

Così fan tutte

(“All women behave that way”)

Subtitled

Ossia la scuola degli amanti

“The School for Lovers”

Opera buffa in Italian in two acts

Music

by

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

Premiere: Vienna, 1790

*Principal Characters in Così fan tutte**The Officers:*

Ferrando, betrothed to Dorabella	Tenor
Guglielmo, betrothed to Fiordiligi	Baritone

The Sisters:

Fiordiligi, a well-to-do young woman from Ferrara residing in Naples	Soprano
Dorabella, sister of Fiordiligi	Mezzo-soprano

The Conspirators:

Don Alfonso, a cynical philosopher	Bass
Despina, the sisters' maid	Soprano

Soldiers, townspeople, servants, and musicians

TIME: Early 19th century

PLACE: A village near Naples, Italy

Brief Story Synopsis

In Act I, Don Alfonso, a cynical old philosopher, declares to two young officer friends, Ferrando and Guglielmo, that women cannot be trusted, particularly their respective fiancées, the sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi. The officers become enraged at Don Alfonso's affront and challenge him to prove his point. A wager is agreed upon with the provision that Don Alfonso has 24 hours to prove that all women are inconstant and fickle.

Don Alfonso initiates his grand scheme, the first part of which is to announce to the two sisters that their sweethearts have been ordered off to the wars. After their lovers' departure the sisters are lonely and despondent. Their maid Despina castigates them and advises them not to lament because one man is pretty much like any other; very simply, go out and have fun. Don Alfonso enlists the aid of Despina in his plot and introduces two young, wealthy "Albanians" - Ferrando and Guglielmo in disguise - who claim to be enamored with the sisters. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are outraged at the intrusion of the "Albanians" and angrily order the two foreigners to leave. In despair, the men pretend to take poison. Despina appears in the disguise of a doctor and revives the "Albanians" by extracting their poison with a huge magnet. Afterwards, the "Albanians" renew their ardent attack on the sisters but are still spurned by them.

In Act II, after Despina derides the sisters' fidelity, the sisters weaken and decide that a little innocent flirtation will do no harm. Each chooses one of the "Albanians," and each chooses the other's fiancé: Dorabella picks Guglielmo, and Fiordiligi favors Ferrando. Guglielmo gives Dorabella a golden locket in return for a picture of her betrothed, Ferrando. Initially, Fiordiligi refuses to yield to Ferrando and decides to disguise herself as a man and join her

betrothed at the front. However, when Ferrando threatens suicide, she too yields. Guglielmo and Ferrando become utterly downcast: their sweetheart's are indeed fickle, and, of course, they are losing their wager to Don Alfonso.

Don Alfonso promises to fix everything. He arranges a marriage ceremony: the "Albanians" are to marry the sisters with the help of Despina who is disguised as a notary, but, overturning the original relationships from Act I, Ferrando is to marry Fiordiligi, and Dorabella is to marry Guglielmo. Military music is heard and it is announced that the two officers have returned from the wars. In the confusion, Ferrando and Guglielmo appear without their "Albanian" disguises. They pretend to fly into a rage when they find the marriage contract. The sisters blame Don Alfonso and Despina for leading them astray, and then Ferrando and Guglielmo reveal that it was all a masquerade: they were the "Albanians." The sisters are properly chastened, and all ends in apparent reconciliation as Don Alfonso proclaims reason the victor.

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

When the Overture to *Così fan tutte* arrives at its 12th measure, the orchestra plays the musical motive that will later underscore the words *Co-si fan tu-te*, the refrain sung by Don Alfonso, Guglielmo, and Ferrando toward the close of Act II. The signature theme is followed by gay, bubbling musical sequences interspersed with rapid exchanges between leading instruments.

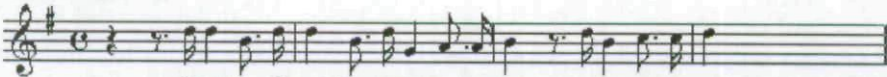
Act I: A tavern in Naples.

Two young officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, together with the elderly cynic and self-proclaimed philosopher, Don Alfonso, argue about the fidelity of women. Ferrando and Guglielmo both proclaim that their respective sweethearts, Dorabella and Fiordiligi, are the paragons of virtue.

Trio: "La mia Dorabella"

Allegro

FERRANDO



La mia Dorabella ca-pace non e, ca-pa-ce non e,
My Dorabella just could not be unfaithful,

Don Alfonso claims that the officers are naïve; he knows better — all women are fickle. Irritated by Don Alfonso's arrogance, the young men challenge him and decide to resolve their argument in a wager on their mistresses' honors, agreeing to do everything Don Alfonso prescribes for the next 24 hours. Don Alfonso's caveat is that no inkling of this wager may be communicated to their "Penelopes," his ironic reference to their fiancées.

Don Alfonso propounds his cynicism about women's constancy and fidelity: "They're all the same. Women's fidelity is the purest fiction, like the Albanian phoenix, everyone says it exists, but nobody knows where it is."

Ferrando and Guglielmo are so certain of their victory in the wager that they begin to speculate how they will spend their winnings. Finally, all three drink a toast to the wager.

The garden of a villa overlooking the Bay of Naples.

Dorabella and Fiordiligi gaze ecstatically and adoringly at lockets containing miniature pictures of their lovers, Ferrando and Guglielmo. Each of the sisters tries to outdo the other in praising her respective hero. Both are rhapsodic in their happiness and contentment, eagerly contemplating their forthcoming marriages.

"Ah guarda sorella"

Andante

FIORDILIGI and DORABELLA

A musical staff in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in two lines.

Ah, guar-da, so - rel - la, ah guar - da so - rella.
Oh, look, sister,

Don Alfonso appears on the scene and initiates his scheme. He announces the bad news that their lovers' regiment has been called off to the wars. The ladies become desolate, unable to bring up the courage to bid their lovers farewell. But Don Alfonso prompts the young women to withstand the pain of their parting, signals the officers, and as if by magic, they appear. A Quintet between Don Alfonso and the four lovers expresses elaborate farewells and the lovers' undying passion for each other.

"Sento, o Dio"

Andante

QUINTET

GUGLIELMO

A musical staff in bass clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 4/4 time signature. The melody is sparse, with long rests and few notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in two lines.

Sen - to, o Di - o che que - sto piede,
I feel my feet cannot move forward,

A drum roll announces the imminent departure of the officers' ship. Ferrando and Guglielmo fall in line as the tearful ladies wish them a bon voyage and beg them to write daily. The ship leaves and Don Alfonso joins the ladies in a prayer for their safe voyage.

"Soave sia il vento"

Andante

FIORDILIGI, DORABELLA,

DON ALFONSO

A musical staff in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and common time (C). The melody is simple and lyrical, consisting of quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are written in two lines.

So - a - ve sia il ven - to, tran-quil - la sia l'onda,
May the wind be gentle, may the sea be calm,

Left alone, Don Alfonso's laughter indicates his smugness, an assurance to himself of the success of his scheme, and an opportunity to sneer again about women's inconstancy.

A room in the villa.

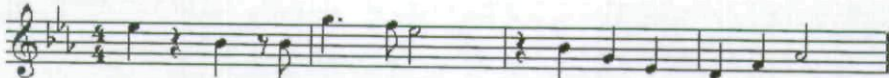
In a diatribe against domestic service, the sisters' maid, Despina, grumbles and complains about her work, alternating between shrewdness and impudence.

Dorabella and Fiordiligi arrive in a rebellious mood and display exaggerated grief: a sword, poison, or anything to overcome the misery of their loneliness, and their fear that their lovers may be killed.

"Smanie implacabili"

Allegro agitato

DORABELLA



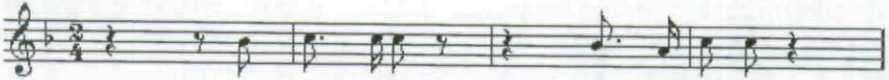
Sma - nie impla - ca - bi-li che m'a - gi - ta - te,
Implacable rage, is stirring within me,

Despina, using her purely self-arrogated powers, advises the ladies to take love lightly. She expresses her contempt for all males and their philandering traits, further advising her mistresses that their hero lovers are certainly not faithful saints; they are probably having a good time and chasing a girl in every port. Despina offers some womanly advice to the sisters, telling them to open their eyes to the certainty that other men are waiting for them.

"In uomini, in soldati"

Allegretto

DESPINA



In uo - mini, in sol - da - ti,
Men and soldiers,

With righteous indignation and outrage, the sisters leave their response to Despina's capricious approach to love.

After the sisters depart, Don Alfonso arrives and bribes Despina to aid him in his scheme. Don Alfonso introduces two comically and extravagantly dressed "Albanian" noblemen — Guglielmo and Ferrando in disguise. He begs Despina to persuade her mistresses to let these two men console the sisters in their loneliness. Don Alfonso hides as Despina summons her mistresses.

The returning sisters are scandalized and duly horrified at the presence of these two strangers, the men's disguises so heavy that they do not recognize their respective lovers. Don Alfonso reappears and with due formality feigns elation at seeing these "Albanian" gentlemen, claiming that they are his very good friends.

The girls are indignant and protest at the intrusion of what they perceive as repulsive foreigners. But the "Albanians" plead with them, telling them they have fallen passionately in love with them. Fiordiligi rebuffs them and asserts her faithfulness to her fiancé Guglielmo by likening her fidelity to a rock.

"Come scoglio"

Andante maestoso

FIORDILIGI

Co - me sco - glio im - mo - to re - sta,
Like a rock standing firm against wind and storm,

After hearing Fiordiligi's steadfastness, the officers claim victory in their bet with Don Alfonso, but Don Alfonso cautions them that the bet has not been won as yet. Guglielmo proceeds to try his charms on Fiordiligi, begging her not to be so shy.

"Non siate ritrosi"

Andantino

GUGLIELMO

Non siate ritrosi, occhiettu vessosi, due lampi amorosi vibrare un po'qua,
Don't let your gazes be so shy, pretty eyes, let love brighten you,

And then Ferrando tries his charms on Dorabella

"Un' aura amorosa"

Andante cantabile

FERRANDO

Un' aura a - mo - ro - sa del nostro te - so - ro.
We treasure a breath of love from these girls,

The garden of the sisters' house.

Dorabella and Fiordiligi are melancholy as they mourn their lovers' absence. Suddenly, the "Albanians" stagger in, condemning the ladies for the cruelty of their inattention. They pretend to be driven to suicide, telling the sisters that they have taken poison in despair over their rejection, further proving their point by pretending to roll about in agony and sinking lifeless to the ground.

Don Alfonso and Despina run off to call a doctor. The sisters, not unsympathetic to the men's agony, kneel beside the "Albanians" and show compassion for them by feeling their pulses and stroking their brows.

Don Alfonso returns with the "doctor" — none other than Despina in a grotesque disguise and spouting bogus Latin. The "doctor" produces an oversized magnet, topically referred to as an invention of the celebrated Dr. Mesmer, waves it over the patients' bodies to draw out the poison, and miraculously, the "Albanians" are restored to health.

As the "Albanians" come out of their feigned trances, they renew their amorous ardor and beg the sisters for kisses. The women are outraged, spurn the men, and leave in disapproval.

Act II: A room in the sisters' house.

Despina urges her mistresses that for the sake of womanhood they should stop being stubborn and seek adventure; take advantage of a romantic opportunity with those wealthy and handsome "Albanian" suitors, and take control of the situation and console their loneliness. Despina lectures them that any girl, by the time she is fifteen, intuitively knows how to pursue a woman's mission: how to be expert in managing men; know when to amuse; know when to confuse. The cynical but omniscient Despina concludes that love is a woman's kingdom in which man must surrender and serve.

"Una donna a quindici anni"

Andante
DESPINA



Una donna a quindici anni de sa-per ogni gran moda,
A girl should know it all by the time she's fifteen,

The sisters initially reject Despina's suggestions, considering them sheer madness. But Dorabella weakens and envisions that it could all be a harmless joke and innocent diversion rather than a breach of faith. Initially, Fiordiligi tries to remain firm, but then decides to accede to her sister's wishes, provided, however, that all is done with care and propriety.

They decide who will pair off with whom. Dorabella selects the "dark Albanian" — Guglielmo — for herself, and Fiordiligi decides to pursue the big blond, Ferrando — each in fact, choosing the other's fiancé. Both sigh about the romantic enchantment of the idea, as well as the naughtiness and amusement of their intrigue.

“Prenderò quel brunettino”

Andante

FIORDILIGI and DORABELLA



Prenderò quel brunet - tino, che piu le pi - do mi par,
 I'll take the darkish one, he seems more witty,

A garden beside the sea. A boat is at the quay.

Don Alfonso has arranged a party in the garden. Ferrando and Guglielmo — still disguised as the “Albanians” — are encouraged by Don Alfonso to woo the sisters.

Guglielmo walks arm-in-arm with Dorabella; Ferrando walks with Fiordiligi. The four lovers seem embarrassed; they sigh, giggle, and engage in small talk about the weather and the beautiful flowers. Guglielmo pretends he has a fever and seeks compassion from Dorabella. He tells her that he loves her madly and gives her a locket to symbolize his love. Hesitantly, Dorabella accepts, and then Guglielmo replaces the portrait of her lover Ferrando with his locket. Both rejoice about the sweet discovery of their love and leave arm in arm.

“Il core vi dono”

Andante grazioso

GUGLIELMO



Il co - re vi do - no,
 My heart is only for you, my dear.

Ferrando professes his increasing ardor toward Fiordiligi; she displays proportionately diminishing resistance. Ferrando begs her to stop being cold and unheeding: to surrender and yield to his pleas of love.

When Fiordiligi is left alone, she reproaches herself for listening to a new lover's pleas, but she also confesses her inner sense of guilt that this stranger has aroused passions in her heart. Fiordiligi senses that she has embraced temptation and broken her vows of love. She proceeds to condemn herself as a faithless betrayer, begging pardon and forgiveness from her true love, Guglielmo, and praying that the secret of her errors should remain unknown.

“Per pietà”

Adagio

FIORDILIGI



Per pie - ta, ben mio, per - do - na,
 Show pity and pardon me, my love,

Ferrando and Guglielmo compare notes about their respective amorous adventures. Ferrando assures Guglielmo that Fiordiligi stood firm and was faithful to her betrothed. But Guglielmo infuriates Ferrando and shows him the portrait he had earlier given Dorabella as a token of their love. Ferrando concludes that Dorabella has betrayed him, not at all consoled by Guglielmo's commentary on the waywardness and deceit of women.

"Donne mie, la fate a tanti"

Allegretto
GUGLIELMO



Donne mie la fate a tanti, a tanti, a tanti, a tanti, a tan - ti,
My ladies, you take in so many men,

Left alone, Ferrando feels betrayed and scorned, the prey of woman's ruthless deception. He is disillusioned, defeated, and hopeless, asserting finally that the cynical Don Alfonso was right about female inconstancy. In his torment, he cries for revenge.

"Tradito, schernito"

Allegro
FERRANDO



Tra - di - to scherni-to dal per - fi - do cor,
I am betrayed and scorned by her treacherous heart,

A room in the sisters' house.

Dorabella tells Despina that she was not able to resist Guglielmo's temptation. Fiordiligi rebukes Dorabella for being fickle, but then admits the sudden change in her own heart: she has succumbed to the stranger — Guglielmo — and loves him. Dorabella tries to coax her sister into deciding to marry the "Albanians," explaining that love is like a thief, a wily rogue that can be divine, and can be cruel and spiteful, but in the end, so delightful.

"E amore un ladroncello"

Allegretto vivace
DORABELLA



È a-more un la - droncel - lo, un ser - pentel - lo è a-mor;
Love is a little thief, a little serpent.

Fiordiligi decides that they must save their honor. She orders Despina to fetch the officers' uniforms they left behind and concludes that their only solution to protect their integrity and honor is to don those uniforms and join their fiancées at the front.

As Fiordiligi speaks of being reunited with Guglielmo, the "Albanian" Ferrando arrives and threatens her that if she decides to leave, she should plunge a sword into his heart. Fiordiligi cannot resist temptation and surrenders by admitting her love for Ferrando. Guglielmo has overheard them and is in shock: Guglielmo is now tormented and feels betrayed by his fiancé Fiordiligi; his model of virtue has become a vixen and he wants revenge and punishment.

Don Alfonso cautions Ferrando and Guglielmo that without their women, they will spend the rest of their days as lonely bachelors. He tells them that they might as well admit that they indeed love sweethearts, and even though their fiancées have been unfaithful, Don Alfonso advises that they marry them.

Don Alfonso says: "Women cannot be faithful, but I don't mind it, for I can see the principle behind it. You are wrong to upbraid them. You have to take them as they are, as Mother Nature made them. There is only one conclusion; women are always untrue; it's no illusion. All your ancestors, fathers, and brothers went through it. Women always betray, that's how it is: *Co-si fan tut-te*."

