUBINO But any ribbon which touched the skin, or bound the hair of someone, somebody . . .

COUNTESS (interrupting him) Who's a stranger will heal your cuts and bruises, don't you think so? It seems to have some pow'rs I never heard of.

CHERUBINO My lady's joking, and I must go away.

COUNTESS My poor boy! What misfortune!

CHERUBINO How I am suffering!

COUNTESS (much moved) You're crying!

CHERUBINO O Lord, why don't you let me die now? Close to my death, I might get up the courage to confess how I really . . .



COUNTESS (drying his eyes with her handkerchief) Cherubino, you are a little baby. (A knock is heard at the door) Who's knocking at my door?

COUNT (outside) Why locked in?

COUNTESS It's my husband! Good Heavens! I'm ruined . . . with you here without your jacket . . . in this condition . . . he has received a letter . . . He's so terribly jealous!

COUNT (more loudly) Why this delay?

COUNTESS (confused) I'm alone. Yes, yes, I'm coming

COUNT To whom were you speaking?

COUNTESS To you . . . surely to you only.

CHERUBINO After all that has happened, his awful temper, I cannot let him find me! (runs into the small room and shuts the door)

COUNTESS May God above protect me in this danger! (takes the key and runs to admit the Count)

COUNT (enters, in a hunting costume) This is something new! It was never your custom to lock yourself in.

COUNTESS That's true, but this time, I only was arranging . . .

COUNT Arranging

COUNTESS Some of my dresses, and Susanna was with me; she has gone into her own room . . .

COUNT At any rate, it seems that something upset you. Can you explain this letter?

COUNTESS (aside). Heavens! The letter that Figaro has written! (Cherubino, in the small room, noisily knocks over a small table and chair.)

COUNT What was that awful noise in there? A piece of furniture fell down in your boudoir.

COUNTESS Strange, I did not hear it.

COUNT In that event, you must be hard of hearing.

COUNTESS Who, I?

COUNT Somebody's in there!

COUNTESS Who could possibly be there?

COUNT I'm asking you that. I only just came in here.

COUNTESS Of course, Susanna. How could I . . .

COUNT Just before, you were saying she went to her room.

COUNTESS Maybe to her room or that one, I was not watching.

COUNT Then tell me, how does it happen you are so embarrassed?

COUNTESS (with a forced laugh) For what possible reason?

COUNT I can't explain it, but you do seem embarrassed.

COUNTESS Is it not you, rather, who should be embarrassed about Susanna?

COUNT That's not the issue! If it's Susanna, then I must see her.

No. 13 *TRIO*

Susanna enters through the door she used on leaving, and halts oil stein; the Count at the door of the small room.)

COUNT Susanna, what's the matter? Come out now, do you hear?

COUNTESS Impossible, she cannot, Right now she can't appear.

SUSANNA What's all this angry chatter? The page no longer here?

COUNT What reason can prevent her? Speak

COUNTESS She's modest, she's modest! That is why. A wedding dress was sent her, She has to try it on.

COUNT I grasp the situation, Her lover hides inside..

COUNTESS Your shameful accusation Severely wounds my pride. Your impudent accusation Is baseless and unwise.

SUSANNA A ticklish situation, It cannot be denied. A ticklish situation, He took us by surprise.

COUNT Disgraceful situation! I took them by surprise. Susanna, what is the matter? Come out now! Haven't you heard?

COUNTESS Impossible! She cannot! Right now she can't appear.

COUNT Well, if I may not see you, Susanna, let me hear you,

COUNTESS You will not hear her talking. Expressly, I forbid it! (Susanna hides in the alcove.

COUNT My lady, please consider. Be careful, I warn you.

SUSANNA Oh Heavens! This is dreadful! A scandal, a catastrophe Will surely come to pass.

COUNTESS Your lordship, think it over. No scandal or catastrophe Must ever come to pass.

SUSANNA Good Lord, what a disaster, A scandal, a catastrophe Will surely come to pass.

COUNT, COUNTESS AND SUSANNA Your lordship, (my lady) think it over, A scandal, a catastrophe Will surely come to pass.

*RECITATIVE*

COUNT Are you going to open?

COUNTESS And for what reason should I open my room?

COUNT All right, don't open. I'll get in just the same. Ho, servants!

COUNTESS How dare you! Can it be your intention to disgrace me in public?

COUNT Of course not, why should I? Without noise or disturbance, nor arousing a scandal before our servants, I'll go myself, then, to get all that is needed. You will wait for me here. But before leaving, so that all doubts are excluded, I shall make sure and lock all the doors. (locks the door to Susanna's room)

COUNTESS This is worse yet.

COUNT No, on second thought, be kind enough to come with me. (with feigned gaiety) My lady, may I escort you? Here is my arm.

COUNTESS (shuddering) So be it.

COUNT (indicating the small room) Susanna won't mind waiting till we are back here. (Exeunt)

NO. 14 *DUETTINO*

(Susanna runs out of the alcove.)

SUSANNA (at the door of the small room) Unlock the door and hurry! It's Susanna! Come out now, and quickly, Come out this very minute, You must get out of here!

CHERUBINO (coming out of the small room, confused and breathless) O Lord, what a calamity, How can I get away? You can't, I fear.

CHERUBINO I've got to get away!

SUSANNA He locked the door from outside. In Heaven's name, what can we do?

CHERUBINO To stay is out of question.

SUSANNA Then make a good suggestion.

CHERUBINO (going towards the window which looks out on the Garden, as though he were going to jump out) Let's see about the window, It is above the garden.

SUSANNA (holding him back) Don't do it, Cherubino, Don't do it, don't jump, it is too high!

CHERUBINO (trying to free himself from her) It's suicide, I know it!

SUSANNA

Don't do it, Cherubino.

CHERUBINO

It really does not matter!

SUSANNA

It's much too high for jumping, You never will get by.

CHERUBINO

No other day is left for me. (releasing himself from her) I would never cause my lady any shame. Embrace her in my name! Good-bye now, and here I go.

SUSANNA He really means to do it! For Heaven's sake, stay here, Don't do it, don't do it! (Cherubino jumps out. Susanna screams, sits down for a moment, and then goes to the balcony.)

*RECITATIVE*

SUSANNA

Look at the little devil! How he can run! He's already a mile away. But it is up to me now to deal with our lord and master. Come ahead, Mister Tyrant, I shall be ready.

(She enters the small room and locks the door behind her.)

(The Countess and the Count enter. The Count brings a hammer and a crow-bar. After entering, he examines all the doors.)

COUNT Ev'rything's as we left it. Will you yourself unlock the door now, or shall I? (preparing to force open the door)

COUNTESS Just wait one moment. I entreat you to listen. (The Count tosses the hammer and crow-bar onto a chair.) Do you think I could fail you in my duty as your wife?

COUNT That is the question. Meanwhile I am proceeding to find out who is there.

COUNTESS (timidly and trembling)

Yes, there is someone, but listen to me calmly.

COUNT (incensed) So it's not Susanna?

COUNTESS No, but somebody else who can give you no reason for suspicion or doubt. We were rehearsing, just a harmless diversion, a frolic for this evening, and I assure you that my honor, your good faith . . .

COUNT Who is it? Say it, (with increasing anger) I'll strike him dead!

COUNTESS Please listen? Ah! I'm afraid!

COUNT I Speak freely.

COUNTESS It's just a child.

COUNT Just a child?

COUNTESS Yes, Cherubino.

COUNT (aside) Why must I find that page-boy trailing my footsteps like a shadow? (aloud) What? Has he not left? He defied me. Now I begin 'to see daylight in this confusion. This is the cunning plot of which the letter warned me.

*NO. 15 FINALE*

COUNT (with violence, at the door of the small room) Out you come. Don't waste a moment, wretched, disobedient page!

COUNTESS (pulling him back from the .small room) Dearest husband, what excitement! I am frightened by your rage.

COUNT And you still would dare oppose me?

COUNTESS You must listen!

COUNT I am waiting!

COUNTESS Let me tell you.

COUNT I am waiting. The answer, what is it?

COUNTESS As a joke you have to take it, No bad intention, (trembling and alarmed) And the costume, in which you find him, Open collar, shoulders naked . . .

COUNT Open collar! Shoulders naked! Do continue !

COUNTESS To disguise him as a woman

COUNT (goes toward the small room, then turns around) How indecent, how outrageous! For his boldness he shall pay!

COUNTESS (forcefully) You offend me most. severely By accusing me this way.

COUNT Let me enter! (turning back

COUNTESS He is not guilty. (gives him the key) You know better.

COUNT I know nothing! Go away at once and leave me. You're unfaithful and deceived me. You have covered me with shame.

COUNTESS

I leave you, yes . . . but

COUNT I won't listen.

COUNTESS But . . .

COUNT I won't listen.

COUNTESS I am blameless.

COUNT I don't believe you! I shall kill him.

COUNTESS Ah, his ear is deaf to reason, jealous rage has made him blind.

COUNT He must die for his treason! Nothing less can ease my mind! Now I know you!

COUNTESS What suspicion! What injustice!

COUNT Unworthy woman, I shall kill him, etc .... (astonished) Susanna! (opens the door; Susanna gravely issues from the doorway and remains there.)

COUNTESS (astonished) Susanna!

SUSANNA Your lordship! You seem so bewildered! (ironically) The wicked offender has come to surrender. Your treacherous rival is standing right here.

COUNT (aside) They fooled me! This thing is confusing my brain. However . . .

COUNTESS (aside) I can't understand it.

Susanna, explain!

SUSANNA (aside) How all this has happened They cannot explain.

You mean, sir, he still might be there? Why don't you go look, then, He still might be there.

COUNT All right, then, he still might be there. (The Count goes into the small room.)

COUNTESS Susanna, I'm weary, I'm breathless with terror.

SUSANNA (quickly indicates to the Countess the window from which Cherubino leaped) Don't worry, be cheerful, the page is not there.

COUNT (comes out of the small room in confusion) How badly mistaken, Completely mistaken! I scarcely believe it . . . If I did

offend you, I beg your forgiveness. I'm sure you will give it. But such cruel escapades Are quite out of place.

COUNTESS (with her handkerchief at her mouth to conceal her agitation)

AND SUSANNA

Your foolish behavior Can merit no grace.

COUNT I love you

COUNTESS

(gradually recovering from her confusion) Don't say it!

COUNT I swear it

COUNTESS You're lying! (forcefully and angrily) I'm wicked, unfaithful, And always deceive you.

COUNT Please help me, Susanna, Her anger to calm.

SUSANNA Your jealous suspicion has done all this harm.

COUNTESS (resentfully) My love, always faithful, So true and unswerving, Is surety deserving of better reward

COUNT Oh, help me, Susanna, Her anger to calm.

SUSANNA Your jealous suspicion has done all this harm.

(beseechingly) My lady!

COUNT (beseechingly) Rosina !

COUNTESS (to the Count) You traitor! Those days are forgotten! I once was contented, Adored by my lover, But now I'm tormented And scorned by my lord.

SUSANNA Dejected, repentant, He begs for your pardon. Don't harbor resentment, Be kind and forgive.

COUNT Dejected, repentant, I beg your forgiveness. Ah, don't harbor resentment, Have mercy, forgive.

COUNTESS You traitor, I'll never forgive you as long as I live.

COUNT But what of the page, then?

COUNTESS To test and provoke you.

COUNT Your fright and embarrassment?

COUNTESS Was just to mislead you.

COUNT But what does the letter mean?

COUNTESS AND SUSANNA By Figaro written and sent through Basilio.

COUNT What infamy, how dare they . . .

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS If you want forgiveness, You, too, must forgive.

COUNT (tenderly) If all have consented, The quarrel is ended. Rosins, I beg of you, This time to forgive.

COUNTESS I feel it, Susanna, I weaken already. Why is it that women can never be firm?

SUSANNA When men are in question, However you treat them, You never defeat them, As hard as you scheme.

COUNT (tenderly) You pardon me?

COUNTESS I cannot

COUNT I treated you unjustly, I am sorry.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND COUNT He means it (I mean) sincerely, He hopes (I hope) from now on his (my) mistake to redeem.

FIGARO (enters) Dear master, just listen, The music is sounding, The trumpets are blaring, The fiddles are playing, The echoes are ringing, The people are singing, (taking Susanna by the arm and about to leave) The wedding procession is ready to start.

COUNT (detaining him) There's time, so don't hurry.

FIGARO The crowd is impatient.

COUNT There's time, so don't hurry, just one explanation before we depart.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO A new complication with which to contend. A bad situation, but how will it end?

COUNT I know that this ruse will accomplish my end. With this complication they cannot contend. Kindly tell me, mister Figaro, (shows him the letter) did you ever see this note?

FIGARO (pretending to examine it) Never saw it, never saw it.

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS Never saw it?

FIGARO No.

SUSANNA Didn't give it to Basilio?

COUNTESS To deliver

COUNTESS

COUNT What about it?

FIGARO Oh no, oh no'

SUSANNA You don't know about a lover. . .

COUNTESS Who this evening in the garden. . .

COUNT You remember?

FIGARO Why, not at all.

COUNT Stop evading and denying, I can see that you are lying. It is written on your face.

FIGARO Well, my face may lie but I don't,

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS What's the use of all the ruses? We can see through your excuses, And the truth you can't deny.

COUNT What's your answer?

FIGARO Nothing, nothing.

COUNT You admit it?

FIGARO No, I will not.

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS There's no point in telling stories, You have carried things too far.

FIGARO In theatrical tradition, Let us have a happy ending, (taking Susanna by the arm) With a wedding celebration When the final curtain falls.

SUSANNA, FIGARO AND COUNTESS Won't you give us (them) your permission, Say the word we (they) long to hear? Let us (the) two at last be married, Say the word we (they) long to hear.

COUNT (aside) Marcellina, Marcellina, You are late in getting here.

ANTONIO (enters excitedly with a pot of geraniums) Ah, my lord, my lord!

COUNT (anxiously) What has happened?

ANTONIO (enraged) Who has dared, who has done this to me?

THE OTHERS What's the matter with you, What has happened?

ANTONIO I won't have it!

THE OTHERS What have you to say?

ANTONIO I won't have it.

THE OTHERS What have you to say?

ANTONIO From the window that looks on the garden Ev'ry day they throw down many objects. But today, it is really the limit, They have thrown a whole man to the ground.

COUNT (with vivacity) From the window?

ANTONIO (Showing the pot) Just look at the geraniums.

COUNT Into the garden?

ANTONIO Yes.

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS (softly to Figaro) Figaro, help us!