Don Alfonso, Guglielmo and Ferrando:

DON ALFONSO, FERRANDO, GUGLIELMO

Ferrando

Don Alfonso

Guglielmo

Co - si fan tut - te!

Don Alfonso has arranged a double wedding between the sisters and the "Albanians." Each man is now paired off with the other's betrothed. Don Alfonso announces that the notary has arrived with the marriage contracts — Despina in disguise. With due courtesy, the contract arrangements are agreed upon, but just as the ladies are about to sign, a distant drum roll is heard, and Don Alfonso announces that Ferrando and Guglielmo have returned from the wars.

In panic, the sisters push their intended "Albanian" husbands away; the "Albanians" go off to hide themselves. Don Alfonso arrives to console the terrified and understandably very penitent sisters. The "real" Ferrando and Guglielmo reappear dressed in their military uniforms.

Both express surprise at the presence of the notary, and more importantly, the rather tame welcome from their sweethearts. Ferrando notices the marriage contract — purposely dropped by Don Alfonso — and proceeds to storm at the ladies.

Don Alfonso asks the young men to look into the other room, from which, after some seconds for a quick change, Ferrando and Guglielmo emerge, this time dressed as the "Albanians."

The truth of the charade and deception is now revealed. The sisters tremble as they admit that they were preparing a wedding, but now the men duly surprise them by confessing the charade.

Guglielmo returns the miniature portrait of Ferrando to Dorabella, and both men sarcastically shower praise on the “doctor” who saw them safely through a dose of poison. The “notary” astonishes the girls when she reveals herself as Despina.

The sisters know everything and feel completely humiliated. Don Alfonso declares himself the winner of his wager with the officers, and the sisters — still chaste — are reunited with their original lovers.

Don Alfonso reasons that true happiness lies not in romantic illusion, but in accepting things as they are. The entire charade is over and the lovers are reconciled.

Commentary and Analysis

A revival of *The Marriage of Figaro* in 1789 was such a huge success that Mozart's supreme devotee, Emperor Joseph II, promptly commissioned him to write a new opera, further inspiring him by offering him double the usual fee. For this new opera, *Cosi fan tutte*, Mozart chose as his librettist that peripatetic scholar, entrepreneur, and erstwhile crony of Casanova, the man who had supplied the texts for his *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Lorenzo da Ponte.

No one knows the exact genesis of the work, or where da Ponte found the story. There is no hard evidence to back popular legend that the plot was based on a real-life intrigue and scandal in the court of Joseph II in which, supposedly, two Viennese officers bet that they would succeed in proving their girlfriends' infidelities. Nevertheless, the essential ingredients of the story had considerable literary ancestry; there have been many traditional tales containing bets against chastity from as far back as the Greek theater (the *Procris* story), works of Ovid, Shakespeare (*Cymbeline*), stories of Boccaccio and Cervantes, as well as the Renaissance Commedia dell'arte plots which were saturated with stock situation comedy in which wives' fidelities were constantly being tested.

The essence of good comedy is not that it has necessarily happened, but that it could happen. Therefore, comedy must have a link with reality so that it does not degenerate into farce. The situations in the plot of *Cosi fan tutte* in which two young women, Dorabella and Fiordiligi, are respectively engaged to lovers Ferrando and Guglielmo, who pretend to leave for the wars but instead return, disguised, and prove their mistresses' infidelities by each seducing the other's fiancée, is a situation which if it did not in fact happen in real life — real or imagined — it is certainly credible enough to have happened, and therefore, inherently, the events in the plot are indeed convincing.

Nevertheless, Mozart's contemporary audience failed to perceive any inner truth within the story. Da Ponte's ironic words appeared to mock the conventions of faithful love and were considered downright immoral. In fact, at best, they considered the plot a series of trivial and artificial intrigues, ridiculous and preposterous situations, and even, a marionette show. The opera's plot very quickly suffered a stigma of shabbiness and inferiority that resulted from its 24-hour time-span, its full day of intrigue between lunch and dinner, its frank sexuality, its scenes involving touching and feeling, its outlandish disguises, its seductions at lightning speed, and its switching of partners. In addition, the audience was shocked by the thought that any "well-bred" woman could simultaneously be in love with two different men, and even plan to marry, escape, pack up and leave her original lover.

In particular, German audiences became horrified by the immorality of the plot and its treatment and by the disrespect shown for the sacred and noble figure of "Woman." Germans would spend the better part of the nineteenth century "improving" the libretto of *Cosi fan tutte*. German idealism was in conflict with the eighteenth century repugnance for women that was concealed under the veneer of Enlightenment ideals; attitudes that would eventually be transformed into the nineteenth century Romantic movement's reverence and ennoblement of women.

Beethoven, who admittedly loved Mozart's music, was just like his nineteenth-century Romantic contemporaries, detesting the plots of *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Cosi fan tutte*, distraught by their downright depravity, and lamenting that Mozart had squandered his genius on such trivial and immoral subjects. Beethoven would counter that triviality with his own ideal of womanhood, Leonora in *Fidelio*, by carrying the conception of Goethe's "femme eterne," the "Eternal Woman," to new heights, and placing woman on a pedestal to be revered. Richard Wagner expressed his own nineteenth century Romantic ideal

of the "Eternal Woman" by ennobling her as the understanding and sacrificing woman who alone could bring redemption and salvation to man's innate egoism and his yearnings for love.

Nevertheless, the general dissatisfaction with the plot itself, irrespective of Mozart's music, caused *Così fan tutte* to virtually disappear from the opera stages for much of the nineteenth century. In an almost hypocritical sense, many nineteenth-century critics, who did not balk at some of the most farfetched coincidences in opera librettos, or at those most absurd plot convolutions involving singing dragons and informative birds, found da Ponte's plot disgusting and unrealistic.

But in 1896, Herman Levi produced a revival at Munich, followed in the early 1900s with Richard Strauss's "rediscovery" of the work. Strauss became *Così fan tutte*'s acknowledged propagandist and started a full-scale revival in 1910. As a result, *Così fan tutte* bounced back and became recognized as a long underrated masterpiece; to this day, it has remained a repertory staple, no longer looked upon condescendingly, and generally canonized by every opera lover; it is certainly no longer condemned as a mildly amusing piece satirizing immorality, or a farcical plot clothed in Mozart's sublime and magical music. In our modern opera world, we have surrendered to *Così fan tutte*'s extraordinary charm, wit, and gaiety, as well as Mozart's exceptionally sublime music.

Mozart wrote *Così fan tutte* while the Bastille was being stormed in 1789; that event, the onset of the French Revolution, was the quintessential manifestation of the ideals of the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment and the Age of Reason. In fact, the da Ponte trilogy, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, all satirically deal with despicable aspects of human character whose transformation was the very focus of Enlightenment idealism.

In *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, the stories deal with aristocratic men — the Count Almaviva and the Don himself. These men can be perceived by our standards as criminals: unstable, wildly libidinous men, who feel themselves above the law. Similarly, in *Così fan tutte*, the actions of the women can be perceived as being beyond moral law. In all three works, their themes deal with seduction, but in these stories, that seduction ends in hapless failure: a subtle forecast to the demise of the ancien régime, the end of the old world order and the beginning of Enlightenment reason.

Così fan tutte's preoccupation with female inconstancy — the engine that drives the plot — suggests that its story reveals a dark side of the Enlightenment, even an expression of antifeminist sadism and misogyny. The Enlightenment was imbedded with contradictions and dichotomies; underneath the surface of Enlightenment ideals, it was man, not woman, who possessed the great gift of reason. Inferentially, the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason had an attitude of contempt and distaste for women, considering them fleshly, unspiritual, devoid of reason, faithless, and fickle. The superficial gallantry of the era, in many ways, represented a disguise for a deep-seated hatred and fear of women.

Therefore, to Mozart's eighteenth-century audience — all children of the Enlightenment — the plot of *Così fan tutte* and its presumed negative view about the infidelity and inconstancy of women seemed all too realistic, quite in keeping with the paradoxical contemporary male view that women's reprehensible proclivity to philander and sleep around was widespread.

Those standards of virtue and morality were hypocritical and represented the classic double standard; being faithful was a virtue that only applied to women, not to men. Philandering by men, whenever they felt inclined, was socially acceptable, and, of course, their divine right. In eighteenth-century terms, these one-sided struggles of the senses with the intellect were perfectly shipshape and correct, by-products of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, and certainly in

line with the views of Mozart, all the gentry in Vienna, and particularly, the libertine da Ponte. Nevertheless, the repudiation of women in the *Cosi fan tutte* story could be accepted by contemporary male audiences, but placing unfaithful men on the stage was unacceptable.

In its eighteenth century perspective, the *Cosi fan tutte* story can be viewed as a gender class conflict that evolves into a highly sophisticated battle of the sexes, its inner truth, a reflection of the social realities, and tensions prevalent in contemporary times.

The theme of the opera specifically portrays a satire on the fidelity of both the female and male sex, but on its higher level of meaning, it is an innocent exploration of the sanctity of love. In certain respects, the story depicts the coming to awareness of the state of love, as well as human yearning for love. The story explores a wide range of feelings and nuances of emotion in contemplating love, and, therefore, the effects of love: erotic entanglements, tenderness, devotion, deceit, infatuation, lust, frivolity, jealousy, obsession, as well as man's foibles and his silly pride and folly.

All great art provokes different and higher levels of meaning. In that sense, they can have various interpretations. Is the *Cosi fan tutte* story a highly artificial frolic based on disguises of absurd improbability? Is the story a darker commentary on human frailty? Musicologists never cease to explore its possible subtext or inner meaning.

The opera's title, *Cosi fan tutte*, is not untranslatable. Its most literal translation, "All women behave that way" means that all women show fickleness in love. Other translations could similarly apply: "Never trust a woman," or even, "Girls will be girls." Since the title words are actually sung in the course of the opera — in five syllables with an emphasis on the fourth — a perfect English translation that fits the cadence might simply be "just like a woman!"

Nevertheless, *Cosi fan tutte* bears a subtitle which may provide a clearer intent for its plot: *The School for Lovers*. In a school, one learns, and one raises consciousness to awareness. *Cosi fan tutte*'s school is intended to teach moral lessons: to men, don't trust your girlfriend; to women, if you are unfaithful, likewise beware; it can lead to disaster. The title could easily have been *Cosi fan tutti*, applying the Italian plural *tutti* meaning male and female, thus conveying the idea that infidelity applied to men and women. But in taking da Ponte's libretto at face value — and particularly its subtitle *School for Lovers* — *Cosi fan tutte* is simply an artificial comedy in which foolish lovers learn moral lessons, are raised to a higher level of consciousness by exposing their folly, and in the end, celebrating by glorifying reason. Its simplest underlying meaning is that with wisdom, reason and intellect, emotions are conquered.

Mozart's Overture anticipates the final moral lesson: *Cosi fan tutte*. A short Andante features the oboe, in this opera, an instrument frequently associated with the cynical chuckling of Don Alfonso. The motto theme is heard three times in the opera: after the 12th measure of the Overture; a very subtle hearing at the end of the Overture; and at the end of Act II when it is sung by Don Alfonso and his "students." After the Andante, the tempo changes to Presto in which Mozart's symphonic development does nothing more than create an atmosphere of general good humor and exuberance to frame our mind and put us in a receptive mood for the humorous story which follows.

Naples was the center of the Italian Enlightenment, so it seems perfectly logical that there we find one of its principal residents: Don Alfonso, the blithely spiritual old philosopher and cynical catalyst of the plot. In the spirit of this Age of Reason, he is the enlightened force seeking good and truth, the teacher and sermonizer in this *School for Lovers*, who, in spite of his rather harsh teaching methods, manipulates and slows down the infantile relationships of the lovers long enough for them to see each other realistically rather than in disguise.

Mozart's music score continuously alternates between farce and seriousness; the styles of opera buffa and opera seria are continually interacting. The opening three trios are pure opera buffa and establish the presumed absurdity of the plot as Don Alfonso and the two officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, decide on their wager: Are their fiancés unfaithful like all women? The officers are resolute in their individual convictions, but Don Alfonso is confident that he can prove women's inconstancy. Nevertheless, the officers proclaim their faith in their women and are so assured of their victory that they celebrate in advance.

In the second scene, farce is replaced with dead seriousness and genuine human sentiment as we meet the two infatuated sisters from Ferrara: Dorabella and Fiordiligi, the latter's name meaning "flower of loyalty." Like ordinary young women, their thoughts are preoccupied with getting married as soon as possible: marriage seems to be their primary objective, more important to them than their specific partners — their lack of seriousness and reason the premise upon which the whole adventure is built. The sisters have simply fallen in love with love; they are love-sick maidens, and in their duet, "Ah, Guarda sorella," in which they gloat over portraits of their lovers, Mozart's lush music leaves no doubt that love dominates their souls: his luscious cavatina on the word *A-m-o-r-e*.

Pursuing the first stage of his scheme to prove the sisters unfaithful, Don Alfonso arrives to bring them bad news: their lovers must go off to war, a comic simulation combining grief and anxiety that returns the score to opera buffa comedy and farce. But in the Quintet that follows, "Sento a Dio," there is a return to seriousness as the sisters, the lovers, and the cynical Don Alfonso, all reflect their profound sadness and sorrow that fate has decreed their parting.

In a bon voyage trio, "O soave sia," the sisters persuade us — or at least Mozart's music persuades us — that they are genuinely heartbroken. The music is filled with pathos, feeling and sentiment; at the same time it brilliantly captures the gentle Neapolitan warm evening breezes and the slapping of waves. Mozart dazzles us as the quintessential stage painter with his uncanny affinity to translate sights into musical sound.

The plot returns to farce and opera buffa when we meet the sisters' maid, the 15-year old Despina, the name meaning "thorn" in Italian. Despina is seen preparing chocolate for her employers, and in the true tradition of the servant of opera buffa, she is inevitably complaining about her lot. She is quick witted, and eternally hungry, just escaping being found tasting the chocolate when her mistresses Fiordiligi and Dorabella arrive. In Despina, da Ponte has provided us with Don Alfonso's soul-mate, a teenage cynic who believes intuitively and instinctively that virtue does not last. She is particularly convincing when she condemns men as fickle and untrustworthy, that "girl-in-every-port" addiction of men that she describes in her cynical little aria: "In uomini, in soldati."

Pure opera buffa and satire abound when the "Albanians" arrive and the sisters' expression of outrage. Fiordiligi has an opportunity to avow her faithfulness and believability, her seriousness and protestations of immovable fidelity expressed in the old fashioned heroic style of opera seria, a simile aria on a grand scale in which she likens her love to the strength of a rock: the aria "Come scoglio," a gem of almost comic sentiments juxtaposed against the solemn coloratura in which they are expressed, and providing an intriguing paradox of parody and caricature that requires a first-rate vocal acrobat and juggler.

Mozart's music for the finale of the first act is saturated with convincing sincerity with its mood of high tragedy, but da Ponte's libretto delivers farce, burlesque, and satire. The "Albanians" try every possible ruse to be accepted by the sisters, but they are spurned, eventually having to feign taking poison as the solution to their hopeless passion. The sisters seem to be sincerely affected; the two male practical jokers sound equally sincere and convincing, but express an incongruity of words and music in ideas — all comic, irrelevant and surprising — that tumble over each other with immense and fantastic spontaneity and profusion. Nevertheless, the sisters'

anxiety and helplessness leads to weakness: both admit that they are moved to tears at the plight of the outrageous men; and Ferrando and Guglielmo — the “Albanians” — wonder whether the young ladies’ new sympathy may not ripen into love.

Despina, in the disguise of Dr. Mesmer, the famed eighteenth-century German physician and hypnotist, virtually “mesmerizes” the “Albanians” to recovery by magnetically removing their poison. Mozart provides a perfect musical caricature of Despina in the charade of Dr. Mesmer, the music accented with trills that seem like giggles and horselaughs. Da Ponte’s text surely portrays the sisters as the antithesis of the Age of Reason, pretty shallow creatures with a limited education: they cannot comprehend even a few simple words of Dr. Mesmer’s Latin; only love, whatever its meaning, permeates their thoughts.

When the “Albanians” have fully recovered, they aggressively seek kisses, but the outraged sisters spurn them. As the first act closes in a brilliant ensemble climax, the sisters have not betrayed their fiancées, and it would seem that Guglielmo and Ferrando have won their bet. Nevertheless, Don Alfonso has 24 hours, and the clock still runs in his favor: the man born of wisdom and experience is convinced he will prove the sisters’ inconstancy and have the last laugh.