COUNT Do you mean it?  
 FIGARO, SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *aside.* )  
 Our plan will be ruined!  
 (aloud) Is this drunkard quite out of his mind?  
 COUNT ( *to Antonio, fiercely* ) And this man, what became of him later?  
 ANTONIO He went by like a shot from a cannon. In a flash he had left me behind.  
 SUSANNA ( *softly, to Figaro* ) Cherubino . . .  
 FIGARO ( *softly, to Susanna* ) I know it, I saw him.  
 (aloud) Ha ha ha ha!  
 COUNT Quiet there!  
 FIGARO Ha, ha, ha, ha t  
 ANTONIO I What's so funny?  
 FIGARO Ha, ha, ha, ha!  
 COUNT Hold your tongue, all of you, hold your tongue!  
 FIGARO Are you tipsy from morning till night?  
 COUNT Now repeat what you just said to me! He fell from the window?  
 ANTONIO From the window.  
 COUNT On the flowers?  
 ANTONIO On the flowers.  
 SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO But, your lordship, he's drunk, can't you see?  
 COUNT Just continue! Tell your story! You saw what he looked like?  
 ANTONIO No, I did not.  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *softly, to Figaro* ) Look out, Figaro, help us, Figaro, help us!  
 FIGARO ( *to Antonio* ) Will you ever be finished complaining? Such a fuss over nothing whatever. ( *pointing contemptuously to the geraniums* ) If the truth can no longer be hidden, I myself was the man whom you saw.  
 COUNT You! And why?  
 FIGARO What surprise!  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *aside* ) How brilliant! How clever!  
 COUNT I cannot believe it!  
 ANTONIO You? And why?  
 ANTONIO In that case you have grown very quickly.  
 COUNT That sounds unlikely.  
 ANTONIO After jumping you looked very small.  
 FIGARO When one jumps one becomes very small.  
 ANTONIO You don't say so!  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *aside* ) Who believes all this nonsense?  
 COUNT ( *to Antonio* ) Come, describe him.  
 ANTONIO He looked like a youngster.  
 COUNT ( *violently* ) Cherubino?  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *aside* ) I can't bear it. I can't bear it.  
 FIGARO Cherubino, Cherubino! ( *ironically* ) Who returned from Seville on horseback, For it's there he was sent by the Count.  
 ANTONIO ( *with stupid simplicity* ) No, no, no! He was not on horseback, He jumped out the window on foot.  
 COUNT Don't be foolish. Let's get to the point.

SUSANNA,AND COUNTESS ( *aside* ) Heaven knows what will come out of this.  
 COUNT ( *to Figaro, fiercely* ) It was you?  
 FIGARO ( *innocently* ) That is true.  
 COUNT But what for?  
 FIGARO I was scared.  
 COUNT You were scared?  
 FIGARO ( *indicating the maid's count* ) I had come here and was waiting to see my Susanna, When I heard angry voices from out side. You here raging; I thought of my letter; Scared to death, I jumped down from the window ( *pretends that his foot hurts him* ) And I twisted my foot when I fell.  
 ANTONIO Then these papers ( *handing Figaro some folded papers* ) I found in the garden must be yours?  
 COUNT Oho! ( *takes them front him* ) Give them to me.  
 FIGARO ( *softly, to the Countess and Susanna* ) Now I'm in for it.  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *softly, to Figaro* ) Figaro, help us, Figaro, help us!  
 COUNT ( *opens the paper and immediately folds it again* ) Do you know what this paper may be?  
 FIGARO ( *taking some papers out of his pocket* ) Yes, I know it, I know it, just a moment.  
 ANTONIO Well, perhaps it's a list of his creditors.  
 FIGARO No, I don't buy on credit.  
 COUNT ( *to Figaro* ) Speak up now. ( *to Antonio* ) And you, let him be.  
 SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO Off with you, Antonio.  
 ANTONIO I will go, but the next time I see you . . . ( *exit* )  
 FIGARO Go away, I'm not frightened of you.  
 SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO Off with you, good riddance.  
 COUNT ( *reopens the paper and folds it again quickly* ) ( *to Figaro* ) Well now?  
 COUNTESS ( *to Susanna* ) Good Heavens, the page's commission!  
 SUSANNA ( *to Figaro* ) That is right, his commission!  
 COUNT ( *ironically, to Figaro* ) Speak freely.  
 FIGARO ( *pretending to recollect* )  
 O how stupid, now I know it. That is the commission Which the boy has entrusted to me.  
 COUNT For what reason?  
 FIGARO ( *confused* ) It needed'.  
 COUNT It needed . . .  
 COUNTESS ( *to Susanna, softly* ) Needed sealing.  
 SUSANNA ( *to Figaro, softly* ) Needed sealing.  
 COUNT I'm waiting .  
 FIGARO ( *pretending to ponder* ) It's the custom . . .  
 COUNT Well, what is the custom?  
 FIGARO It's the custom to seal a commission.  
 COUNT ( *aside, notices that the seal is missing, tears up the paper and angrily throws it away* ) Oh, that rascal is driving me crazy. This affair is a myst'ry to me.  
 SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( *aside* ) If I ever escape from this shipwreck, Nevermore will I venture to sea.  
 FIGARO ( *aside* ) Let him threaten as much as he pleases, He will not get the better of me. (Enter Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo.)



MARCELLINA, BASILIO AND BARTOLO

Lord, our case demands a hearing. That is why we came today.

COUNT (aside) They have come here for retribution. Things begin now to go my way.

FIGARO, SUSANNA AND COUNTESS ( aside ) They have come to give us trouble, we must lead their plans astray.

FIGARO Bent on asinine obstruction, Those three fools are here today.

COUNT Let's not make a rash deduction, First each one must have his say.

MARCELLINA This man gave his solemn promise That in time we would be married; I insist upon this bargain

Being promptly carried out.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO Bargain? Bargain?

COUNT No more; let nobody dare interrupt me; It is I who judge this case.

BARTOLO With this lady's wish compliant I am here as her attorney, And I warrant that my client Has a strictly legal case.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO He's a scoundrel, he's a scoundrel!

COUNT Enough! Be silent! Let's hear Don Basilio. It is I who judge this case.

BASILIO I, as man of prime celebrity, Give my word and testimonial That their plans were matrimonial, With a bonus in advance.

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS Ev'ryone of them is crazy.

COUNT Hold on! According to proper proceeding, We must first give the contract a reading, We must follow the legal course.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO What a course events have taken!

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO, COUNT AND BASILIO

What a perfect case of trapping.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO We are beaten, badly shaken.

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO, COUNT AND BASILIO This time we have caught them napping.

SUSANNA, COUNTESS AND FIGARO Surely some infernal power Must have brought them here today.

MARCELLINA, BARTOLO, COUNT AND BASILIO Some propitious, kindly power must have brought us here today, On this day!

### ACT THREE

(A richly decorated hall prepared for a wedding festivity, with two thrones.)

#### RECITATIVE

COUNT (walking up and down) What a hopeless confusion! An anonymous letter, the maid-in-waiting shut in her mistress' boudoir, her mistress embarrassed, one man who jumps out of the window to the garden, somebody else who claims that he has done it. I don't know what to think. It might have been even one of the domestics, they are the kind who would take such a chance. As for the Countess . . . any doubt would be insult; she has too much respect for herself and for my honor. My honor! What has human weakness done to my honor!

COUNTESS (entering with Susanna, and keeping in the background, unseen by the Count) Come, don't be downcast. Tell him he may meet you in the garden.

COUNT I'll make sure that Cherubino arrived at Seville. I've sent Basilio expressly for that purpose.

SUSANNA Good Heavens, and Figaro?

COUNTESS He must not know about it. Instead of you, I'll await him myself.

COUNT Before this evening he ought to be back.

SUSANNA My lady, I'm frightened!

COUNTESS Remember that my fate hands now. (She retires.)

COUNT And Susanna? Who knows, maybe she has already betrayed my secret. If she has done so, Figaro must marry Marcellina.

SUSANNA (aside) Marcellina! (aloud) My lord!

COUNT (gravely) What do you wish? is in your

SUSANNA You seem in bad humor.

COUNT What is it that you want?

SUSANNA My lord, just now the Countess is suffering from a headache and sent me to get your flask of smelling salts.

COUNT Take it.

SUSANNA I'll soon return it.

COUNT No, no, don't bother, you may need it yourself.

SUSANNA Myself? People of my kind do not suffer from headaches.

COUNT But a bride about to lose her bridegroom on the day of her wedding?

SUSANNA I'll pay off Marcellina with the dowry that you promised to give me.

COUNT I made that promise? Did I?

SUSANNA That's how I understood you.

COUNT Yes, yes, if you had only wished to understand me.

SUSANNA It is my duty, and what your lordship wishes is my desire.

#### No. 16 DUET

COUNT But why, why make me suffer, Longing for your reply? But why, but why? Will you not tell me why?

SUSANNA In time we women grant you What we at first deny.

COUNT Then we shall meet this evening?

SUSANNA If so you wish, my lord.

COUNT You will not fail to be there?

SUSANNA No, no, you have my word.

COUNT You promise?

SUSANNA Yes!

COUNT Won't disappoint me?

SUSANNA No.

COUNT This very evening?

SUSANNA You have my word, I will not fail my word.

COUNT The sweet promise you gave me Raises my hope so high.

SUSANNA (aside) All those who know what love is, Forgive me for this lie.

COUNT You'll meet me in the garden?

SUSANNA If that's your wish, I might.

COUNT You will not disappoint me!

SUSANNA I shall be there tonight.

COUNT You promise?

SUSANNA Yes.  
 COUNT Won't disappoint me?  
 SUSANNA No.  
 COUNT I have your promise?  
 SUSANNA No.  
 COUNT No?  
 SUSANNA Yes, I shall be there tonight.  
 COUNT Won't disappoint me"  
 SUSANNA No.  
 COUNT And you will be there?  
 SUSANNA Yes.  
 COUNT Won't disappoint me?  
 SUSANNA Yes.  
 COUNT Yes?  
 SUSANNA No, I shall be there tonight.  
 COUNT The sweet promise you gave me, etc.  
*RECITATIVE*  
 COUNT But why in the world were you so cross to me this morning?  
 SUSANNA I knew the page was listening.  
 COUNT And to Basilio, who was speaking for me?  
 SUSANNA I do not see why we need a Basilio . . .  
 COUNT Of course, dear, how clever! And I may have your word you will not disappoint me? But the Countess, she is waiting for her smelling salts.  
 SUSANNA She really isn't. I had to make some pretext to address you.  
 COUNT (taking her hand) Adorable!  
 SUSANNA (drawing it away) They're coming!  
 COUNT (aside) She has surrendered.  
 SUSANNA Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.  
 FIGARO (enters; aside to Susanna) Say, Susanna,. what's up?  
 SUSANNA (aside, to Figaro) Plenty! Without a lawyer we have won the decision. (Exit)  
 FIGARO (follows her) What has happened?  
 NO. 17 *RECITATIVE AND ARIA*  
 COUNT "You have won the decision?" What the devil! Are they trying to fool me? Hypocrites! I'll cure them. I'll see that both the traitors are punished. I'll base the verdict on my pleasure alone. If he succeeded in paying Marcellina! How can he? He has no money! Besides, Antonio won't permit his beloved niece Susanna, To marry such a nobody as Figaro. I will flatter the ego Of that conceited drunkard. It will further my purpose. It can't go better! Shall I look on desiring, And see my servant happy? Shall I see him acquiring Favors for which I yearn? Shall I, in helpless fashion, Allow a hateful marriage, While I restrain a passion Which she does not return? Shall I not lift a finger To conquer her affection, Look on without objection, Aloof and unconcerned? Ah, no! I won't! Ah, no, I will not give you So great a satisfaction. You shall not dare to spite me, Oppose me and torment me. You'll have no chance to laugh at me, While I am cast aside. Only the thought of vengeance Offers me consolation. Triumphant vindication Shall satisfy my pride, My deeply wounded pride.  
 2ND TIME  
 Shall satisfy my pride, And fill my heart with joy.

(He prepares to leave, but meets Don Curzio, who enters with Marcellina, Figaro, and Bartolo.)  
*RECITATIVE*  
 CURZIO (stammering) The ca-case has b-been d-decided. He must marry her or pay her, th-that is the v-verdict.  
 MARCELLINA What a wedding!  
 FIGARO What a funeral!  
 MARCELLINA (aside) At last I'll be the wife of the man I worship!  
 FIGARO I appeal this, your lordship.  
 COUNT The sentence is a just one, either marry or pay. Good work, Don Curzio.  
 CURZIO You f-f-flatter, your 1-lordship.  
 BARTOLO What a glorious sentence!  
 FIGARO In what way glorious?  
 BARTOLO Full justice has been rendered.  
 FIGARO But I will not give in.  
 BARTOLO Oh, yes, you will!  
 CURZIO Either m-marry or p-pay her; Did she not l-lend you two thousand silver pieces?  
 FIGARO I am a nobleman and cannot be married without my parents' consent.  
 COUNT And these parents, where are they?  
 FIGARO I still am on the look-out. In about ten years I am sure I will have found them.  
 BARTOLO So you are a foundling?  
 FIGARO No, a lostling. It seems that I was kidnaped.  
 COUNT Kidnaped?  
 MARCELLINA Kidnaped?  
 BARTOLO Then prove it!  
 CURZIO Where is your evidence?  
 FIGARO That I can offer! The gold and precious jewels that my abductors found near me, the fine embroidered line: I was wearing are the confirmation of my noble extraction. Still more conclusive, there is a symbol branded on my arm.  
 MARCELLINA A spatula printed on your right arm?  
 FIGARO How did you know that?  
 MARCELLINA Great heavens, it's he, then!  
 FIGARO Of course, it's I, then.  
 CURZIO Who?  
 COUNT Who?  
 BARTOLO Who?  
 MARCELLINA Emanuel!  
 BARTOLO You say, that robbers stole you?  
 FIGARO From near a castle.  
 BARTOLO Here is your mother.  
 FIGARO My wet nurse?  
 BARTOLO No, your mother.  
 CURZIO AND COUNT His mother?  
 FIGARO You don't mean it?  
 MARCELLINA And here is your father!  
 No. 18 *SEXTET*  
 MARCELLINA (embracing Figaro) Now at last I may embrace you, For I am your loving mother.  
 FIGARO(to Bartolo) Father dear, why not do likewise? Do not make me blush with shame

BARTOLO (embracing Figaro) It is my duty to inform you Of the justice of your claim.

CURZIO He, the father, and she his mother! this match is null and void.

COUNT Worse misfortune could not happen! My only hopes have been destroyed (about to go)

MARCELLINA I'm your mother!

BARTOLO I'm your father!

FIGARO Beloved parents!

MARCELLINA He's your father!

BARTOLO She's your mother!

FIGARO Beloved parents! (Enter Susanna with a purse in her hand.)

SUSANNA (detaining the Count) Wait a minute, not so hasty! I have brought along the money. It's the ransom for my Figaro, So that I can buy him free.

COUNT AND CURZIO There has been a great sensation Take a look and you will see.

MARCELLINA AND BARTOLO Come, embrace me!

FIGARO I love you dearly!

SUSANNA (turns and sees Figaro embracing Marcellina ) So he marries Marcellina! Lord in Heaven! To be so, false, so false to me! Don't come near me! (about to go)

FIGARO (detaining Susanna) Wait a moment! You're mistaken! Listen, my darling, 'listen, listen!

SUSANNA (tears herself away and boxes Figaro's ears) I am list'ning!

MARCELLINA AND BARTOLO This peculiar fit of fury Shows you truly how she loves you. Women often act that way.

SUSANNA I'm beside myself with fury, Being tricked in such a way; Tricked and cheated by a spinster In a most dishonest fashion, In a most distasteful way.

COUNT I'm beside myself with fury, Things have not turned out my way.

CURZIO Anger and quarrels, jealous rages, fits of fury Are the order of the day.

MARCELLINA (runs to embrace Susanna) No longer be angry, my dear little daughter, From this moment onward I'm mother to you. For I am his mother And mother to you.

SUSANNA (to Bartolo) His mother?

BARTOLO His mother!

SUSANNA (to the Count) His mother?

COUNT His mother!

SUSANNA (to Don Curzio) His mother?