In Act II, Mozart comes to grips with deep emotions. Each of the lovers becomes transformed into a more elevated sense of awareness and consciousness as they matriculate — and are transformed — in Don Alfonso’s *School for Lovers*.

Da Ponte wanted his story to be simply funny, so he spun a perfect opera buffa, a satirical and exaggerated story about betrayal. Who really loves who is another part of the story? Indeed, in the second act, Mozart treats da Ponte’s intended comic predicaments of the characters with profound seriousness. All of the characters will become victims of their emotions as they profess true love to the other’s betrothed and unwittingly surrendering to love. Not only will female inconstancy be proven, but male inconstancy as well.

Mozart tends to confuse us because he provides us with an unending stream of very poignant amorous arias and duets lavished on apparently worthless characters and contemptible situations. This is an artificial comedy, but Mozart’s music convinces us that *if* human beings ever found themselves having to express emotions depicted in *Cosi fan tutte*, they would certainly do so to the highly expressive and often moving music he placed in this score, music containing an unexpected beauty and depth, music that is almost superhuman in its unrelenting intensity and seriousness.

With Mozart’s musical pen, all is not a joke. Mozart is so subtle and vague in his character delineation that he places us in conflict: his musical language can be so serious that our emotions are jolted. As a result, there is a tension between da Ponte’s text and Mozart’s music, each at odds with the other, an identical scenario as Boito’s libretto fighting against Verdi’s music in *Otello*: in that instance, Boito’s text reflected the fall of the lover; Verdi’s music showed the fall of the hero. In that same context, Mozart’s music switches without warning from parody in the comic tradition of opera buffa, to moments of music as emotionally stirring and intentionally opera seria as almost anything he had ever written. The dividing line between parody and sincerity is extremely narrow, and at times, difficult to distinguish. In other words, in *Cosi fan tutte*’s second act, it is at times impossible to distinguish between fantasy and reality, between farce and seriousness.

As Act II opens, Despina just about persuades the sisters to “live for today” in her delicious parody, “In uomini, in soldati,” an overstatement and exaggeration whose words seems riotous, yet musically, dead serious. She tells her mistresses to behave like grown-up women and not sit around moping, iterating her philosophy that they should behave as their soldier-lovers (and indeed all soldier-lovers) behave when they are out of sight. The sisters

become receptive to the idea of flirtation and fun and have arrived at the borderline of betraying their lovers. They conclude that, after all, it would not do much harm to flirt a little, provided, of course, that one is discreet and careful about it. Mozart provides sublime musical sensuousness as the two sisters settle down, pick their love-players, and pleasantly anticipate the joys ahead.

Each new pair of lovers has an opportunity to test their fidelity; each will lose their will power and surrender. Their confrontations contain sincere, heartfelt, and seductive music. The words and music are genuine; there is no satire in these scenes between prospective lovers other than the fact that their words are supposed to be feigned. Mozart's musical serenades are exploring deep emotions and passions within the human psyche. As a result, his music for these "new" prospective lovers is extremely persuasive so that the seducers as well as their victims become extremely credible.

At first, both pairs of lovers are tongue-tied and bashful — an almost awkward silence — even though the boys have apparently entered the masquerade with verve and enthusiasm. And then each of the men tries to seduce the other's fiancé: Ferrando romances Fiordiligi; Guglielmo romances Dorabella. Dorabella and Guglielmo sing the duet "Il core vi dono, bell'idol mio." Dorabella quickly surrenders to her emotions and Guglielmo gives her a golden locket in exchange for her betrothed's portrait, both forgoing resistance and by no means unresponsive to the passions of the moment.

Ferrando's music establishes him as an idealizing romantic, a man of noble qualities and lofty sentiments; he begs the agitated Fiordiligi not to spurn his passionate and ardent declarations of love for her, in "Ah lo veggio quell'anima bella." After he departs, Fiordiligi is bewildered, ridden with guilt and apologizes to her "true" love Guglielmo for betraying him in her thoughts: the stirring and brilliant "Per pietà," an expression of her conflict between desire and conscience, and an aria requiring incredible vocal technique to negotiate its wide leaps, its musical flourishes, and vigorous decorations.

Later, when the two young men compare notes on their activities, the general complacency is broken when Guglielmo breaks the embarrassing news to Ferrando of Dorabella's inconstancy by showing him the locket she has returned to him: the "smoking gun." Mozart provides amorous outpourings of excessive sentiment as well as fiery passions in "Tradito, schernito," Ferrando's conclusion that Dorabella has betrayed him, but in spite of everything, he still adores her.

When Fiordiligi is alone and sings "Fra gli amplessi," she is guilt-ridden and proclaims that she will search out her lover and die at his side if need be, another protestation like "Come scoglio" of rock-like devotion and eternal fidelity. But when Ferrando comes out from hiding and pours his heart out to her, we witness the ultimate seduction scene in which both admit their passionate love for each other. Fiordiligi's resistance has been broken; she has surrendered; and has been conquered, but also, she has arrived at a higher level of consciousness and awareness, realizing the power of emotion and sexuality.

The conclusion to *Così fan tutte's School for Lovers* is an artificial resolution, in many senses, failing to bring the action to a satisfying close. In the end, nothing happens. In the end, we are left with an unsolvable enigma in these love relationships in which everything seems to be shrugged off with a laugh.

We do not know what happens after the curtain falls. Perhaps the new pairs formed in the course of Act II remain together? Perhaps the four lovers stand separate and alone, raising the question whether anybody will marry anybody? Or, perhaps the original pairs are re-matched at the conclusion, but this time with doubt and suspicion?

The maddening absence of closure is a consequence of the delicate balance that Mozart and da Ponte had to strike in an opera designed to “prove” the outrageous thesis of its title. They achieve their illusion because they have omitted a vital element of the story: we never see the original lovers alone together, neither Fiordiligi alone with Guglielmo nor Dorabella alone with Ferrando. In the Act I parting scenes, stage directions dictate that the men and women are to be paired by sex — Ferrando with Guglielmo, Fiordiligi with Dorabella — all on stage together, voicing generic emotions that seem to be exaggerated to the point of parody. Because we have had no musical or emotional investment in the original couples in terms of witnessing intimacy, we can watch Dorabella and Fiordiligi succumb to the Act II seductions by the “Albanians” without a sense of indignation or betrayal. The plot has fostered a disinterest because we cannot suddenly feel one way or another about the future of couples we do not really know. The parting in the first act is impersonal and superficial, but in the second act, the passions are real, and that sense of confusion is what the story is all about.

The incompleteness of the conclusion is thus arguably compatible with the theme of the opera, and perhaps, the reason that its plot is controversial and perhaps misunderstood. We do not know the original couples, and likewise, the original lovers do not know each other, or even themselves. Knowing oneself is the lesson of reason underlying the plot. Don Alfonso and Despina, the cynical catalysts of the story, must continually remind the lovers that they are dealing with human beings, flesh-and-blood creatures, not gods and goddesses. The sisters constantly echo stock poses; the men repeatedly parrot received wisdom. But in this *School for Lovers*, in the end, they must evaluate their personal experiences. In other words, at the end of school, graduation implies that something has been learned, and one of those lessons is that before one can know love, one must know one’s self.

But what has been learned? In this story, both the men and the women are inconstant: the women clearly through their actions, and later those of the men, however unwittingly. Punishment is not the solution, as Don Alfonso succinctly expresses in his remedy to the dilemma: just marry them. But Don Alfonso does not stipulate who is to marry whom, and the stage directions, which are equally uninformative, underscore the either/or possibilities hinted at in the finale. At the climax, the score indicates that Ferrando and Guglielmo come out of the room without their hats, capes, and beards, but in “Albanian” costume, in other words, with one foot in each camp: Who are they?

The reconciliation is equally unclear when the men state to their respective ladies: “I believe you ... but I don’t want to try to prove it.” So, unlike the specific clarity of da Ponte’s other collaborations with Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, this opera’s conclusion is noncommittal, if not enigmatic.

Don Alfonso’s final words in the closing ensemble indicate that a universal human lesson of propriety and correctness are now in order: reason. He says:

“Happy is the man of reason who can face the world in season. Firm and steadfast and uncomplaining, he will go his cheerful way. Things that make his brothers sorrowful, he will answer with knowing laughter. He has learned that life’s adversities turn to joy another day.”

If good sense and logical thinking are the moral within this story, then the lesson is that love is not a frivolity: the nobility of love — beauty, desire, and fulfillment — are to be achieved through intellect and reason. The old cynical philosopher has told us that in terms of constancy, women are like that, but he also tells us that we can’t live without them: a truth has been exposed, an hypocrisy unmasked.

Two centuries after *Così fan tutte*'s premiere, the final debate about the opera, and for that matter, the entire Age of Enlightenment, has not yet been resolved: the dialogue between reason and sensuality, between desire and conscience. *Così fan tutte*'s stylized eighteenth-century story is indeed a very serious — yet subtle — analysis of the necessary ingredients of amorous relationships. Below the glitter and possible nonsense of its farcical actions, the men are naïve and heartless lovers, the women perhaps just as idiotic, but there is much more fabric in da Ponte's text than whipped-cream comedy. In the story, the powerful passions of love are uncontrollable, all triggered without reason. Essentially, the moral of the story is to remedy and correct that fault.

As a result, debate continues to mark *Così fan tutte* productions. Contemporary productions have varied in their focus: a slapstick affair with overblown physical histrionics; homage to the sexual revolution with emphasis on the exchanging of lovers; expression of the feminist movement and its cardinal rule of the parity between sexes — all men do it, too.

An English National Opera revival, directed by Nicolette Molnar, had the sisters overhear the plotting of Don Alfonso and then take feminist revenge with a masquerade of their own. After they dupe the men into a wedding ceremony with a pair of surrogates, they pack their suitcases and make a getaway.

Così fan tutte remains one of the greatest masterpieces of comedy in music. Mozart's melodies are enormously faithful to character and situation that contain a charm, a sparkle, a technical perfection of form, an expressive virtuosity, and an utter spontaneity. Often, a serious musical number apes the style of the lamenting, heroic opera seria aria style and switches immediately to comic opera buffa, if anything, underscoring the gentle irony of the work.

In the end, we are left with *Così fan tutte*'s ultimate irony: who loves who? Who marries whom? Those questions have spurred the search for and the attribution of an arcane subtext to the plot. There is a complex web of conflicting emotions and entanglements that are insoluble, if not elusive. Notwithstanding controversy, the opera is nevertheless a magnificent monument to the invention and ingenuity of the greatest musico-dramatic partnership in the history of opera: Mozart and da Ponte. That combination of Mozart's sublime music together with da Ponte's shrewdly contrived libretto has become one of the gems of opera: a perfect comic opera, full of subtleties, always inspiring us to debate whether to laugh or to cry. Is *Così fan tutte* opera buffa or opera seria?

We assume that the enlightened couples have discovered reason in Don Alfonso's *School for Lovers*. We assume that they have all grown and matured. Don Alfonso, after all, was primarily a philosopher, and he may well have engineered the whole scenario to prevent two marriages taking place that he regarded as ill-conceived — long before the curtain rose. We can only assume that they all live happily ever after in a world in which reason triumphs. After all, the essence of the entire Enlightenment was that man act with reason rather than emotion.

Così fan tutte should also be viewed as hyperbole; it is an exaggeration for effect that is not meant to be taken seriously. In da Ponte's hands, it most assuredly has undertones — and overtones — of Enlightenment conflicts, ideology, and contradictions: those historic prejudices against women, their lack of power, the gender divide and the hypocrisies inherent in male attitudes to women. In the end, *Così fan tutte* may simply be a skeptical questioning of the Enlightenment, and in a certain sense, a bridge to nineteenth-century Romanticism, and eventually, to twentieth-century feminism.

Così fan tutte's story involves the wheels that turn in our lives: a story to make us think

whether we are fools of time or of love or of fortune or of ourselves. If we are fools of love, *Così fan tutte* is trying to bring us to a higher level of consciousness where love is not trivial or folly, where conscience overcomes desire, where the senses are overcome by intellect, where reason overcomes emotion. In the end, the message may be not to trivialize love or don't do stupid things when in love.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers placed their faith in rationality; in this story, its propagandist is Don Alfonso. The Romantics who followed embraced irrationalism and rejected the Enlightenment's cold calculations and rigid categories of philosophy, and firmly denied their tidy, reasonable solutions for humanity. Romanticism considered the Enlightenment an arrogant pretense to universal truth, and their movement focused on the senses of freedom and feeling and eventually provided perhaps the greatest transformation of Western consciousness.

Così fan tutte and its tension between emotion and reason represent a bridge between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Mozart and da Ponte stood in the middle of the bridge — at the center of those two great ideologies — not quite sure on which side they belonged.

Nevertheless, *Così fan tutte* is a magic: a supremely lovely, funny, highly entertaining, enchanting, and satisfying comic opera.

The rest.... is commentary.

Così fan tutte

Libretto

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Act I

Naples, Italy. The officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, sit at a cafe with their friend, the cynical philosopher, Don Alfonso.

Allegro
FERRANDO



Ferrando:

La mia Dorabella capace non è:
fedel quanto bella il cielo la fè.

Guglielmo:

La mia Fiordiligi tradirmi non sa:
uguale in lei credo costanza e beltà.

Don Alfonso:

Ho i crini già grigi, *Ex cathedra* parlo;
ma tali litigi finiscano quà.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

No, detto ci avete che infide esser ponno;
provar ce'l dovete, se avete onestà.

Don Alfonso:

Tai prove lasciamo.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

No, no, le vogliamo: o, fuori la spada,
rompiam l'amistà.

(Sul vivo mi tocca chi lascia di bocca
sortire un accento che torto le fa.)

Don Alfonso:

(O pazzo desire!)
Cercar di scoprire quel mal che, trovato,
meschini ci fa.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Fuor la spada!
Scegliete qual di noi più vi piace.

Ferrando:

My Dorabella could not be unfaithful:
God gave her beauty and faith.

Guglielmo:

My Fiordiligi would never betray me:
her constancy is equal to her beauty.

Don Alfonso:

I'm well over sixty and experienced,
but these arguments must cease.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

No, you declared them to be unfaithful:
if you're honorable, you must prove it.

Don Alfonso:

Let's forget about proof.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

(their hands on their swords threateningly)
No, no, we want proof: or else, draw your
sword, and our friendship is over.

(to themselves)

(He's touched a sensitive spot by slandering
the woman I love and adore.)

Don Alfonso:

(What insane yearning!)
I was only trying to save you trouble and
warn you of what awaits you.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Draw your sword!
Choose one of us.

Don Alfonso:

Io son uomo di pace, e duelli non fo, se non a mensa.

Ferrando:

O battervi, o dir subito perchè d'infedeltà le nostre amanti sospettate capaci!

Don Alfonso:

Cara semplicità, quanto mi piaci!

Ferrando:

Cessate di scherzar, o giuro al cielo!

Don Alfonso:

Ed io, giuro alla terra, non scherzo, amici miei; solo saper vorrei che razza di animali son queste belle, se han come tutti noi carne, ossa e pelle, se mangian come noi, se veston gonne, alfin, se Dee, se donne son.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Son donne, ma son tali, son tali.

Don Alfonso:

E in donne pretendete di trovar fedeltà? Quanto mi piaci mai, semplicità?

Don Alfonso:

È la fede delle femmine come l'araba fenice: che vi sia, ciascun lo dice, dove sia, nessun lo sa.

Ferrando:

La fenice è Dorabella!

Guglielmo:

La fenice è Fiordiligi!

Don Alfonso:

Non è questa, non è quella, non fu mai, non vi sarà. È la fede delle femmine come l'araba fenice: che vi sia, ciascun lo dice; dove sia, nessun lo sa.

Ferrando:

Scioccherie di poeti!

Guglielmo:

Scempiaggini di vecchi!

Don Alfonso: (calmly)

I'm a peace-loving man, who achieves satisfaction at the dining table.

Ferrando:

Either fight or apologize for doubting the integrity of our sweethearts!

Don Alfonso:

Your naiveté overwhelms me!

Ferrando:

I swear to Heaven, stop this joking!

Don Alfonso:

And I swear to you, my friends, that I'm not joking. I only want to know what sort of creatures your girlfriends are. Are they like us, made of flesh and bone, and eat meat? Do they wear skirts? Are they goddesses? Or women?

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

They are women, but very special women.

Don Alfonso:

Do you expect women to be faithful? Are you so naive and inexperienced?

Don Alfonso: (jokingly)

Woman's fidelity is like the phoenix of Arabia: everyone tells you it exists, but no one knows where it is.

Ferrando: (impassioned)

Dorabella is the phoenix!

Guglielmo:

Fiordiligi is the phoenix!