CURZIO His mother!

SUSANNA (to Marcellina) His mother?

MARCELLINA His mother!

ALL His mother! I

SUSANNA (to Figaro) Your mother?

FIGARO And this is my father, He says so himself.

SUSANNA (to Bartolo, the Count, Don Curzio and Marcellina) His father? etc. (All four rush to embrace each other.)

SUSANNA, FIGARO, BARTOLO AND MARCELLINA

In one blessed moment Our fears have been thwarted. A happier future at last is in sight.

COUNT AND CURZIO

In one cursed moment My (his) plans have been thwarted It fills me (him) with envy And bitter resentment To see them all so happy with sudden delight. In one cursed moment My (his) plans have been thwarted. Not even the hope of revenge is in sight. (Exeunt the Count and Don Curzio.)

RECITATIVE

MARCELLINA There he is, dearest doctor, the blooming flower of our one-time romance.

BARTOLO

Let's not warm up such overaged proceedings. He is my offspring, you indeed are his mother, so our marriage shall be whenever you want it.

MARCELLINA To-day! It shall be a double wedding. Take this, (gives the note to Figaro) it is the note for the money you owe me. Take it as dowry.

SUSANNA (throws a purse to the ground) Take this purse in addition.

BARTOLO (does the same) And also this one.

FIGARO Thank you! Just keep right on, I'm getting wealthy.

SUSANNA Now let us go and tell all that has happened to the Countess and Uncle Antonio. Who is as glad as I am? Who is as glad as I am?

FIGARO I am!

BARTOLO I am!

MARCELLINA I am!

ALL The Count is wild with fury, but we don't care a bit!

(All exeunt, embracing.)

RECITATIVE

(Enter Barbarina, and Cherubino.)

BARBARINA Come on, come on, dear page, you will have fun were you to come along to my house. You will see all the pretty girls of the castle, but none of them is as beautiful as you are.

CHERUBINO But, if the Count should find me, Heaven forbid! You know, he believes I have left for Seville.

BARBARINA Since when does that disturb you? And if he found you, it would not be the first time. Listen, you must let us dress you like a girl. Then we all will present a nice bouquet of flowers to the Countess. Just leave it all to me, your Barbarina. (Exeunt)

NO. 19 RECITATIVE AND ARIA

(The COUNTESS enters.)

COUNTESS

And Susanna is late . . . I am anxious to find out How his lordship accepted the proposal. I must admit that our project is bold. And with a husband so impulsive and so jealous! But what's the harm? I only want to meet him in a dress of Susanna's while she wears mine, By the favour of darkness. Ah, Heaven! To what shameful state of existence

Have I descended through the fault of my husband, Who, after treating me with scorn unexampled And with disdain, With jealous rages betrayed me, First beloved, then offended, At last deserted, Forced me to plead now for my maid's assistance! Are they over, those cherished moments, Hours together so sweetly shared? Are they broken, those fervent pledges His deceitful lips declared? If a bitter fate inclined me Such unhappiness to know, Why do memories remind me Of those joys of long ago? Are they over, etc. If at last my heart's devotion Could achieve but

one reward, And revive the dead emotion Of my false and heartless lord! (Exit)

RECITATIVE

(Enter the Count, and Antonio, with a hat in his hand.)

ANTONIO There's no doubt, my lord, that Cherubino is still here in the castle, and I brought his hat with me to prove it.

COUNT But how can that be? By this time he is due at Seville.

ANTONIO Today, sir, if you'll excuse me, Seville is my house. There they dressed him in girl's clothes and there he also has left his new uniform.

COUNT Reprobrates!

ANTONIO Please come, and I'll be glad to show you. (Exeunt)

(Enter the Countess and Susanna.)

COUNTESS Isn't that marvelous? What was the Count's reaction?

SUSANNA Oh, he was so furious that he hardly could bear it.

COUNTESS Was he! So much the better for our intentions. And where is the appointment which you proposed to give him?

SUSANNA In the garden.

COUNTESS Be more specific. Write to him.

SUSANNA But is that not too daring?

COUNTESS Do as I tell you. (Susanna sits down and writes.)

Let all the blame fall on my shoulders.

(dictating) Write a message "to Romeo."

NO. 20 DUETTINO

SUSANNA (writing) "To Romeo

COUNTESS (dictating) "When the breeze is gently blowing,

SUSANNA gently blowing . . .

COUNTESS And the evening shadows fall,

SUSANNA and the evening shadows fall . . .

COUNTESS In the grove where pines are growing,

SUSANNA (enquiringly) pines are growing? . . .

COUNTESS In the grove where pines are growing.

SUSANNA (writing) In the grove where pines are growing.

COUNTESS And the rest he will understand.

SUSANNA Yes, the rest he will understand.

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS And the rest he will understand.

COUNTESS Let us read it together. (They read the letter together.)

SUSANNA AND COUNTESS "When the breeze is gently blowing,"

etc.

SUSANNA (folds the letter) The note is ready, and how shall we seal it?

COUNTESS (draws a pin and gives it to her) This way. Let's take a pin. We will use that to seal it. And further, write on the back of the letter: "Return the pin, please."

SUSANNA That's an idea. It makes it sound mysterious.

COUNTESS Hurry and hide it! I hear somebody coming. (Susanna puts the note in her bosom.)

NO. 21 CHORUS

(Enter Cherubino, dressed as a country girl; and Barbarina, with several other country girls, dressed in the same way, carrying nosegays.)

GIRLS Mistress dear, accept these flowers,

Daisies, roses bright with dew, Freshly cut in morning hours

just to show our love for you. Though we're poor and simple peasants, Please accept these humble presents As a token of affection From our hearts so loyal and true.

RECITATIVE

BARBARINA There they are, my lady, all the girls of the village who bring to you the best they have to offer, and they hope you'll forgive them their presumption.

COUNTESS How lovely! I am grateful.

SUSANNA They're so pretty and charming.

COUNTESS And who is, I ask you, that delightful young girl there? She looks so shy and modest.

BARBARINA That one? Stir is my cousin. She came last night to be here for the wedding.

COUNTESS Let us honour our guest on her arrival. Come here to me. (takes Cherubino's flowers and kisses him on the forehead) May I accept your flowers? Look at her blush! Susanna, do you not notice a resemblance to someone?

SUSANNA Yes, it is striking. (Antonio enters stealthily, pulls off Cherubino's bonnet, and puts his officer's cap on him.)

ANTONIO What do you know! If that's not Cherubino!

COUNTESS Good Heavens!

SUSANNA (aside) What a devil!

COUNT What now, my lady!

COUNTESS This time, my dear husband, I'm annoyed and astonished as much as you are.

COUNT But this morning?

COUNTESS This morning we were getting ready for tonight's celebration and we dressed him exactly as you see him.

COUNT And why have you not left?

CERUBINO (tearing his cap off his head) My lord . . .

COUNT I'll have you punished for insubordination.

BARBARINA Dearest master, dearest master, Ev'ry time wHen you kissed me, do you remember, you always told me: "Barbarina, if you love me, there's no wish I won't grant you."

COUNT So, did I say that?

BARBARINA Surely. Now, dearest master, let me marry Cherubino, and in return I'll love you like my kitten.

COUNTESS (to the Count) My lord, it's up to you now.

ANTONIO Well said, my daughter. One can see you had an expert teacher.

COUNT (aside) I'd like to know what nemesis, what demon, converts each situation to my undoing? (Figaro enters.)

FIGARO My lord, if you detain these girls here very much longer, good-bye party, good-bye dancing!

COUNT What's that? You're planning to dance with your twisted foot?

FIGARO (pretends to straighten his leg, then tries to dance. He calls all the girls, starts to go; the Count calls him back.)

It doesn't hurt at all now. Come on, girls, let's be going.

COUNTESS (to Susanna) Now how will he get out of this predicament?

SUSANNA (to the Countess) Oh, don't be concerned about him.

COUNT It's very lucky the flower bed was a soft one.

FIGARO Very lucky. No more delaying, let's go now. (starts to go)



ANTONIO (holds him back) And meanwhile, on horseback, Cherubino was galloping to Seville!

FIGARO Maybe galloping, maybe trotting, what's the difference? You girls, we must be off now. (starts to go)

COUNT (conducts him back to the center of the stage ) But you had his commission still in your pocket.

FIGARO Why, of course, sir! (aside) He kills me with his questions!

ANTONIO (to Susanna, who is making signs to Figaro ) Don't make him any signals, he cannot see them. (He leads Cherubino forward and presents him to Figaro.) Here's someone who maintains that my brilliant nephew is a champion liar.

FIGARO Cherubino!

ANTONIO That's the one.

FIGARO (to the Count) What is his story?

COUNT He told the truth. He said that he was the one who jumped on the geraniums.

FIGARO Did he say so? Could be . . . just because I jumped, there's no possible reason why he could not do likewise.

COUNT He also?

FIGARO And why not? One sheep will blindly follow the other's lead. (The Spanish march is heard in the distance.)

*No. 22 FINALE*

FIGARO There's the procession, let's join it. Go to your places, dear ladies, take your places! Susanna, be my partner! (takes Susanna's arm)

SUSANNA Willingly! (All exeunt except the Count and Countess. The march is heard more clearly.)

COUNT How dare they!

COUNTESS Ah, were it over!

COUNT My lady!

COUNTESS Let's not discuss it! Both the couples are coming, We must receive them well. At least in one bride You have shown special interest. Be seated.

COUNT With pleasure; (aside) and plan a fitting vengeance. (The Count and Countess seat themselves on the thrones. Enter Figaro, Susanna, Marcellina, Barbarina, Bartolo, Antonio, hunters with guns, Court attendants and country people. Two girls bring the little bridal hat with white plumes, two others a white veil, two others gloves and a nosegay. They are followed by Figaro with Marcellina. Two other girls carry a similar hat for Susanna, etc. They are followed by Bartolo with Susanna, Bartolo leads Susanna to the Count, and she kneels to receive from him the hat, etc. Figaro leads Marcellina to the Countess for the same purpose.)

GIRLS O, come, faithful lovers, in happy accord, And gratefully join us in praise of our lord. The right of his forbears he kindly ignored, Revoking a custom his subjects abhorred. O, come, lift your voices in praise of our lord. A practice he ended Which shamed and offended, And leaves chaste and spotless The one you adored. Come all, lift your voices in praise of our lord.

ALL With hearts ever grateful We sing to our lord, And may Heaven's blessing His wisdom reward.

(Susanna, kneeling, plucks the Count's sleeve, shows him the note, then reaches to her head, and while the Count pretends to adjust her bonnet, she gives him the note. He quickly hides it, and she rises and curtsies. Figaro comes to receive Susanna and

they dance. A little later Marcellina rises. Bartolo receives her from the Countess.)

COUNT (takes out the note and pricks his finger with the pin as he opens it; he shakes his finger, squeezes it, sucks it, and throws the pin to the ground.) I wonder why these careless females must fasten all they hand me with pins and needles! Ha, ha, I get the point now'

FIGARO (sees it all and says to Susanna) Just a note of affection Which some lady has given him in passing, She must have used a pin to seal the letter, see. And now he stuck his finger. (The Count reads the note, kisses it, looks for the pin, finds it and sticks it in his lapel.) Now he is trying to find it. **Oh, is he stupid!**

COUNT

Dear friends and subjects, I'll see you all this evening, Tonight we'll celebrate the double wedding With the greatest of splendor. for this must be a magnificent occasion, With music: and fireworks, And a banquet, also dancing, So I may show you How much love and good-will I feel I owe you.

CHORUS

O, come, faithful lovers, in happy accord, etc.

## ACT FOUR

Scene: A small room. Enter Barbarina. She looks for something on the floor.

*No. 23 CAVATINA*

BARBARINA I have lost it, heaven help me, I have lost the little pin. How on earth could that have been? I can't find it, I can't find it, This is awful, simply awful! Oh, what trouble I am in? I keep looking, but cannot find it. This is dreadful, I am desperate! This is my unlucky day! Cousin Susanna, and the Count ... What will they say, what will they say?

RECITATIVE

(Figaro enters with Marcellina.)

FIGARO Barbarina, what is it?

BARBARINA I have lost it, dear cousin.

FIGARO Lost it?

MARCELLINA Lost it?

BARBARINA The pin that his lordship gave me to take back to Susanna.

FIGARO To Susanna, a pin? (angrily) I am awfully happy that you show so much talent . . . (recollecting himself) in performing assignments you are given.

BARBARINA What's wrong? Why do you growl at me?

FIGARO Can't you see I am joking? (searches the floor for a moment, that draws a pin from Marcellina's dress, or bonnet, and gives it to Barbarina) Now listen: this is the pin the Count has given you to return to Susanna; it had served as a seal upon a letter. See, I know all about it.

BARBARINA If you know more than I, why do you ask me?

FIGARO I just wanted to hear how my dear master has worded his instructions.

BARBARINA Oh is that it? "Please, Barbarina, take this little pin here, bring it back to Susanna and tell her: 'Here is the seal to the pine-grove.'"

FIGARO Ah, ha, the pine-grove!

BARBARINA It's true, though, that he added: "Don't let a soul observe you." But you don't really count.

FIGARO Why, of course not.

BARBARINA It's none of your business.

FIGARO Indeed not, it isn't!

BARBARINA It's high time that I hurried to see Susanna, and later, Cherubino. (Dances off.)

FIGARO (as if crushed) Mother!

MARCELLINA Yes, dear

FIGARO This kills me!

MARCELLINA Don't get excited, son.

FIGARO This is outrageous!

MARCELLINA Not so hasty, think it over. It is a problem; we must give it some thought. You must make sure that you're not the target of some new deception.

FIGARO But, dearest mother, I tell you, that is the pin for which the Count was looking.

MARCELLINA If so, that makes it all the more important to act with caution and foster your least suspicion. After all, you do not know yet.

FIGARO But soon I will. I know the spot exactly they have set for their meeting.

MARCELLINA My dear son, where are you going?

FIGARO To take revenge for cheated husbands so help me! (He leaves, furious.)

MARCELLINA Quickly, I'll warn Susanna, I believe she is guiltless. She looks honest and surely true to Figaro . . . and if by chance I should be mistaken . . . now that I am her mother and no longer her rival, as a woman I am bound to become a defender of the whole female sex; for all men are ungrateful and should be punished.

No. 24 *ARLÀ*

MARCELLINA The birds and beasts are able To live in loving pairs. The horses in ev'ry stable Will never fight their mares. A goose will feed her gander A friendly good companion, Never will he philander Or wander very far. The rooster loves each feather Of his beloved hen, The lion and his chosen lioness Are happy in their den. The most ferocious creatures Have some redeeming features. But when it comes to mankind That's something else again. We members of the female sex Are victims of the men we love. For all his faults and shameless ways The woman always pays. We tolerate their jealousy, We offer them fidelity, We love with lavish generosity. They pay us back with misery And break our tender hearts.

*RECITATIVE*

(Scene: A thickly grown garden with two parallel pavilions.)

BARBARINA (alone, holding some fruit and cookies) He said the left pavilion, it must be here. I see it, yes, this one. I only hope he'll get here. Good lord, what stingy people! The most I could make them give me was an apple and a tomato. "For whom are those provisions?" "Just for a certain person." "That's what I thought." The misers! The Count can't stand him, but I, I love him dearly. A kiss is what it cost me . . . It does not matter. I'll get it back very soon. (Frightened, she enters the pavilion on the left.) Good gracious! (Enter Figaro in a cloak, and carrying a lantern. Then. Basilio, Bartolo, a group of workmen, etc.)