Don Alfonso:

It's neither one nor the other. It never existed and it never will. Woman's fidelity is like the phoenix of Arabia: everyone tells you it exists, but no one knows where it is.

Ferrando:

Poetic nonsense!

Guglielmo:

An old man's foolishness!

Don Alfonso:

Or bene, udite, ma senza andare in collera:
qual prova avete voi che ognor costanti
vi sien le vostre amanti; chi vi fe' sicurtà che
invariabili sono i lor cori?

Ferrando:

Lunga esperienza.

Guglielmo:

Nobil educazion.

Ferrando:

Pensar sublime.

Guglielmo:

Analogia d'umor.

Ferrando:

Disinteresse.

Guglielmo:

Immutabil carattere.

Ferrando:

Promesse.

Guglielmo:

Proteste.

Ferrando:

Giuramenti.

Don Alfonso:

Pianti, sospir, carezze, svenimenti.
Lasciatemi un po' ridere.

Ferrando:

Cospetto!
Finite di deriderci?

Don Alfonso:

Pian piano: e se toccar con mano
oggi vi fo che come l'altre sono?

Guglielmo:

Non si può dar!

Ferrando:

Non è!

Don Alfonso:

Then listen, but without getting angry:
What proof do you have that your lovers will
always be faithful? What has made you so
sure of the integrity of their hearts?

Ferrando:

Long experience.

Guglielmo:

Good breeding.

Ferrando:

Sublime thoughts.

Guglielmo:

Intelligent logic.

Ferrando:

Unselfishness.

Guglielmo:

Strength of character.

Ferrando:

Promises.

Guglielmo:

Protestations.

Ferrando:

Vows.

Don Alfonso:

Tears, sighs, kisses, and swooning.
Let me have my little laugh.

Ferrando:

Damn it!
Will you stop deriding us?

Don Alfonso:

Calm down. What if I could convince you this
very day that they're like all the others?

Guglielmo:

You can't do it!

Ferrando:

It can't be!

Don Alfonso:
Giochiam!

Ferrando:
Giochiam!

Don Alfonso:
Cento zecchini.

Guglielmo:
E mille se volete.

Don Alfonso:
Parola.

Ferrando:
Parolissima.

Don Alfonso:
E un cenno, un motto, un gesto giurate di non far di tutto questo alle vostre Penelopi.

Ferrando:
Giuriamo.

Don Alfonso:
Da soldati d'onore?

Guglielmo:
Da soldati d'onore.

Don Alfonso:
E tutto quel farete ch'io vi dirò di far?

Ferrando:
Tutto!

Guglielmo:
Tuttissimo!

Don Alfonso:
Bravissimi!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Bravissimo, Signor Don Alfonso!

Ferrando:
(A spese vostre or ci divertiremo.)

Guglielmo:
(E de' cento zecchini, che faremo?)

Don Alfonso:
Let's bet!

Ferrando:
Let's bet!

Don Alfonso:
A hundred sovereigns.

Guglielmo:
A thousand, if you like.

Don Alfonso:
Your word.

Ferrando:
On my word.

Don Alfonso:
But promise. No inkling, mention, or suggestion of this wager to your Penelopes.

Ferrando:
We swear.

Don Alfonso:
On a soldier's honor?

Guglielmo:
On a soldier's honor.

Don Alfonso:
Will you do everything I tell you to do?

Ferrando:
Everything!

Guglielmo:
Absolutely everything!

Don Alfonso:
Excellent!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Excellent, Don Alfonso!

Ferrando: (*aside to Guglielmo*)
(We'll enjoy ourselves at his expense.)

Guglielmo: (*aside to Ferrando*)
(How shall we spend the 100 sovereigns?)

Ferrando:
Una bella serenata far io voglio alla mia Dea.

Ferrando:
I want to sing a beautiful serenade to my goddess.

Guglielmo:
In onor di Citerea un convito io voglio far.

Guglielmo:
I'll honor my Venus with a banquet.

Don Alfonso:
Sarò anch'io de' convitati?

Don Alfonso:
May I also be invited?

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Ci sarete, sì signor.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Of course you'll be there.

Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:
E che brindisi replicati far vogliamo al Dio d'amor!

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:
We'll toast the god of love over and over again!

All three depart.

A garden at the seashore.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella gaze at lockets bearing portraits of their respective lovers.

Andante

FIORDILIGI and DORABELLA



Ah, guar-da, so - rel - la, ah guar - da so - rella.

Fiordiligi:
Ah, guarda, sorella, se bocca più bella,
se petto più nobile si può ritrovar.

Fiordiligi:
Look, sister, could you ever find such a
beautiful mouth, or such noble features?

Dorabella:
Osserva tu un poco, che fuoco ha ne' sguardi!
Se fiamma, se dardi non sembran scoccar.

Dorabella:
Just look a moment. What fire is in his eyes,
with darts shooting from them.

Fiordiligi:
Si vede un sembiante guerriero ed amante.

Fiordiligi:
He has the face of both hero and lover.

Dorabella:
Si vede una faccia che alletta e minaccia.

Dorabella:
His face is expressive and threatening.

Fiordiligi:
Io sono felice.

Fiordiligi:
I'm so happy.

Dorabella:

Felice son io.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Se questo mio core mai cangia desio,
amore mi faccia vivendo penar.

Fiordiligi:

Mi par che stamattina volentieri farei la
pazzarella: ho un certo foco, un certo pizzicor
entro le vene.

Quando Guglielmo viene se sapessi
che burla gli vo' far!

Dorabella:

Per dirti il vero, qualche cosa di nuovo
anch'io nell'alma provo: io giurerei
che lontane non siam dagli imenei.

Fiordiligi:

Dammi la mano: io voglio astrologarti.
Uh, che bell'*Emme!* E questo è un *Pi!* Va
bene: matrimonio presto.

Dorabella:

Affè che ci avrei gusto!

Fiordiligi:

Ed io non ci avrei rabbia.

Dorabella:

Ma che diavol vuol dir che i nostri sposi
ritardano a venir? Son già le sei.

Fiordiligi:

Eccoli.

Dorabella:

I'm so happy.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

If my desires should ever change, let love
bring me a life of pain.

Fiordiligi:

I feel like doing something roguish this
morning: I have a fire and a sense of mischief
in my veins.

When Guglielmo comes, I feel like playing a
trick on him!

Dorabella:

To be honest, I also have a feeling that
something is about to happen. I swear that
we'll soon be married.

Fiordiligi:

Give me your hand. I want to read your
future. There's an M and a P: marriage
presently.

Dorabella:

That would really please me!

Fiordiligi:

I wouldn't mind it either.

Dorabella:

But what devil has detained our sweethearts?
It's already six o'clock.

Fiordiligi:

Here they are.

Don Alfonso arrives.

Fiordiligi:

Non son essi: è Don Alfonso, l'amico lor.

Dorabella:

Ben venga il signor Don Alfonso!

Don Alfonso:

Riverisco.

Fiordiligi:

It's not them. It's their friend, Don Alfonso.

Dorabella:

Welcome, Don Alfonso.

Don Alfonso:

My respects.

Fiordiligi:

Cos'è?
Perchè qui solo? Voi piangete?
Parlate, per pietà: che cosa è nato?
L'amante...

Dorabella:

L'idol mio...

Don Alfonso:

Barbaro fato!

Vorrei dir, e cor non ho,
balbettando il labbro va.
Fuor la voce uscir non può,
ma mi resta mezza quà.
Che farete? Che farò?
Oh, che gran fatalità!
Dar di peggio non si può,
ho di voi, di lor pietà.

Fiordiligi:

Stelle! Per carità, signor Alfonso,
non ci fate morir.

Don Alfonso:

Convien armarvi, figlie mie, di costanza.

Dorabella:

Oh Dei! Qual male e addivenuto mai, qual
caso rio?
Forse è morto il mio bene?

Fiordiligi:

E morto il mio?

Don Alfonso:

Morti non son, ma poco men che morti.

Dorabella:

Feriti?

Don Alfonso:

No.

Fiordiligi:

Ammalati?

Don Alfonso:

Neppur.

Fiordiligi:

What has happened?
Why are you here alone? Are you crying?
For heaven's sake, tell us what's happened?
My lover...

Dorabella:

My beloved...

Don Alfonso:

Cruel fate!

I'd like to speak, but I haven't the heart,
and my lips refuse to move.
I must speak, but it seems that I've lost my
voice.
What will you do? What shall I do?
Oh, what a terrible misfortune!
There couldn't be anything worse,
I have such pity for them and for you.

Fiordiligi:

For goodness sake, Don Alfonso,
don't make us suffer.

Don Alfonso:

Have courage, my girls, be prepared for a shock.

Dorabella:

Oh Heavens! What terrible thing has
happened?
Is my beloved dead?

Fiordiligi:

Is mine dead?

Don Alfonso:

They aren't dead, but just as well might be.

Dorabella:

Wounded?

Don Alfonso:

No.

Fiordiligi:

Ill?

Don Alfonso:

Not that either.

Fiordiligi:

Che cosa, dunque?

Don Alfonso:

Al marzial campo ordin regio li chiama.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Ohimè, che sento!

Fiordiligi:

E partiran?

Don Alfonso:

Sul fatto!

Dorabella:

E non v'è modo d'impedirlo?

Don Alfonso:

Non v'è.

Fiordiligi:

Nè un solo addio?

Don Alfonso:

Gli infelici non hanno coraggio di vedervi.
Ma se voi lo bramate, son pronti.

Dorabella:

Dove son?

Don Alfonso:

Amici, entrate!

Fiordiligi:

Then what is it?

Don Alfonso:

They've been called to the front by royal order.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Oh my, how dreadful!

Fiordiligi:

When do they leave?

Don Alfonso:

Immediately!

Dorabella:

Isn't there a way to prevent it?

Don Alfonso:

No way.

Fiordiligi:

Not even a good-bye?

Don Alfonso:

The unfortunate men don't have the courage to
face you. But if you can bear it, I'll call them.

Dorabella:

Where are they?

Don Alfonso:

My friends, come here!

Ferrando and Guglielmo arrive; they wear traveling clothes.

Andante

QUINTET

GUGLIELMO



Sen - to, o Di - o

che que - sto piede,

Guglielmo:

Sento, o Dio, che questo piede
è restio nel girle avante.

Guglielmo:

Oh God, I feel that my feet resist moving
forward.

Ferrando:

Il mio labbro palpitante non può detto
pronunziar.

Don Alfonso:

Nei momenti più terribili sua virtù l'eroe
palesa.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Or che abbiam la nuova intesa,
a voi resta a fare il meno;
fate core, a entrambe in seno immergeteci
l'acciar.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Idol mio! La sorte incolpa se ti deggio
abbandonar!

Dorabella:

Ah, no, no, non partirai!

Fiordiligi:

No, crudel, non te n'andrai!

Dorabella:

Voglio pria cavarmi il core!

Fiordiligi:

Pria ti vo' morire ai piedi!

Ferrando:

(Cosa dici?)

Guglielmo:

(Te n'avvedi?)

Don Alfonso:

(Saldo, amico: *finem lauda...*)

Tutti:

Il destin così defrauda le speranze de' mortali.
Ah, chi mai fra tanti mali, chi mai può la vita
amar?

Guglielmo:

Non piangere, idol mio!

Ferrando:

Non disperarti, adorata mia sposa!

Ferrando:

My lips are trembling, and I can't utter a
word.

Don Alfonso:

The hero shows his courage in moments of
danger.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

We've already heard the news.
Now there's but one thing to do;
plunge your swords into our breasts.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

My angel! Destiny has decreed that we must
part!

Dorabella: (to Ferrando)

Oh, no, no, don't leave!

Fiordiligi: (to Guglielmo)

No, it's cruel for you to leave me!

Dorabella:

I'd rather tear out my heart!

Fiordiligi:

Let me die at your feet!

Ferrando: (aside to Don Alfonso)

(What do you say?)

Guglielmo: (aside to Don Alfonso)

(Do you see it?)

Don Alfonso: (aside to the men)

(Steady, friends, he who laughs last...)

All:

Destiny crushes human hopes.
Who could love life amid such misfortune?

Guglielmo: (to Fiordiligi)

Don't cry, my beloved!

Ferrando: (to Dorabella)

Don't despair, my sweetheart!

Don Alfonso:

Lasciate lor tal sfogo; è troppo giusta la
cagion di quel pianto.

Don Alfonso:

My friends, be patient. Let them have a good
cry.

The lovers embrace tenderly.

Fiordiligi:

Chi sa s'io più ti veggio!

Fiordiligi:

Who knows if I'll ever see you again!

Dorabella:

Chi sa se più ritorni!

Dorabella:

Who knows if you'll ever return!

Fiordiligi:

Lasciami questo ferro: ei mi dia morte,
se mai barbara sorte in quel seno a me caro.

Fiordiligi:

Give me that sword: since fate is so cruel, only
death can console me.

Dorabella:

Morrei di duol; d'uopo non ho d'acciaro.

Dorabella:

I will die of grief; I don't need a weapon.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Non farmi, anima mia, quest'infausti presagi!
Proteggeran gli Dei la pace del tuo cor ne'
giorni miei.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

My dearest, don't commit a fatal act!
The gods will protect your grieving heart
during the days we are gone.

Al fato dan legge quegli occhi vezzosi:
amor li protegge, nè i loro riposi
le barbare stelle ardiscon turbar.
Il ciglio sereno, mio bene, a me gira:
felice al tuo seno io spero tornar.

Love is a force that will guide and protect us
from the cruel fate that has befallen us.
Wait and be patient,
for nothing can divide us.
Soon we'll be happily reunited.

Don Alfonso:

(La commedia è graziosa, e tutti due
fan ben la loro parte.)

Don Alfonso: (to himself)

(The performance is charming, and all of them
are acting their part wonderfully.)

Drums are heard in the distance.

Ferrando:

Oh cielo! Questo è il tamburo funesto
che a divider mi vien dal mio tesoro.

Ferrando:

Oh Heavens! That is the ominous drum roll
that announces separation from my treasure.

Don Alfonso:

Ecco, amici, la barca.

Don Alfonso:

Friends, here comes your boat.

Fiordiligi:

Io manco.

Fiordiligi:

I'm fainting.

Dorabella:

Io moro.

Dorabella:

I'm dying.

A military march is heard in the distance. A boat arrives at the landing, and then a troop of soldiers, accompanied by villagers.

Soldati e Popolani:

Bella vita militar!
Ogni dì si cangia loco;
oggi molto, doman poco,
ora in terra ed or sul mar.
Il fragor di trombe e pifferi,
lo sparar di schioppi e bombe,
forza accresce al braccio e all'anima
vaga sol di trionfar.
Bella vita militar!

Don Alfonso:

Non v'è più tempo, amici: andar conviene
ove il destino, anzi il dover, v'invita.

Fiordiligi:

Mio cor.

Dorabella:

Idolo mio.

Ferrando:

Mio ben.

Guglielmo:

Mia vita.

Fiordiligi:

Ah, per un sol momento.

Don Alfonso:

Del vostro reggimento già è partita la barca;
raggiungerla convien coi pochi amici che su
legno più lieve attendendo vi stanno.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Abbracciami, idol mio.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Muoio d'affanno.

Fiordiligi:

Di scrivermi ogni giorno
giurami, vita mia!

Soldiers and villagers:

A military life is beautiful!
There's a new place every day;
today there's much, but little tomorrow,
sometimes on land, sometimes on the sea.
There's the din of trumpets and fifes,
guns and bombs exploding,
that strengthens your arm and spirit
in order to be victorious.
A military life is beautiful!

Don Alfonso:

Friends, time has run out. Go and follow the
call of destiny, or rather, your duty.

Fiordiligi:

My heart.

Dorabella:

My beloved.

Ferrando:

My dearest.

Guglielmo:

My life.

Fiordiligi:

Oh, just for a moment.

Don Alfonso:

Your regiment's ship has already left. You can
join it by taking the boat that is waiting.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Kiss me, my beloved.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

The anguish is killing me.

Fiordiligi:

My love, promise that you'll write to me
every day!

Dorabella:

Due volte ancora tu scrivimi, se puoi.

Ferrando:

Sii certa, o cara.

Guglielmo:

Non dubitar, mio bene.

Don Alfonso:

(Io crepo, se non rido!)

Fiordiligi:

Sii costante a me sol.

Dorabella:

Serbati fido.

Ferrando:

Addio.

Guglielmo:

Addio.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Addio.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Mi si divide il cor, bell'idol mio!

Addio! Addio! Addio!

Soldati e Popolani:

Bella vita militar! Ecc.

Dorabella:

Write to me twice a day if you can.

Ferrando:

Certainly, my darling.

Guglielmo:

Don't worry, my dearest.

Don Alfonso:

(I'll burst if I don't laugh right away!)

Fiordiligi:

Be faithful to me alone.

Dorabella:

Remain faithful.

Ferrando:

Good-bye.

Guglielmo:

Good-bye.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Good-bye.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

My heart is breaking, my beloved!

Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!

Soldiers and Villagers:

Military life is beautiful! Etc.

Ferrando and Guglielmo board the ship. Their lovers, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, remain at the shore, pensive and saddened.

Dorabella:

Dove son?

Don Alfonso:

Son partiti.

Fiordiligi:

Oh dipartenza crudelissima, amara!

Don Alfonso:

Fate core, carissime figliuole.

Guardate: da lontano vi fan cenno con mano i cari sposi.

Dorabella:

Where are they?

Don Alfonso: (consoling their sadness)

They've gone.

Fiordiligi:

What bitterness in parting!

Don Alfonso:

Be brave, my dear girls.

Look! They're waving to their dear lovers from the distance.

Fiordiligi:

Buon viaggio, mia vita!

Dorabella:

Buon viaggio!

Fiordiligi:

Oh Dei! Come veloce ae ne va quella barca!
Già sparisce, già non si vede più. Deh, faccia
il cielo ch'abbia prospero corso.

Dorabella:

Faccia che al campo giunga con fortunati
auspici.

Don Alfonso:

E a voi salvi gli amanti, a me gli amici.

Fiordiligi: (*waving to the ship*)

Bon voyage, my darling.

Dorabella: (*also waving*)

Bon voyage!

Fiordiligi:

Oh Heavens! How fast the boat sails!
It already disappeared. May Heaven grant it a
successful journey.

Dorabella:

May it arrive at the battle with signs of good
fortune.

Don Alfonso:

May your lovers and my friends be protected.

Andante**FIORDILIGI, DORABELLA,
DON ALFONSO****Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Don Alfonso:**

Soave sia il vento,
tranquilla sia l'onda,
ed ogni elemento
benigno risponda
ai nostri/vostri desir.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso:

May the wind be gentle,
may the sea be calm,
may all the elements
respond favorably
to our/your wishes.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella depart, leaving Don Alfonso alone.

Don Alfonso:

Non son cattivo comico! Va bene.
Al concertato loco i due campioni
di Ciprigna e di Marte mi staranno
attendendo: or senza indugio raggiungerli
conviene.
Quante smorfie, quante buffonerie!
Tanto meglio per me. Cadran più facilmente:
questa razza di gente è la più presta a
cangiarsi d'umore.
Oh, poverini! Per femmina giocare cento
zecchini?

Don Alfonso:

I'm not a bad actor! Well done.
The two champions of Venus and Mars are
waiting for me at the place we agreed on:
I must meet them without delay.
So many grimaces! So much play acting!
So much the better for me. They'll fall much
easier. This type of person is quick to change
their moods.
Poor men! Staking 100 sovereigns on
womanhood?

"Nel mare solca e nell'arena semina
e il vago vento spera in rete accogliere
chi fonda sue speranze in cor di femmina."

"He who ploughs the sea, sows in the desert,
and tries to catch the wind in a net, places his
hopes in a woman's heart."

A room in the sister's house. Despina, their maid, is alone, whipping chocolate.

Despina:

Che vita maledetta è il far la cameriera!
Dal mattino alla sera si fa, si suda, si lavora,
e poi di tanto che si fa nulla è per noi.
È mezza ora che sbatto; il cioccolato è fatto,
ed a me tocca restar ad odorarlo a secca
bocca?

Non è forse la mia come la vostra, o garbate
signore, che a voi dèssi l'essenza, e a me
l'odore?

Per Bacco, vo' assaggiarlo: cospettaccio!
Com'è buono!

Vien gente.
Oh ciel, son le padrone!

Despina:

What a terrible life a maid has!
From morning till night you sweat, you work,
and you do nothing for yourself.
I've been churning the chocolate for half an
hour, and when it's done, why can't I place it
in my dry mouth?

My ladies, my fate is not yours. Why should
you have the real thing, while all I get is the
aroma?

I'm going to taste it.
Oh, it's so good!

Someone is coming.
Heavens, it's my mistresses!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella enter in despair. Despina offers them chocolate.

Madame, ecco la vostra colazione.
Diamine, cosa fate?

Fiordiligi:

Ah!

Dorabella:

Ah!

Despina:

Che cosa è nato?

Fiordiligi:

Ov'è un acciaro?

Dorabella:

Un veleno dov'è?

Ladies, here's your breakfast.
Heavens, what happened?

Fiordiligi:

Ah!

Dorabella:

Ah!

Despina:

What has happened?

Fiordiligi:

Where is a dagger?

Dorabella:

Where is poison?

Despina:

Padrone, dico!

Dorabella:

Ah, scostati! Paventa il tristo effetto
d'un disperato affetto:
chiudi quelle finestre! Odio la luce,
odio l'aria che spiro, odio me stessa.
Chi schernisce il mio duol? Chi mi consola?
Deh, fuggi per pietà, lasciami sola!

Despina:

Ladies, speak!

Dorabella:

Out of my way! Beware of the unhappy
feelings of a despairing heart.
Close those windows! I hate the light,
I hate the air I breathe, I hate myself.
Who mocks my grief? Who can console me?
Go, for pity's sake, leave me alone!

Allegro agitato

Smanie implacabili che m'agitano,
entro quest'anima più non cessate
fin che l'angoscia mi fa morir.

Esempio misero d'amor funesto
darò all'Eumenidi, se viva resto,
col suono orribile de' miei sospir.

Despina:

Signora Dorabella, Signora Fiordiligi,
ditemi: che cos'è stato?

Dorabella:

Oh, terribil disgrazia!

Despina:

Sbrigatevi in buon'ora.

Fiordiligi:

Da Napoli partiti sono gli amanti nostri.

Despina:

Non c'è altro?
Ritomeran.

Dorabella:

Chi sa?

Despina:

Come, chi sa?
Dove son iti?

Implacable rage stirs within me.
It does not leave my heart in peace.
It is an unceasing anguish that will kill me.

If I remain alive, the horrible sound of my
sighs, will make me a miserable example of
tragic love for the Furies.

Despina:

Madame Dorabella, Madame Fiordiligi,
tell me what has happened?

Dorabella:

A terrible misfortune!

Despina:

Hurry, tell me right away.

Fiordiligi:

Our lovers have left Naples.

Despina: (laughing)

Is that all?
They'll come back.

Dorabella:

Who knows?

Despina:

What do you mean, who knows?
Where have they gone?

Dorabella:

Al campo di battaglia.

Despina:

Tanto meglio per loro: li vedrete tornar carichi d'alloro.

Fiordiligi:

Ma ponno anche perir.

Despina:

Allora, poi, tanto meglio per voi.

Fiordiligi:

Sciocca, che dici?

Despina:

La pura verità: due ne perdete, vi restan tutti gli altri.

Fiordiligi:

Ah, perdendo Guglielmo mi pare ch'io morrei!

Dorabella:

Ah, Ferrando perdendo mi par che viva a seppellirmi andrei!

Despina:

Brave, vi par, ma non è ver: ancora Non vi fu donna che d'amor sia morta. Per un uomo morir! Altri ve n'hanno che compensano il danno.

Dorabella:

E credi che potria altr'uom amar chi s'ebbe per amante...

Fiordiligi:

Guglielmo.

Dorabella:

Ferrando.

Despina:

Han gli altri ancora tutto quello ch'hanno essi.

Un uom adesso amate, un altro n'amerete: uno val l'altro, perché nessun val nulla.

Dorabella:

To battle.

Despina:

Good for them: they'll return decorated with laurels.

Fiordiligi:

But they might die.

Despina:

Then, all the better for you.

Fiordiligi:

You idiot. What are you saying?

Despina:

The honest truth. You may lose two, but all the rest are left.

Fiordiligi:

If I lost Guglielmo, I would die!

Dorabella:

If I lost Ferrando, I would want to be buried alive!

Despina:

That's what you think, but it's not the truth. No woman has ever died from love. To die for a man! There are plenty to take their place.

Dorabella:

Do you think I could love another when I've loved...

Fiordiligi:

Guglielmo.

Dorabella:

Ferrando.

Despina:

Other men have the same qualities that they have.

Now you love one man, but you'll love another. One is as good as another, but no one of them is worth anything.

Ma non parliam di ciò; sono ancor vivi
e vivi torneran; ma son lontani, e piuttosto
che in vani pianti perdere il tempo,
pensate a divertirvi.

Fiordiligi:
Divertirci?

Despina:
Sicuro! E quel ch'è meglio, far all'amor come
assassine, e come faranno al campo i vostri
cari amanti.

Dorabella:
Non offender così quell'alme belle,
di fedeltà, d'intatto amore esempi.

Despina:
Via, via! Passaro i tempi da spacciar queste
favole ai bambini.

But that's enough; they're still alive and
they'll come back alive, and while they're
away, rather than wasting time crying, think
about enjoying yourselves

Fiordiligi: (*indignantly*)
Enjoy ourselves?

Despina:
Of course! The best thing is to make love with
passion, just like your lovers will be doing in
the field.

Dorabella:
Don't insult those noble souls, those models
of fidelity and chaste love.

Despina:
The time is long past to believe in such
children's fairytales.

Allegretto
DESPINA



In uomini, in soldati
sperare fedeltà?

Non vi fate sentir, per carità!
Di pasta simile son tutti quanti:
le fronde mobili, l'aure incostanti
han più degli uomini stabilità.
Mentite lagrime, fallaci sguardi, voci
ingannevoli, vezzi bugiardi, son le primarie
lor qualità.

In noi non amano che il lor diletto;
poi ci dispregiano, neganci affetto,
né val da' barbari chieder pietà.

Paghiam, o femmine, d'ugual moneta
questa malefica razza indiscreta;
amiam per comodo, per vanità!
La ra la, la ra la, la ra la, la.

In men, and in soldiers,
are you hoping they'll be faithful?

For goodness sake, don't let anyone hear you!
They're all made of the same stuff. Swaying
branches and changing winds are steadier
than men.
Their main qualities are deceptive tears, false
looks, lying words and flattery, and bad
habits.

They love us for their own pleasure. Then
they cast us aside and deny us love. There's
no point in asking for mercy from barbarians.

Ladies, let's reimburse this evil and indiscreet
breed in kind.
Let's love for convenience, for vanity.
La ra la, la ra la, la ra la, la.

Despina departs.

Don Alfonso:

Che silenzio! Che aspetto di tristezza spirano queste stanze.

Poverette! Non han già tutto il torto: bisogna consolarle; infin che vanno i due creduli sposi, com'io loro commisi, a mascherarsi, pensiam cosa può farsi.

Temo un po' per Despina: quella furba potrebbe riconoscerli; potrebbe rovesciarmi le macchine. Vedremo.

Se mai farà bisogno, un regaletto a tempo: un zecchinetto per una cameriera è un gran scongiuro.

Ma, per esser sicuro, si potrà metterla in parte a parte del segreto.

Eccellente è il progetto.

La sua camera è questa.

Don Alfonso:

Not a sound here! What sadness pervades the air?

Poor girls! They're not totally at fault: they need to be comforted. Meanwhile I'll go and meet my two disguised friends. I'm optimistic that I will succeed.

I'm a little worried about Despina. She might recognize them and then ruin my plans. Let's see.

I know just how to handle a girl like Despina.

A little money

can always become a great inspiration.

But, to be sure, I could ask her to be my partner in this secret.

It's an excellent project.

Her room is here.

Don Alfonso knocks on the door.

Despinetta!

Despinetta!

Despina:

Chi batte?

Despina:

Who's knocking?

Don Alfonso:

Oh!

Don Alfonso:

Oh!

Despina:

Oh!

Despina:

Oh!

Don Alfonso:

Despina mia, di te bisogno avrei.

Don Alfonso:

Despina, I might need your help.

Despina:

Ed io niente di lei.

Despina:

And I wouldn't need yours.

Don Alfonso:

Ti vo' fare del ben.

Don Alfonso:

I'd like to do a favor for you.

Despina:

A una fanciulla un vecchio come lei non può far nulla.

Despina:

An old man like you can't do anything for a young girl.

Don Alfonso:

Parla piano, ed osserva.

Don Alfonso: *(displaying a purse with money)*

Keep your voice down and look.

Despina:

Me la dona?

Don Alfonso:

Sì, se meco sei buona.

Despina:

E che vorrebbe?

È l'oro il mio giulebbe.

Don Alfonso:

Ed oro avrai; ma ci vuol fedeltà.

Despina:

Non c'è altro? Son qua.

Don Alfonso:

Prendi ed ascolta. Sai che le tue padrone han perduti gli amanti.

Despina:

Lo so.

Don Alfonso:

Tutti i lor pianti, tutti i deliri loro anco tu sai.

Despina:

So tutto.

Don Alfonso:

Or ben, se mai per consolarle un poco e trar, come diciam, chiedo per chiedo, tu ritrovassi il modo da metter in lor grazia due soggetti di garbo che vorrieno provar. Già mi capisci?
C'è una mancia per te di venti scudi, se li fai riuscir.

Despina:

Non mi dispiace questa proposizione. Ma con quelle buffone. Basta, udite: Son giovani? Son belli? E, sopra tutto, hanno una buona borsa i vostri concorrenti?

Don Alfonso:

Han tutto quello che piacer può alle donne di giudizio.
Li vuoi veder?

Despina:

Is that for me?

Don Alfonso:

Yes, if you're nice to me.

Despina:

What do you want?

I've a weakness for gold.

Don Alfonso:

You can have gold, but it will require loyalty.

Despina:

Is that all? I'm ready.

Don Alfonso:

Listen. You know well that your mistresses have lost their lovers.

Despina:

I know all about it.

Don Alfonso:

You know that they're overcome by despair and are always crying.

Despina:

I know it well.

Don Alfonso:

Well, suppose in order to console them, or, as they say, make the best of a bad situation, you help me to persuade them to meet two nice gentlemen who have romantic intentions. Do you understand me?
There's a gift of twenty scudos if you can make it succeed.

Despina:

I'm not averse to this proposition. But those two foolish women. Enough, listen: Are they young? Handsome? And above all, do your prospects have plenty of money?

Don Alfonso:

They have everything women of taste could want.
Do you want to see them?

Despina:
E dove son?

Don Alfonso:
Son li.
Li posso far entrar?

Despina:
Direi di sì.

Despina:
Where are they?

Don Alfonso:
They're here.
Can I invite them in?

Despina:
Of course.

Don Alfonso opens the door. Ferrando and Guglielmo enter, disguised as Albanians.

Don Alfonso:
Alla bella Despinetta, vi presento, amici miei;
non dipende che da lei consolar il vostro cor.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Per la man, che lieto io bacio,
per quei rai di grazia pieni,
fa' che volga a me sereni
i begli occhi il mio tesor.

Despina:
Che sembianze! Che vestiti!
Che figure! Che mustacchi!
Io non so se son Valacchi o se Turchi son
costor.

Don Alfonso:
(Che ti par di quell'aspetto?)

Despina:
(Per parlarvi schietto schietto, hanno un
muso fuor dell'uso, vero antidoto d'amor.)

Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:
Or la cosa è apvien decisa;
se costei non li/ci ravvisa non c'è più nessun
timor.

Despina:
Che figure! Che mustacchi!
Io non so se son Valacchi o se Turchi son
costor.

Don Alfonso:
I present my friends to the lovely Despinetta.
Depend on her to console your hearts.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
I happily kiss this hand,
and I am deeply honored by your kindness
in helping me win
the goddess of my soul.

Despina: (*laughing to herself*)
What an appearance! What clothes!
What figures! What mustaches!
I can't tell if they're Walachians or Turks.

Don Alfonso: (*aside to Despina*)
(What do you think of them?)

Despina: (*aside to Don Alfonso*)
(To be honest, they look so odd, that they'll be
an antidote to love.)

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:
She is fooled by the disguises;
barring unforeseen surprises, there is nothing
more to fear.

Despina: (*laughing to herself*)
What figures! What mustaches!
I can't tell if they're Walachians or Turks.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella enter.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Eh, Despina! Olà, Despina!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Hey, Despina! Hello, Despina!

Despina:
Le padrone!

Despina:
My mistresses!

Don Alfonso:
Ecco l'istante!
Fa' con arte; io qui m'ascondo.

Don Alfonso:
This is the moment!
Use your skill while I hide myself here.

Don Alfonso hides.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Ragazzaccia tracotante!
Che fai lì con simil gente?
Falli uscire immantinente,
o ti fo pentir con lor.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Shameless girl!
What are you doing here with these people?
Tell them to leave at once,
or you'll all be sorry.

Despina, Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Ah, madama, perdonate!
Al bel piè languir mirate due meschin, di
vostro merto spasimanti adorator.