FIGARO It's Barbarina! Who is there?

BASILIO Remember, you have asked us to come.

BARTOLO You look so savage, ready to cut our throats.

What is the point of these infernal preparations?

FIGARO Very soon you shall know it. You are about to witness the unannounced revival of an old Spanish custom by the Count and my bride.

BASILIO

(aside) Oh, charming, charming! I see the light of day. They arranged this affair without my help.

FIGARO Stand where no one can see you and watch what happens. I'll give a few last minute orders, but I'll return here shortly, and when I whistle, rush forward and surprise them.

(All exeunt except Bartolo and Basilio.)

BASILIO He's acting like a madman.

BARTOLO Can you explain it?

BASILIO Gladly. The Count loves Susanna; she is pleased to accord him an appointment, and Figaro is displeased.

BARTOLO Well? And? Is he supposed to take it calmly?

BASILIO Why should he be exempted from what so many have suffered? And then, I ask you, what on earth could he gain? One learns one's lesson. In this life, dearest doctor, one must be realistic. You can't eat your cake and also have it.

No. 25 *ARLÀ*

BASILIO Youth is headstrong, overbearing, So impulsive, as a rule. I myself was young and daring, I was just as big a fool. But the passing years have brought me Sense enough to swallow pride; And experience at last has taught me Not to swim against the tide. Once, while I was on a journey, I met Father Time in person. In his hand he held an object Which he offered me as present. 'Twas the hide of a donkey. "Son," he said, "take this and wear it, You won't regret it." Then he disappeared in air, Left me speechless standing there. While I was lost in amazement and wonder, A dreadful storm arose. Thunder was crashing, And like a waterfall the rain was splashing, And lightning flashing. I had no shelter, coat or umbrella. Only the donkey hide lay there nearby. I slipped it over me, It kept me dry. The sun came out again and I proceeded. A horrid animal came out of nowhere, Its mouth wide open, about to eat me. I stood there, petrified. What could I do? My life was doomed, that much I knew. All of a sudden the beast turned and bolted, Smelling the donkey hide, it was revolted. I smelled so horrible, it lost its appetite And ran away. Take this advice, my friend, And learn this lesson: Malice and calumny, injustice, dishonor, Will never penetrate a donkey's hide. (Basilio and Bartolo leave.)

No. 26 *RECITATIVE AND ARLÀ*

(Figaro enters.)

FIGARO It won't be long now, they should arrive at any moment. Someone is coming . . . Susanna? No, it's not, the darkness deceived me. On the night of my wedding I am already playing the role of jealous husband. Imagine! At the moment of the wedding procession, When the Count read her message, I was laughing! I was laughing at myself, and did not know it! O Susanna, Susanna, what despair you have caused me! Who could have thought you faithless, You were always so honest, So naïve and so winning! Ah, to put faith in woman, in woman! Foolish beginning! O, fellow man, be smarter! Don't be a blinded martyr. Wake up and look at women-folk And see them as they are, And see them as they really are. Though you may call them angels, And like a slave adore them, Your love will merely bore them,

But you will bear the scar. Like witches with sorcery, they charm and decoy. Their dealings are double, Like sirens with treachery, they sing and destroy. They flatter their vanity and cater to fashion, They cause us unhappiness and show no compassion. Like roses with briars, hie soft-spoken liars, Appearing delightful, Yet vicious and spiteful. Their dealings are double, They get us in trouble. Deceitful and jealous, To love they are callous, Their heart is of store, Yes, made of stone! 'Thou rest I need hardly to tell you, All that is sufficiently known. Why don't you men get smarter, etc.

(Retires.)

RECITATIVE

(Enter the Countess, Susanna, disguised, and Marcellina.)

SUSANNA My lady, I heard from Marcellina that Figaro will be here.

MARCELLINA He's here already, so better speak more softly.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) One man in ambush, the other should be here any moment. The fun begins!

MARCELLINA (enters the pavilion where Barbarina is; Figaro in the background.) I will leave you alone here.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) My lady, you are trembling. Are you cold?

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) The night is damp and chilly. I'll go inside now.

FIGARO (aside) We are arriving at the crucial moment.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) I'll stay a little longer, if my lady will permit me. It is early and the night air is refreshing.

FIGARO Refreshing! Refreshing!

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) (hides herself) You have my permission.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) I know the rogue is spying. It will give me much pleasure to reimburse him in full for his suspicions.

NO. 27 RECITATIVE AND ARIA

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess)

This at last is the moment, So divine and so cherished, I longingly awaited. Soon he will come here, With loving arms embrace me, , And no worry or fear shall mar our rapture. Close to the heart of Nature's friendly powers, Delicate, fragrant flowers, The pine trees, the sky surround us. Aiding the lovers, Night casts her veil around us. Beloved, don't delay, the night is falling. Hasten where love's delight is sweetly calling. Until the stars grow pale and night is waning, While the world is still and calm is reigning. The brooklet rustles on, the breeze is blowing, And the timorous heart with hope is glowing, The flowers all with shining dew are gleaming, While the world is long asleep and dreaming. Come, my beloved, the starry sky above you, Come, my beloved, with all my heart I love you.

RECITATIVE

FIGARO

(Hearing Susanna's voice) Shame on her! Behind my back she plans to deceive me! It's like a dreadful nightmare!

CHERUBINO (enters) La, la, la, la, la, la, la.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) It's Cherubino

CHERUBINO Here are the pavilions. Barbarina must be in the left one. I recognized my lady.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) I can't avoid him!

CHERUBINO But no. I was mistaken; by her dress I can tell it is Susanna.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) If my husband comes now, Heaven protect me!

NO. 28 FINALE

CHERUBINO On my tip-toes I'll go nearer, Here's the chance to have some fun.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) Oh, good Lord, it's Cherubino, Now the trouble has begun.

CHERUBINO (to the Countess) Come, Susanna! Won't you answer? She pretends she does not see me, But I'll show her that I know her little game, Posing as a noble dame. (takes her hand and caresses it)

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) (tries to free herself; disguising her voice) Shameless meddler, don't come near me, Take yourself away from here.

CHERUBINO Susanna, stop pretending, I know well why you are here. You needn't be condescending . . . You await your cavalier, And you hope he'll soon be here! That's the reason you are here.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) Who allowed you to molest me? Go at once away from here! Shameless meddler! Go at once away from here! Who allowed you to molest me? Go at once away from here!

COUNT (in the distance) Here you are, my sweet Susanna!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) AND FIGARO (In the distance) Here's our roving Don Giovanni.

CHERUBINO Don't act prudish and affected!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess), COUNT AND FIGARO Ah, this shock came unexpected!

COUNT Go, or I must call assistance!

CHERUBINO (keeping her hand in his) Let me kiss you, don't be so silly.

OTHERS I am sure it's Cherubino.

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) I should kiss you, what presumption!

CHERUBINO Why am I not once permitted What the Count does ev'ry day?

OTHERS (aside) How offensive, how insulting!

CHERUBINO Is it not time now to stop pretending? This very morning, remember, When I hid behind the chair? SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) What effrontery!

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) What presumption!

COUNT AND FIGARO His behaviour is outrageous!

ALL EXCEPT CHERUBINO (aside) If this rascal keeps insisting, he will lead our plans astray.

CHERUBINO (tries to kiss the Countess, dressed as Susanna) To begin with . . . (The Count comes between the Countess, dressed as Susanna, and Cherubino, and receives the kiss.)

COUNTLESS (dressed as Susanna) (aside) Good Lord, my husband!

CHERUBINO (joins Barbarina in the pavilion) Good Lord, my master!

FIGARO (drawing near the Count) I must see what's going on.