Despina, Ferrando and Guglielmo:
(all on bended knee)
Have mercy, ladies!
Two wretched fellows kneel at your lovely
feet, throbbing as they adore your beauty.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Giusti Numi! Cosa sento?
Dell'enorme tradimento chi fu mai l'indegno
autor?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Good Heavens! What am I hearing?
Who is responsible for this outrageous
treachery?

Despina, Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Deh, calmante quello sdegno!

Despina, Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Restrain your anger!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Ah, che più non ho ritegno!
Tutta piena ho l'alma in petto
si dispetto e di furor!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Nothing can restrain me!
My soul is infuriated by your haughtiness!

Despina e Don Alfonso:
Mi dà un poco di sospetto quella rabbia e
quel furor!

Despina and Don Alfonso: (to each other)
I'm a little suspicious about that anger and
fury!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Qual diletto è a questo petto quella rabbia e
quel furor!

Ferrando and Guglielmo: (to themselves)
I'm sure they are sincere in their anger and
fury!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Ah, perdon, mio bel diletto!
Innocente è questo cor.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Forgive my transgression!
My heart is innocent.

Don Alfonso:

Che sussurro! Che strepito!
 Che scompiglio è mai questo! Siete pazze,
 Care le mie ragazze?
 Volete sollevare il vicinato?
 Cos' avete? Ch'è nato?

Dorabella:

Oh, ciel! Mirate: uomini in casa nostra!

Don Alfonso:

Che male c'è?

Fiordiligi:

Che male? In questo giorno!
 Dopo il caso funesto!

Don Alfonso:

Stelle! Sogno o son desto?
 Amici miei, miei dolcissimi amici!
 Voi qui? Come? Perché? Quando? In qual
 modo?
 Numi! Quanto ne godo!

(Secondatemi.)

Ferrando:

Amico Don Alfonso!

Guglielmo:

Amico caro!

Don Alfonso:

Oh la bella improvvisata!

Despina:

Li conoscete voi?

Don Alfonso:

Se li conosco! Questi sono i più dolci amici
 ch'io mai abbia in questo mondo, e i vostri
 ancor saranno.

Fiordiligi:

E in casa mia che fanno?

Guglielmo:

Ai vostri piedi due rei, due delinquenti, ecco
 madama!
 Amor...

Don Alfonso:

What murmuring! What a commotion!
 What confusion there is here!
 Girls, have you lost your minds?
 Are you trying to rouse the whole neighbor-
 hood? What has happened?

Dorabella: (furiously)

Heavens! Look at the men in our house!

Don Alfonso:

What's wrong with that?

Fiordiligi:

What's wrong? On this day!
 After our terrible misfortune!

Don Alfonso:

Good Heavens! Am I dreaming?
 My friends, my dearest friends!
 You're here? How? Why? When?

Gods! What a pleasure!

(aside)

(Play along.)

Ferrando:

My friend Don Alfonso!

Guglielmo:

My dear friend!

Don Alfonso:

What a happy coincidence!

Despina: (to Don Alfonso)

Do you know them?

Don Alfonso:

I know them! These are the dearest friends I
 have in this world, and they will be yours as
 well.

Fiordiligi:

What are they doing in my house?

Guglielmo:

Here Madame, two rogues, two delinquents,
 are at your feet!

Love...

Dorabella:
Numi, che sento?

Ferrando:
Amor, il Nume sì possente per voi qui ci conduce.

Guglielmo:
Vista appena la luce di vostre fulgidissime pupille...

Ferrando:
Che alle vive faville...

Guglielmo:
Farfallette amorose e agonizzanti...

Ferrando:
Vi voliamo davanti...

Guglielmo:
Ed ai lati, ed a retro...

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
per implorar pietade in flebil metro.

Fiordiligi:
Stelle! Che ardir!

Dorabella:
Sorella, che facciamo?

Fiordiligi:
Temerari, sortite, fuori di questo loco, e non profani l'alito infausto degli infami detti nostro cor, nostro orecchio e nostri affetti!

Invan per voi, per gli altri invan si cerca le nostr'alme sedur: l'intatta fede che per noi già si diede ai cari amanti, saprem loro serbar infino a morte, a dispetto del mondo e della sorte.

Dorabella:
Gods, what am I hearing?

Ferrando:
The powerful god of love drew us here.

Guglielmo:
The moment we saw the light from your eyes...

Ferrando:
We were attracted by their sparkling...

Guglielmo:
Like loving butterflies in agony...

Ferrando:
We flew before you...

Guglielmo:
Beside you, and behind you...

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
to beg for mercy in plaintive verse.

Fiordiligi:
Heavens! What boldness!

Dorabella:
Sister, what shall we do?

Fiordiligi:
Get out of this house, you reckless men, and do not profane our hearts, our ears, or our affections with your scandalous words!

It is in vain for you or anyone else to try to lure us or seduce us: we have given our word to the dear men we love, and we shall keep that faith until death, defying the world and destiny.

Andante maestoso
FIORDILIGI



Come scoglio immoto resta
contro i venti e la tempesta,
così ognor quest'alma è forte
nella fede e nell'amor.

Con noi nacque quella faccia
che ci piace, e ci consola,
e potrà la morte sola
far che cangi affetto il cor.

Rispettate, anime ingrante,
quest'esempio di costanza;
e una barbara speranza
non vi renda audaci ancor!

Like a rock standing firm
against wind and storm,
in faithfulness and love;
that is how strong my soul will always be.

Within us burns the flame, that delights and
comforts us,
and only death can change our heart's
affections.

Worthless men, show respect
for our example of constancy;
and let no savage hope
embolden you!

The sisters attempt to leave.

Ferrando:
Ah, non partite!

Guglielmo:
Ah, barbare, restate!

(Che vi pare?)

Don Alfonso:
Aspettate!

Per carità, ragazze, non mi fate più far trista
figura.

Dorabella:
E che pretendereste?

Don Alfonso:
Eh, nulla, ma mi pare, che un pochin di
dolcezza. Alfin son galantuomini, e sono
amici miei.

Fiordiligi:
Come! E udire dovrei?

Guglielmo:
Le nostre pene, e sentime pietà!
La celeste beltà degli occhi vostri la piaga
aprì nei nostri,
cui rimediar può solo il balsamo d'amore.
Un solo istante il core aprite, o belle,
a sue dolci facelle, o a voi davanti
spirar vedrete i più fedeli amanti.

Ferrando: (to *Fiordiligi*)
Please don't leave!

Guglielmo: (to *Dorabella*)
Stay, you're so cruel!

(to *Don Alfonso*)
(See, didn't I tell you?)

Don Alfonso: (aside to *Guglielmo*)
Wait!

(to *Fiordiligi and Dorabella*)
I implore you ladies, don't make me look like
such a fool.

Dorabella: (furiously)
What do you want?

Don Alfonso:
Nothing, but I think you could show a little
kindness. After all, they're gentlemen,
and they're my friends.

Fiordiligi:
What! Do I have to listen to this?

Guglielmo:
Feel pity for our pain!
The heavenly beauty of your eyes wounded
our hearts.
Only love can soothe the wound.
Open your hearts for just one moment,
and you will see the most faithful lovers die
before you.

Andantino
GUGLIELMO



Non siate ritrosi, occhietti vezzosi, due lampi amorosi vibrare un po' qua,

Non siate ritrosi,
occhietti vezzosi;
due lampi amorosi
vibrate un po' qua.

Don't be shy,
pretty eyes;
shine a loving light
over here.

Felici rendeteci,
amate con noi;
e noi felicissime
faremo anche voi.

Make us happy
and love us,
and in return,
we'll make you very happy.

Guardate, toccate,
il tutto osservate:
siam forti e ben fatti,
e come ognun vede,
sia merto, sia caso,
Abbiamo bel piede,
bell'occhio, bel naso;
guardate, bel piede, osservate, bell'occhio,
toccate, bel naso, il tutto osservate.

Look, touch,
observe everything:
we're strong and well-built,
as anyone can see,
whether by chance or we deserve it.
We have nice feet,
pretty eyes, pretty noses;
look, nice feet, nice eyes,
touch, a pretty nose, observe it all.

E questi mustacchi
chiamare si possono
trionfi degli uomini,
pennacchi d'amor.

And these moustaches
you could call
the triumphs of men,
the plumes of love.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella depart, raging furiously.

Don Alfonso:
E voi ridete?

Don Alfonso:
Are you laughing?

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Certo, ridiamo.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Of course we are.

Don Alfonso:
Ma cosa avete?

Don Alfonso:
What is the reason?

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Già lo sappiamo.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
We now have won.

Don Alfonso:
Ridete piano!

Don Alfonso:
Keep quiet!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Parlate invano.

Don Alfonso:

Se vi sentissero,
se vi scoprissero,
si guasterebbe
tutto l'affar.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Ah, che dal ridere
l'alma dividere,
ah, che le viscere
sento scoppiar!

Don Alfonso:

(Si può sapere un poco la cagion di quel
riso?)

Guglielmo:

Oh cospettaccio!
Non vi pare che abbiam giusta ragione,
il mio caro padrone?

Ferrando:

Quanto pagar volete, e a monte è la
scommessa?

Guglielmo:

Pagate la metà.

Ferrando:

Pagate solo ventiquattro zecchini.

Don Alfonso:

Poveri innocentini!
Venite qua, vi voglio porre il ditino in bocca!

Guglielmo:

E avete ancora coraggio di fiatar?

Don Alfonso:

Avanti sera ci parlerem.

Ferrando:

Quando volete.

Don Alfonso:

Intanto, silenzio e ubbidienza fino a doman
mattina.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

You can't deny it.

Don Alfonso:

If they heard you
it would ruin everything.
If you would only be patient
for one more day.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

We're bursting with laughter.
My soul is breaking up.
Ah, what feelings.
I feel like exploding!

Don Alfonso: (to himself)

(If I could only know the reason why he's
laughing?)

Guglielmo:

For goodness sake!
Don't we have good reason to laugh, my dear
master?

Ferrando:

How much do you want to pay, and is the bet
still on?

Guglielmo:

Pay half.

Ferrando:

Pay just twenty-four sovereigns.

Don Alfonso:

Poor innocents!
Come here, I want you to suck your thumbs!

Guglielmo:

And you still dare to have courage to breathe?

Don Alfonso:

We'll discuss it before tonight.

Ferrando:

Whenever you wish.

Don Alfonso:

Meanwhile, stay quiet and obedient until
tomorrow morning.

Guglielmo:
Siam soldati, e amiam la disciplina.

Guglielmo:
We're soldiers, and we like discipline.

Don Alfonso:
Orbene, andate un poco ad attendermi
entrambi in giardinetto, colà vi manderò gli
ordini miei.

Don Alfonso:
Better yet, go and wait for me in the garden.
I'll send my orders to you there.

Guglielmo:
Ed oggi non si mangia?

Guglielmo:
And won't we eat today?

Ferrando:
Cosa serve?
A battaglia finita fia la cena per noi più
saporita.

Ferrando:
What for?
When the battle is over, dinner will taste all
the better.

Andante cantabile

FERRANDO



Ferrando:
Un'aura amorosa
del nostro tesoro
un dolce ristoro
al cor porgerà;
al cor che, nudrito
da speme, da amore,
di un'esca migliore
bisogno non ha.

Ferrando:
A breath of love
from our treasures,
will bring sweet comfort
to our hearts;
a heart nourished
on the hope of love,
needs nothing more
to entice it.

Ferrando and Guglielmo depart.

Don Alfonso is alone, later joined by Despina.

Don Alfonso:
Oh, la faria da ridere: sì poche
son le donne costanti, in questo mondo,
e qui ve ne son due! Non sarà nulla.

Don Alfonso:
It's ridiculous! I've never found a faithful
woman in this entire world, and now I find
two! It's impossible.

Despina enters.

Vieni, vieni, fanciulla, e dimmi un poco
Dove sono e che fan le tue padrone.

Come here, here girl, and tell me where your
two mistresses are.

Despina:

Le povere buffone atanno nel giardinetto
a lagnarsi coll'aria e colle mosche d'aver
perso gli amanti.

Don Alfonso:

E come credi che l'affar finirà?
Vogliam sperare che faranno giudizio?

Despina:

Io lo farei; e dove piangon esse io riderei.
Disperarsi, strozzarsi perchè parte un
amante?
Guardate che pazzia! Se ne pigliano due,
s'uno va via.

Don Alfonso:

Brava, questa è prudenza!

(Bisogna impuntigliarla.)

Despina:

E legge di natura, e non prudenza sola. Amor
cos'è?
Piacere, comodo, gusto, gioia, divertimento,
passatempo, allegria: non è più amore se
incomodo diventa, se invece di piacere nuoce e
tormenta.

Don Alfonso:

Ma intanto quelle pazze.

Despina:

Quelle pazze?
Faranno a modo nostro. È buon che sappiano
d'essere amate da color.

Don Alfonso:

Lo sanno.

Despina:

Dunque riemeranno.
Diglielo, si vuol dire, e lascia fare al diavolo.

Don Alfonso:

E come far vuoi perchè ritornino or che
partiti sono, e che li sentano e tentare si
lascino queste due bestioline?

Despina:

A me lasciate. La briglia di condur tutta la
macchina.

Despina:

Those simpleminded creatures are in the little
garden, telling the birds and the bees about
the loss of their lovers.

Don Alfonso:

How do you think this will end?
We have to be wise to achieve our objective?

Despina:

Don't worry. The more they lament, the more
I laugh. Why all this despair and raving for a
lover who has gone?
It's downright foolish! For each man who is
gone, one can catch two.

Don Alfonso:

Splendid, that is intelligence!
(to himself)
(A little flattery never hurts.)

Despina:

It doesn't take much wisdom when it's female
intuition. What is love?
It's fun, pleasant, joy, diversion, pastime, and
laughter: once it gets serious, it's no longer
love, because then it becomes a burden and
pain.

Don Alfonso:

But let's think about our ladies.

Despina:

Are they insane?
They'll do what we tell them. It's good they
realize how much they mean to our friends.

Don Alfonso:

They do.

Despina:

Then let's prepare the groundwork.
Present temptation, and leave the rest to me.

Don Alfonso:

And tell me, now that your mistresses are so
angry, how will you manage to calm them
sufficiently enough to make them reconsider?

Despina:

Leave it to me. In such matters there is no one
who can equal me.

Quando Despina macchina una cosa
non può mancar d'effetto: ho già menati
mill' uomini pel naso, saprò menar due
femmine.

Son ricchi i due monsù mustacchi?

Don Alfonso:

Son ricchissimi.

Despina:

Dove son?

Don Alfonso:

Sulla strada attendendo mi stanno.

Despina:

Ite e sul fatto! Per la picciola porta a me
riconduceteli; v'aspetto nella camera mia.
Purché tutto facciate quel ch'io v'ordinerò,
pria di domani i vostri amici canteran
vittoria; ed essi avranno il gusto, ed io la
gloria.

When Despina manages a romance, she does
not miss a thing. I have succeeded in fooling a
thousand men, so I can fool a foolish woman.

Did you say your friends are wealthy?

Don Alfonso:

Lots of money.

Despina:

Where are they?

Don Alfonso:

They're waiting to hear from me.

Despina:

Splendid! Bring them to me through the small
gate. I'll wait in my room.
But only do what I tell you.
Then, by tomorrow, your two friends will be
tasting victory; and you will win your wager,
and I your money.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella sit in the garden.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Ah, che tutta in un momento
si cangiò la sorte mia,
Ah, che un mar pien di tormento
è la vita ormai per me!

Finché meco il caro bene
mi lasciar le ingrate stelle,
non sapea cos' eran pene,
non sapea languir cos' è.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

In just a moment,
my fate has changed.
What a sea of torment
my life has become!

When my beloved was with me
the cruel stars stayed way;
I didn't know what pain was,
and I didn't know what suffering was.

Don Alfonso arrives with Ferrando and Guglielmo.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Si mora, si, si mora onde appagar le ingrate.

Don Alfonso:

C'è una speranza ancora;
Non fate, o Dei, non fate!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Let's satisfy these cruel women by dying.

Don Alfonso:

There's still hope yet.
Don't do it, oh Gods, don't do it!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Stelle, che grida orribili!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Lasciatemi!

Don Alfonso:
Aspettate!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Heavens, what awful cries!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Leave us!

Don Alfonso:
Wait!

Ferrando and Guglielmo carry a jug. They are followed by Don Alfonso.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
L'arsenico mi liberi di tanta crudeltà!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Arsenic will free me from this cruelty!

They drink and spin around.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Stelle, un velen fu quello?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Heavens, was that poison?

Don Alfonso:
Veleno buono e bello, che ad essi in pochi
istanti la vita toglierà.

Don Alfonso:
Good and beautiful poison that will kill them
instantly.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Il tragico spettacolo gelare il cor mi fa!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
This tragic display turns my heart to ice!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Barbare, avvicinatevi; d'un disperato affetto
Mirate il triste effetto e abbiate almen pietà.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
Cruel ones, come closer; see the terrible effect
of despairing love and have some pity.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Il tragico spettacolo gelare il cor mi fa!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
This tragic display turns my heart to ice!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Ah, che del sole il raggio fosco per me
diventa!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
The day has turned dark and become tragic
for me!

Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Tremo: le fibre e l'anima
par che mancar si senta,
né può la lingua o il labbro
accenti articular!

Don Alfonso, Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
I'm trembling: I feel
my fiber and soul weakening.
I can't move my tongue, or my lips, or speak
a word!

Ferrando and Guglielmo fall to the ground.

Don Alfonso:
Giacché a morir vicini sono quei meschinelli,
pietade almeno a quelli cercate di mostrar.

Don Alfonso: (to the sisters)
Since these poor wretches are close to death,
you could at least try to show them some pity.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Gente, accorrete, gente!
Nessuno, oddio, ci sente!
Despina!

Despina:

Chi mi chiama?

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Despina!

Despina:

Cosa vedo? Morti i meschini io credo,
o prossimi a spirar!

Don Alfonso:

Ah, che purtroppo è vero!
Furenti, disperati, si sono avvelenati.
Oh, amore singolar!

Despina:

Abbandonar i miseri saria per voi vergogna:
soccorrerli bisogna.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Don Alfonso:

Cosa possiam mai far?

Despina:

Di vita ancor dan segno; colle pietose mani
fate un po' lor sostegno.

E voi con me correte: un medico, un antidoto.
Vogliamo a ricercar.

Despina and Don Alfonso depart.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Dei, che cimento è questo!
Evento più funesto non si potea trovar.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

(Più bella commediola non si potea trovar!)

Ah!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Sospiran gli infelici.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Help, come quickly!
No one can hear us!
Despina!

Despina: *(from inside)*

Who's calling?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Despina!

Despina: *(entering)*

What's this? I think the poor chaps are dead,
or close to death!

Don Alfonso:

Unfortunately, it's true!
In their despair, they took poison.
What extraordinary love!

Despina:

It would be shameful to abandon them.
We have to help them.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso:

What can we do?

Despina:

There are still signs of life; try to hold them
with your hands to sustain them.

(to Don Alfonso)

Come with me to find a doctor and an
antidote. We'll seek help.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

This is a terrible trial!
One could not find a more horrible event.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

(You couldn't imagine anything more comic!)

(in a loud voice)

Ah!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

The poor men are sighing.

Fiordiligi:

Che facciamo?

Dorabella:

Tu che dici?

Fiordiligi:

In momenti sì dolenti, chi potriali abbandonar?

Dorabella:

Che figure interessanti!

Fiordiligi:

Possiam farci un poco avanti.

Dorabella:

Ha freddissima la testa.

Fiordiligi:

Fredda fredda è ancora questa.

Dorabella:

Ed il polso?

Fiordiligi:

Io non gliel sento.

Dorabella:

Questo batte lento lento.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Ah, se tarda ancor l'aita, speme più non v'è di vita!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

(Più domestiche e trattabili sono entrambe diventate; sta' a veder che lor pietade va in amore a terminar.)

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Poverini! La lor morte mi farebbe lagrimar.

Fiordiligi:

What shall we do?

Dorabella:

What do you suggest?

Fiordiligi:

Who could abandon them at a time like this?

Dorabella:

Such interesting faces!

Fiordiligi:

Perhaps we could get a little closer to them.

Dorabella:

His head is very cold.

Fiordiligi:

And also this one.

Dorabella:

Is there a pulse?

Fiordiligi:

I can't feel it.

Dorabella:

This pulse is very slow.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

If help doesn't come soon, they'll die!

Ferrando and Guglielmo: (to themselves)

(They've become much more tame and amenable. Look at their compassion; they'll end up loving us.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Poor men! I'd weep if they died.

*Despina, dressed as a doctor, enters with Don Alfonso.***Don Alfonso:**

Eccovi il medico, Signore belle!

Don Alfonso:

Here is the doctor, lovely ladies!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
(Despina in maschera: che trista pelle!)

Despina:
Salvete, amabiles bonae puellae!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Parla un linguaggio che non sappiamo.

Despina:
Come comandano dunque parliamo:
so il greco e l'arabo,
so il turco e il vandalo;
lo svevo e il tartaro.
So ancor parlar.

Don Alfonso:
Tanti linguaggi per sè conservi.
Quei miserabili per ora osservi;
preso hanno il tossico,
che si può far?

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Signor dottore, che si può far?

Despina:
Saper bisognami pria la cagione,
e quindi l'indole della pozione:
se calda o frigida, se poca o molta,
se in una volta beberla o in più.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Don Alfonso:
Preso han l'arsenico, Signor dottore;
qui dentro il beberro. La causa è amore,
ed in un sorso se 'l mandar giù.

Despina:
Non vi affannate, non vi turbate:
ecco una prova di mia virtù.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Egli ha di un ferro la man fornita.

Ferrando and Guglielmo: *(to themselves)*
(Despina in disguise!)

Despina:
Salvete, amabiles bonae puellae!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
We don't know what language he speaks.

Despina:
Whichever one you want:
I know Greek and Arabic,
I know Turkish and Vandalic;
Swabian and Tartar.
I can speak them all.

Don Alfonso:
Keep all your languages to yourself.
Look at these poor chaps
who have taken poison.
What can be done?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Doctor, what can be done?

Despina:
First I must know the reason, then the type of
poison: whether warm or cold, whether a little
or a lot, whether swallowed in one or many
gulps.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso:
They've taken arsenic, doctor;
the reason was love, and they took it in one
gulp.

Despina:
Don't worry, don't be upset:
here is a proof of my power.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
He has picked up an iron rod

Despina gently moves her magnet over the bodies of Ferrando and Guglielmo.

Despina:
Questo è quel pezzo di calamita,
pietra mesmerica, ch'ebbe l'origine
nell'Alemagna, che poi si celebre là in
Francia fu.

Despina:
This is the magnet, from the Mesmeric stone,
first discovered in Germany, then made
famous in France.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Don Alfonso:

Come si muovono, torcono, scuotono,
in terra il cranio presto percuotono.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Don Alfonso:

They're moving, turning, twisting their heads.

Despina:

Ah, lor la fronte tenete su.

Despina:

Hold their heads up.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Eccoci pronte!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

We're ready!

Despina:

Tenete forte!
Corraggio; or liberi siete da morte.

Despina:

Be strong!
Be brave; now you're freed from death.

Despina places her hands on their foreheads.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Attorno guardano, forze riprendono.
Ah, questo medico vale un Perù!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

They're looking around, regaining strength.
This doctor's worth all the gold in Peru!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Dove son? Che loco è questo?
Chi è colui? Color chi sono?
Son di Giove innanzi al trono?

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Where am I? Where is this place?
Who are these people?
Am I at the throne of Jupiter?

Ferrando to Fiordiligi, and Guglielmo to Dorabella.

Sei tu Palla o Citerea?
No, tu sei l'alma mia Dea!
Ti ravviso al dolce viso
e alla man ch'or ben conosco
e che sola è il mio tesor.

Are you Athena or Venus?
No, you are the goddess of my soul!
I recognize your sweet face,
and that hand that I know so well
is my only treasure.

The lovers embrace the girls tenderly and kiss their hands.

Despina e Don Alfonso:

Sono effetti ancor del toscò: non abbiate
alcun timor.

Despina and Don Alfonso:

They're still affected by the poison: but don't
be afraid.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Sarà ver, ma tante smorfie fanno torto al
nostro onor.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Perhaps, but such behavior puts our honor at
risk.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

(Dalla voglia ch'ho di ridere il polmon mi
scoppia or or.)

Ferrando and Guglielmo: (*to themselves*)
(My lungs are about to burst from laughter.)

Ferrando to Fiordiligi, and Guglielmo to Dorabella.

Per pietà. bell'idol mio.

For pity's sake, my beloved.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Più resister non poss'io.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

I can no longer resist.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Volgi a me le luci liete!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Turn your eyes to me!

Despina e Don Alfonso:

In poch'ore, lo vedrete,
per virtù del magnetismo.
Finirà quel parossismo,
torneranno al primo umor.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Dammi un bacio, o mio tesoro;
un sol bacio, o qui mi moro.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Stelle, un bacio?

Despina:

Secondate per effetto di bontate.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Ah, che troppo si richiede
da una fida onesta amante!
Oltraggiata è la mia fede,
oltraggiato è questo cor!

Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:

Un quadretto più giocondo
non si vide in tutto il mondo;
quel che più mi fa da ridere
e quell'ira e quel furor.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Disperati, atossicati, ite al diavol quanti
siete; tardi inver vi pentirete se più cresce il
mio furor!

Despina e Don Alfonso:

Un quadretto più giocondo
non si vide in tutto il mondo.
quel che più mi fa da ridere
e quell'ira e quel furor.

Ch'io ben so che tanto foco
cangerassi in quel d'amor.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Un quadretto più giocondo
non si vide in tutto il mondo.
Ma non so se finta o vera
sian quell'ira e quel furor.
Né vorrei che tanto foco
terminasse in quel d'amor.

Despina and Don Alfonso:

In a short while, you'll see
the effect of the magnet.
The convulsions will end,
and they'll return to themselves.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Give me a kiss, my beloved.
One kiss, or I'll die.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Heavens, a kiss?

Despina:

Do what they want, to be kind.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Oh, you're asking too much of a faithful
honest lover!
This is an outrage to my fidelity and to my
heart!

Despina, Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:

There's never been a more comic picture in
the entire world;
what makes me laugh most is their anger and
fury.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Go to the devil, you desperate and wicked
madmen; you'll be sorry if my rage increases.

Despina and Don Alfonso:

There's never been a more comic picture in
the entire world;
what makes me laugh most is their anger and
fury.

I'm convinced that sooner or later their
disdain will turn to love.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

There's never been a more comic picture in
the entire world.
But I have never witnessed
such ire and furor.
I wish that sooner or later
this disdain will turn to love.

Act II - Scene I

The bedroom of Fiordiligi and Dorabella. Despina is present.

Despina:

Andate là, che siete due bizzarre ragazze!

Despina:

Honestly, you are two strange girls!

Fiordiligi:Oh, cospettaccio!
Cosa pretenderesti?**Fiordiligi:**You little devil!
What would you have us do?**Despina:**

Per me nulla.

Despina:

For me, nothing.

Fiordiligi:

Per chi dunque?

Fiordiligi:

Then for whom?

Despina:

Per voi.

Despina:

For yourselves.

Dorabella:

Per noi?

Dorabella:

For ourselves?

Despina:

Per voi: siete voi donne, o no?

Despina:

For you. Are you women or aren't you?

Fiordiligi:

E per questo?

Fiordiligi:

What about it?

Despina:

E per questo dovete far da donne.

Despina:

You should act like women.

Dorabella:

Cioè?

Dorabella:

Meaning what?

Despina:Trattar l'amore en bagatelle; le occasioni
belle non negliger giammai; cangiar a tempo,
a tempo esser costanti;
Coquettizzar con grazia; prevenir la
disgrazia, sì comune a chi si fida in uomo;
mangiar il fico e non gittare il pomo.**Despina:**Treat love lightly. Never let opportunities slip
away. Choose the right time to change or to
remain constant.
Be coquettish gracefully, and escape the fate
of those women who trust men. Have your
cake and eat it too.**Fiordiligi:**(Che diavolo!)
Tai cose falle tu, se n'hai voglia.**Fiordiligi:**(What a devil!)
You do things like that, if you want to.**Despina:**Io già le faccio.
Ma vorrei che anche voi per gloria del bel
sesso, faceste un po' lo stesso.**Despina:**I've always done them.
But I wish that for the sake of all womanhood,
you would both follow my example.

Per esempio, i vostri Ganimedi son andati alla guerra; infin che tornano fate alla militare: reclutate.

Dorabella:

Il cielo ce ne guardi!

Despina:

Eh! Che noi siamo in terra, e non in cielo!
Fidatevi al mio zelo: già che questi forastieri v'adorano, lasciatevi adorar. Son ricchi, belli, nobili, generosi, come fede fece a voi Don Alfonso; avean coraggio di morire per voi; questi son meriti che sprezzar non si denno da giovani qual voi belle e galanti, che pon star senza amor, non senza amanti.
(Par che ci trovín gusto!)

Fiordiligi:

Per Bacco, ci faresti far delle belle cose!
Credi tu che vogliamo favola diventar degli oziosi?
Ai nostri cari sposi credi tu che vogliam dar tal tormento?

Despina:

E chi dice che abbiate a far loro alcun torto?

Dorabella:

Non ti pare che sia torto bastante se noto si facesse che trattiamo costor?

Despina:

Anche per questo c'è un mezzo sicurissimo: io voglio sparger fama che vengono da me.

Dorabella:

Chi vuoi che il creda?

Despina:

Oh bella! Non ha forse merto una cameriera d'aver due cicisbei? Di me fidatevi.

Fiordiligi:

No, no; son troppo audaci, questi tuoi forastieri. non ebber la baldanza fin di chieder dei baci?

Despina:

(Che disgrazia!)

For example: now that your two romeos have gone to war, do as they did; until they return, seek your own adventures, and do it quickly.

Dorabella:

May heaven protect me!

Despina:

Heh! Be glad we're not yet in Heaven!
Have faith in my zeal: you've met two nice young suitors. Let them adore you. As Don Alfonso told you, they're wealthy, handsome, generous, and well-bred. They had the courage to die for your sake, and that's proof that they mean what they're saying. You are lovable women who deserve to be loved and adored.
(It seems that I'm making progress!)

Fiordiligi:

I'm inclined to think you want to lead us into mischief! Are you really proposing that we become a topic for gossip?
And as for our dear fiancés, do you think we want to inflict such torture on them?

Despina:

And who says you're being bad?

Dorabella:

In my opinion, it would be bad enough if anybody knew that we met another man?

Despina:

For that, there's a solution. I'll simply spread a rumor that they came to visit me.

Dorabella:

Who would believe it?

Despina:

Why not? Why couldn't a maid have two lovers? Have faith in me!

Fiordiligi:

No, no! It's too audacious. Those two men are so reckless. Didn't they even dare to beg us for kisses.

Despina:

(How disgraceful!)

Io posso assicurarvi che le cose che han fatto furo effetti del tossico che han preso: convulsioni, deliri, follie, vaneggiamenti. Ma or vedrete come son discreti, manierosi, modesti e mansueti. Lasciateli venir.

Dorabella:
E poi?

Despina:
E poi: caspita, fate voi!
(L'ho detto che cadrebbero.)

Fiordiligi:
Cosa dobbiamo far?

Despina:
Quel che volete: siete d'ossa e di carne, o cosa siete?

Andante
DESPINA



Una donna a quindici anni
dèe saper ogni gran moda,
dove il diavolo ha la coda,
cosa è bene e mal cos'è.

Dèe saper le maliziette
che innamorano gli amanti,
finger riso, finger pianti,
inventar i bei perché.

Dèe in un momento
dar retta a cento;
colle pupille parlar con mille;
dar speme a tutti, sien belli o brutti;
saper nascondersi
senza confondersi;
senza arrossire saper mentire;
e, qual regina dall'alto soglio,
col "posso e voglio"
farsi ubbidir.

(Par ch'abbian gusto di tal dottrina.
Viva Despina che sa servir!)

I give you my assurance that your suitors' behavior was due to the influence of poison; it caused all their tantrums, raving, fits and antics. Get to know them as they really are. They're modest, decent, polished and bashful. You'll see it yourselves.

Dorabella:
And then?

Despina:
And then, that's your business!
(I knew that I could handle them.)

Fiordiligi:
What do you suggest we do?

Despina:
Follow your heart. Are you made of flesh and blood? Or what are you?

By the time a girl is fifteen,
she should know it all:
where the devil has his tail,
what's right, and what's wrong.

She must know all the tricks
that bring lovers together:
pretend to laugh, pretend to cry,
and think up excuses.

She must pay attention
to a hundred men at the same time;
speak to a thousand with her eyes;
offer hope to all, good-looking or not;
know how to be deceptive
without becoming confused;
and know how to lie without blushing;
and make men obey her like a queen,
saying "I might" and "I'd like to"
to make herself obliging.

(I think they like the advice.
Hurrah for Despina, who knows how to serve!)

Despina departs.

Fiordiligi:

Sorella, cosa dici?

Dorabella:

Io son stordita dallo spirito infernal di tal ragazza.

Fiordiligi:

Ma credimi, è una pazza. Ti par che siamo in caso di seguir suoi consigli?