COUNT (intending to give a box on the ear to Cherubino, he gives it to Figaro) Just to cool youthful ardor, take this little gift from me!

FIGARO This is pretty meager payment For the int'rest I have shown!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (laughing) He is getting the proper treatment, He received the proper treatment For the envy he has shown!

COUNT AND COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) (laughing) That is just the proper treatment For the boldness he has shown. He received the proper treatment For the boldness he has shown.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Serves him right for being curious,

Always spying on his own!

Maybe next time he'll know better,

And leave well enough alone.

COUNT AND COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) He has made me simply furious With his high and mighty tone, Maybe next time he'll know better

And leave well enough alone.

FIGARO

All I got for being curious, Is a bruised and aching bone, ah, The next time I shall know better

And leave well enough alone. (Figaro retires.)

COUNT (to the Countess) At last no one disturbs us. Come over here, my dearest.

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) Your word is my commandment, Here I am, my lord.

FIGARO How willing and obedient! She's always in accord.

COUNT Give me your hand, my darling.

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) Here is my hand.

COUNT I love you!

FIGARO He loves her!

COUNT What soft and lovely fingers! Their tender touch still lingers, It moves my heart to ecstasy, Rapture and joy combined.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess), COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) AND FIGARO Such wild infatuation Is mere hallucination, It blinds the human mind, the feeble human mind.

COUNT Darling, besides your dowry, Accept this little present, A diamond ring as token Of my undying love. (gives the Countess a ring)

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) Gladly Susanna welcomes Her benefactor's gift.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess), COUNT AND FIGARO Our (My) plans is fast proceeding, The best is yet to come.

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) (to the Count) My lord, I see the glow of flaming torches in the night.

COUNT Well, then, let us avoid them all And hurry out of sight.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) AND FIGARO Come on, you foolish husbands, It's time you saw the light!

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) You mean there in the dark?

COUNT What else would suit us better? I do not want to read to you in there, Susanna dear.

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) AND SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Our plan is working splendidly, Now comes the best of all.

FIGARO She follows very willingly. There is no doubt at all. (Figaro crosses the stage.)

COUNT (in a feigned voice) Who goes there?

FIGARO (in a rage) Lots of people!

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) It's Figaro! I'll hide. (goes into the right pavilion)

COUNT You go ahead, then! I'll meet you soon. (disappears among the bushes)

FIGARO Now all is still and calm again. The lovers meet in secrecy. But I shall guide their destiny, Biding my time judiciously, To catch them both at once.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (in a feigned voice) Ho, Figaro! Be quiet!

FIGARO (aside) Ah, that must be the Countess. (aloud) Your coming here is timely. Observe in what a manner Your husband and my Susanna Arranged a secret meeting.

Just wait and you will see.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (*forgetting to change her voice*) Be careful and speak softly. I swear I will not leave here Till I have had revenge!

FIGARO (aside.) *Susanna!* (aloud) You want vengeance?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Yes.

FIGARO Vengeance? May I be at your service?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) The traitor thinks he's fooling me, But he is very wrong.

FIGARO (aside) The vixen thinks; she's fooling me, So I will play along. (slyly joiltin" the game) Countess, I am delirious!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) What's this, can he be serious?

FIGARO Ah, my lady!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) Indeed, he must be serious.

FIGARO I'm on my knees before you, You know that I adore you. Remember what you told me, You're here to take revenge!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) I hardly can, restrain myself!

FIGARO (aside) What a delightful comedy!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) My blood begins to boil!

FIGARO (aside) Her blood begins to boil!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (aside) I hardly can restrain my temper. Now he has gone too far!

FIGARO (aside) She hardly can restrain her temper, And I fear I've gone too far!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (disguising her voice slightly) Suppose you are rejected?

FIGARO That would be unexpected. We can't lose time debating. (rubbing his hands) Grant the some sign of favor . . . Give me your hand.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (resumes her natural voice, and boxes his ears) ight here where it belongs!

FIGARO You slapped me!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Take this one, and this one, (continues

to box his ears) And still another, and this one, And still another!

FIGARO Don't hit so hard, I beg you!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) And take this, you scheming traitor, Take this one and still another one!

FIGARO Oh, precious welcome punishment From her beloved hand!



SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) I'll teach you to behave yourself, And mind your own affairs!

FIGARO I am a happy man!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) I warn you not to let it happen again. You got what you deserve as punishment, You false and wicked man!

FIGARO (kneels) My apology, darling, I owe you. From your voice it was easy to know you, From your sweet little voice I adore.

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (surprised and laughing) From my voice?

FIGARO How could I mistake it?

FIGARO AND SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Darling, darling, I love and adore you, Dearest love, let us quarrel no more.

COUNT (enters) Where she is I cannot discover.

FIGARO AND SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) That's the voice of the frustrated lover.

COUNT (turns toward the pavilion in which the Countess has hidden, and opens it) Ho, Susanna! Can't you hear me? Where are you?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) Splendid, splendid, he still does not know her.

FIGARO Who?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) My lady.

FIGARO The Countess?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) The Countess!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) AND FIGARO Now to bring the burlesque to an ending, We must even the score with the Count.

FIGARO (falls at Susanna's – still dressed as Countess, though he now knows it - feet) Ah, my lady, I love you so madly!

COUNT It's the Countess! Ah, and I have no weapons!

FIGARO Won't you favour my loving proposal?

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) I am ready and at your disposal.

COUNT Ah, betrayers, betrayers!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) AND FIGARO Let us hurry away and be happy, Let us bury our troubles in joy. (The Countess, dressed as Susanna, enters the pavilion on the left.)

COUNT Hurry, hurry, come with weapons!

FIGARO (pretending great fear) That's my master. (Enter Bartolo, Basilio, Don Curzio, Antonio, and servants with torches.)

COUNT Guards and servants, come and help me!

FIGARO I'm outnumbered!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO AND BARTOLO What has happened?

COUNT This wretched scoundrel has betrayed me, Acted basely, and with whom you soon shall see.

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO AND BARTOLO I am speechless and bewildered!

Can it be that this is true?

FIGARO They are speechless and bewildered. They cannot believe it's true.

COUNT There's no use resisting, insisting on hiding. Come out now, my Countess, and get your reward! (The Count reaches into the left pavilion and pulls out a resisting Cherubino, then Barbarino, Marcellina and the Countess, still dressed as Susanna.) Cherubino!

ANTONIO My daughter!

FIGARO My mother!

BASILIO, CURZIO, ANTONIO AND BARTOLO My lady!

COUNT (to Susanna, still dressed as the Countess) Your plot is discovered, most faithless of wives, So false to her lord!

SUSANNA (dressed as the Countess) (kneels before the Count, holding her handkerchief before her face) Forgive me, forgive me!

COUNT No, never, never!

FIGARO (kneels) Forgive her, forgive her!

COUNT There's no chance whatever!

ALL OTHERS (kneeling) Forgive her!

COUNT No, no, no, no, no, no!

ALL OTHERS Forgive her!

COUNT (more forceful) No, no, no, no, no, no!

COUNTESS (dressed as Susanna) (comes out of the other pavilion, *reveals her true identity*) I know you'll forgive them, For my sake at least!

BASILIO, CURZIO, COUNT AND ANTONIO I cannot conceive it, I scarcely believe it, I hardly can credit my eyes! What's this I see?

COUNT (supplicatingly) My lady, forgive me, Beloved, forgive me!

COUNTESS How could I refuse it, My heart speaks for you.

ALL We are all contented and happy again. All day long we were tormented, Angry, foolish, and excited, But at last we are united By the magic force of love. Lovers and couples, With laughter and singing, Let the wedding bells chime in with joyous ringing! And to joyous strains of music, Sing and dance till break of day. Let's make merry, And to joyous strains of music, Sing and dance till break of day!