Dorabella:

Oh, certo, se tu pigli pel rovescio il negozio.

Fiordiligi:

Anzi, io lo piglio per il suo verso dritto: non credi tu delitto, per due giovani omai promesse spose, il far di queste cose?

Dorabella:

Ella non dice che facciamo alcun mal.

Fiordiligi:

È mal che basta il far parlar di noi.

Dorabella:

Quando si dice che vengon per Despina!

Fiordiligi:

Oh, tu sei troppo larga di coscienza!
E che diran gli sposi nostri?

Dorabella:

Nulla: o non sapran l'affare, ed è tutto finito; o sapran qualche cosa, e allor diremo che vennero per lei.

Fiordiligi:

Ma i nostri cori?

Dorabella:

Restano quel che sono: per divertirsi un poco, e non morire dalla malinconia non si manca di fè, sorella mia.

Fiordiligi:

Questo è ver.

Fiordiligi:

What do you say, sister?

Dorabella:

I'm shocked by the devilish spirit of that girl.

Fiordiligi:

Believe me, she's crazy. Do you think we should follow her advice?

Dorabella:

Of course, if you turn it upside down.

Fiordiligi:

On the contrary, I'm taking it the proper way. Don't you think it's a crime for two engaged young women to do these things?

Dorabella:

She didn't say we'd be doing anything wrong.

Fiordiligi:

It's wrong to get ourselves talked about.

Dorabella:

If we say they've come for Despina!

Fiordiligi:

You're too broad-minded.
And what will our fiancés say?

Dorabella:

Nothing. Either they won't find out, or they'll find out something else, and then we'll say that the men came for Despina.

Fiordiligi:

But what about our feelings?

Dorabella:

They'll stay as they are. A little entertainment so as not to die of melancholy is not a loss of faith.

Fiordiligi:

That's true.

Dorabella:

Dunque?

Fiordiligi:

Dunque, fa un po' tu: ma non voglio aver la colpa se poi nasce un imbroglio.

Dorabella:

Che imbroglio nascer deve con tanta precauzion? Per altro ascolta: per intenderci bene, qual vuoi sceglier per te de' due Narcisi?

Fiordiligi:

Decidi tu, sorella.

Dorabella:

Io già decisi.

Andante**DORABELLA**

Prenderò quel brunet - tino, che più le pi - do mi par,

Prenderò quel brunettino,
che più lepido mi par.

Fiordiligi:Ed intanto io col biondino.
Vo' un po' ridere e burlar.**Dorabella:**

Scherzosetta ai dolci detti io di quel risponderò.

Fiordiligi:

Sospirando i sospiretti io dell'altro imiterò.

Dorabella:

Mi dirà: "Ben mio, mi moro."

Fiordiligi:

Mi dirà: "Mio bel tesoro."

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:Ed intanto che diletto,
che spassetto io proverò!**Dorabella:**

So?

Fiordiligi:

Therefore, go ahead, but I don't want to be blamed if there's any trouble.

Dorabella:

What trouble could there be if we're very careful? Just so that everything is clear beforehand, which one of the two handsome young men would you choose?

Fiordiligi:

You decide, sister.

Dorabella:

I already have.

I'll take the dark one,
who seems more witty.

Fiordiligi:And meanwhile, I'll take the fair one.
I want to laugh and joke a little.**Dorabella:**

I'll answer him with playful words.

Fiordiligi:

I'll sigh and mimic the other's sighs

Dorabella:

He'll say: "Beloved, I am dying."

Fiordiligi:

He'll say: "My beautiful treasure."

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:Meanwhile, what pleasure,
what fun I'll have!

As the ladies start to leave, they meet Don Alfonso.

Don Alfonso:

Ah, correte al giardino, le mie care ragazze!
Che allegria! Che musica! Che canto!
Che brillante spettacolo! Che incanto!
Fate presto, correte!

Dorabella:

Che diamine esser può?

Don Alfonso:

Tosto vedrete.

Don Alfonso:

My dear girls, hurry to the garden!
What gaiety! What music! What song!
Such a spectacle! It's enchanting!
Hurry up, run!

Dorabella:

What on earth can it be?

Don Alfonso:

You'll soon discover.

*A garden at the shore, with grass seats and two small stone tables.
A barge appears, bearing the disguised Ferrando and Guglielmo;
it is decorated with flowers, and there are musicians
and servants in elaborate costumes.*

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Secondate, aurette amiche,
secondate i miei desiri,
e portate i miei sospiri
alla Dea di questo cor.
Voi che udiste mille volte
il tenor delle mie pene,
ripetete al caro bene
tutto quel che udiste allor.

Coro:

Secondate, aurette amiche,
il desir di sì bei cor.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Follow, friendly breezes,
follow my desires,
and carry my sighs
to the goddess of my heart.
I want you to hear the essence
of my pain a thousand times.
Tell my adored one,
all that you have heard.

Chorus:

Follow, friendly breezes, bear their message
to the dear ones they adore.

*Don Alfonso and Despina lead Ferrando and Guglielmo to the two women,
who look at them, astonished and speechless.*

Don Alfonso:

Il tutto deponete sopra quei tavolini, e nella
barca ritiratevi, amici.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Cos'è tal mascherata?

Despina:

Animo, via, coraggio: avete perso l'uso della
favella?

Ferrando:

Io tremo e palpiro dalla testa alle piante.

Don Alfonso: (to the servants)

Friends, just leave all the flowers on the
tables, and then retire to the barge.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

What is this masquerade?

Despina: (to Ferrando and Guglielmo)

Come on, be brave! Have you lost your power
to speak?

Ferrando:

I'm trembling and shaking from head to toe.

Guglielmo:

Amor lega le membra a vero amante.

Don Alfonso:

Da brave, incoraggiateli.

Fiordiligi:

Parlate.

Dorabella:

Liberi dite pur quel che bramate.

Ferrando:

Madama.

Guglielmo:

Anzi, madama.

Ferrando:

Parla pur tu.

Guglielmo:

No, no, parla pur tu.

Don Alfonso:

Oh cospetto del diavolo, lasciate tali smorfie del secolo passato.
Despinetta, terminiam questa festa, fa' tu con lei quel ch'io farò con questa.

La mano a me date, movetevi un po'.
Se voi non parlate, ser voi parlerò.

Perdono vi chiede un schiavo tremante;
v'offese, lo vede, ma solo un istante.
Or pena, ma tace.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Tace.

Don Alfonso:

Or lasciavi in pace.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

In pace.

Don Alfonso:

Non può quel che vuole, vorrà quel che può.

Guglielmo:

Love ties the limbs of a true lover.

Don Alfonso: (to the women)

Be good girls and encourage them.

Fiordiligi:

Speak.

Dorabella:

Be free to say what you want.

Ferrando:

My lady.

Guglielmo:

My lady.

Ferrando: (to Guglielmo)

You speak.

Guglielmo: (to Ferrando)

No, you speak.

Don Alfonso:

For goodness sake, drop those old-fashioned manners.
Despina, let's put an end to this. I'll speak for them, you for the ladies.

Give me your hand, move it a little.
If you don't speak, I'll speak for you.

(to the ladies)

A trembling slave asks to be forgiven.
If he's offended you, it's only momentary.
Now he feels pain but remains silent.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Quiet.

Don Alfonso:

Or leave in peace.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

In peace.

Don Alfonso:

He can't do what he wants, but he'll want what he can do.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Non può quel che vuole, vorrà quel che può.

Don Alfonso:

Su via rispondete,
Guardate e ridete?

Despina:

Per voi la risposta a loro darò.
Quello che è stato è stato,
scordiamci del passato.
Rompasi omai quel laccio,
segno di servitù.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

He can't do what he wants, but he'll want
what he can do.

Don Alfonso: (to the ladies)

Come on, answer.
Look and laugh?

Despina: (to the ladies)

I'll answer them on your behalf.
What's done is done,
and let's forget the past.
Break the bond
that is the sign of slavery.

*Despina takes Dorabella's hand; Don Alfonso takes Fiordiligi's hand.
The two ladies break the flower garlands around the two lovers.*

A me porgete il braccio, né sospirate più.

Give me your arm. Sigh no more.

Despina e Don Alfonso:

Per carità, partiamo: quel che san far
veggiamo; le stimo più del diavolo s'ora non
cascan giù.

Despina and Don Alfonso:

Let's leave and see what they can do.
I'll have more respect for the girls than for the
devil if they don't tumble now.

*The four look at each other uneasily; they are embarrassed and shy,
at a loss for words to communicate with each other.*

Fiordiligi:

Oh che bella giornata!

Fiordiligi:

What a lovely day!

Ferrando:

Caldetta anzi che no.

Ferrando:

Rather warm.

Dorabella:

Che vezzosi arboscelli!

Dorabella:

What charming bushes!

Guglielmo:

Certo, certo: son belli, han più foglie che
frutti.

Guglielmo:

Certainly, they're lovely. They have more
leaves than fruit.

Fiordiligi:

Quei viali come son leggiadri.
Volete passeggiar?

Fiordiligi: (to Ferrando)

How nice these paths are.
Would you like to take a stroll?

Ferrando:

Son pronto, o cara, ad ogni vostro cenno.

Ferrando:

I'm ready, my dear, to answer your every wish.

Fiordiligi:
Troppa grazia!

Ferrando:
(Eccoci alla gran crisi.)

Fiordiligi:
Cosa gli avete detto?

Ferrando:
Eh, gli raccomandai di divertirla bene.

Dorabella:
Passeggiamo anche noi.

Guglielmo:
Come vi piace.

Fiordiligi:
How kind!

Ferrando: *(to Guglielmo while passing)*
(This is the critical moment.)

Fiordiligi:
What did you say to him?

Ferrando:
I told him to enjoy himself.

Dorabella: *(to Guglielmo)*
Shall we take a stroll as well?

Guglielmo:
If you would like.

Fiordiligi strolls off with Ferrando.

Ahimè!

Dorabella:
Che cosa avete?

Guglielmo:
Io mi sento sì male, sì male, anima mia,
che mi par di morire.

Dorabella:
(Non otterrà nientissimo.)

Saranno rimasugli del veleno che bevete.

Guglielmo:
Ah, che un veleno assai più forte io bevo
in que' crudi e focosi mongibelli amorosi!

Dorabella:
Sarà veleno caldo:
Fatevi un poco fresco.

Guglielmo:
Ingrata, voi burlate ed intanto io mi moro!

(Son spariti: Dove diamin son iti?)

Oh no!

Dorabella:
What's wrong?

Guglielmo:
I feel so sick my beloved, that I think I'm
dying.

Dorabella:
(I don't believe a word of it.)

You're still feeling the effects of the poison
you drank.

Guglielmo:
I'd drink a far more deadly poison because of
the fatal flames of your glorious eyes!

Dorabella:
A flattering comparison!
You ought to write a poem.

Guglielmo:
You're ungrateful. You make fun of me while
I am dying!
(I can't see them. Are they hiding on
purpose?)

Dorabella:
Eh, via, non fate.

Guglielmo:
Io mi moro, crudele, e voi burlate?

Dorabella:
Io burlo? Io burlo?

Guglielmo:
Dunque datemi qualche segno, anima bella,
della vostra pietà.

Dorabella:
Due, se volete;
Dite quel che far deggio, e lo vedrete.

Guglielmo:
(Scherza, o dice davvero?)

Questa picciola offerta d'acceptare degnatevi.

Dorabella:
Un core?

Guglielmo:
Un core: è simbolo di quello ch'arde,
languisce e spasima per voi.

Dorabella:
(Che dono prezioso!)

Guglielmo:
L'acceptate?

Dorabella:
Crudele! di sedur non tentate un cor fedele.

Guglielmo:
(La montagna vacilla. Mi spiace; ma
impegnato è l'onor di soldato.)

V'adoro!

Dorabella:
Per pietà.

Guglielmo:
Son tutto vostro!

Dorabella:
Don't be so silly.

Guglielmo:
I am dying, and you're jesting cruelly.

Dorabella:
Am I making fun of you?

Guglielmo:
Then give me some sign that you have pity for
me.

Dorabella:
Two, if you want.
Tell me what I should do.

Guglielmo:
(Is she joking, or telling the truth?)

Accept this little offering to honor you.

Dorabella:
A heart?

Guglielmo:
A symbol of the man who ardently pines for
you.

Dorabella:
(What a precious gift!)

Guglielmo:
Do you accept it?

Dorabella:
You are cruel to tempt a faithful heart.

Guglielmo:
(She's wavering, I don't like it, but I gave my
word as a soldier.)
(to Dorabella)
I adore you!

Dorabella:
Oh Heavens.

Guglielmo:
I'm all yours!

Dorabella:

Oh, Dei!

Guglielmo:

Cedete, o cara!

Dorabella:

Mi farete morir.

Guglielmo:Morremo insieme, amorosa mia speme.
L'accettate?**Dorabella:**

L'accetto.

Guglielmo:

(Infelice Ferrando!)

O che diletto!

Dorabella:

Oh, Heavens!

Guglielmo:

Give in, darling!

Dorabella:

You're killing me.

Guglielmo:We'll die together, an amorous hope.
Will you accept it?**Dorabella:**

I will.

Guglielmo:

(Poor Ferrando!)

(to Dorabella)

What a pleasure!

Andante grazioso**GUGLIELMO***Il co - re vi do - no,*Il core vi dono, bell'idolo mio;
ma il vostro vo' anch'io, via, datelo a me.I give you this heart, my beloved, but I want
yours in return. Go on, give it to me.**Dorabella:**Mel date, lo prendo, ma il mio non vi rendo:
invan mel chiedete, più meco ei non è.**Dorabella:**I'll take this heart, but won't give you mine.
You ask in vain, for it is no longer mine.**Guglielmo:**

Se teco non l'hai, perchè batte qui?

Guglielmo:

If you don't have it, why is it beating here?

Dorabella:

Se a me tu lo dai, che mai balza li?

Dorabella:

You're giving it to me but what's pounding here?

Dorabella e Guglielmo:È il mio coricino che più non è meco:
ei venne a star teco, ei batte così.**Dorabella and Guglielmo:**It's my little heart which is mine no longer: it's
mine no longer because now it's yours.**Guglielmo:**

Qui lascia che il metta.

Guglielmo:

Let me put it on for you.

Dorabella:

Ei qui non può star.

Dorabella:

It can't go here.

Guglielmo:
T'intendo, furbetta.

Dorabella:
Che fai?

Guglielmo:
Non guardar.

Guglielmo:
I understand you, you crafty girl.

Dorabella:
What are you doing?

Guglielmo:
Don't look.

Guglielmo gently removes the locket and replaces it with a heart.

Dorabella:
(Nel petto un Vesuvio d'avere mi par.)

Guglielmo:
Ferrando meschino! Possibil non par.

L'occhietto a me gira.

Dorabella:
Che brami?

Guglielmo:
Rimira se meglio può andar.

Dorabella e Guglielmo:
Oh cambio felice di cori e d'affetti!

Che nuovi diletta, che dolce penar!

Dorabella:
(There's a volcano in my breast.)

Guglielmo:
(Poor Ferrando!)
(to Dorabella)
Turn your eyes to me.

Dorabella:
What do you want?

Guglielmo:
Look, see if it could be any better.

Dorabella and Guglielmo:
Such a happy exchange of hearts and affections!
New delight and sweet suffering

Dorabella and Guglielmo depart, arm in arm.

Fiordiligi enters extremely agitated, followed by Ferrando.

Ferrando:
Barbara! Perché fuggi?

Fiordiligi:
Ho visto un aspide, un'idra, un basilisco!

Ferrando:
Ah, crudel, ti capisco!
L'aspide, l'idra, il basilisco, e quanto i libici
deserti han di più fiero, in me solo tu vedi.

Fiordiligi:
È vero, è vero! Tu vuoi tormi la pace.

Ferrando:
You are cruel! Why do you run away?

Fiordiligi:
I've seen an asp, a hydra, a basilisk!

Ferrando:
I understand you, cruel woman!
All that you see in me is the hydra, the
basilisk, and the beasts of the desert.

Fiordiligi:
It's true! You want to rob me of my peace.

Ferrando:

Ma per farti felice.

Fiordiligi:

Cessa di molestarmi.

Ferrando:

Non ti chiedo che un guardo.

Fiordiligi:

Pàrtiti.

Ferrando:

Non sperarlo se pria gli occhi men fieri a me
non giri. O ciel! Ma tu mi guardi, e poi
sospiri?

Ah, lo veggio, quell'anima bella
al mio pianto resister non sa;
non è fatta per esser rubella
agli affetti di amica pietà.

In quel guardo, in quei cari sospiri
dolce raggio lampeggia al mio cor:
Già rispondi a' miei caldi desiri,
già tu cedi al più tenero amor.

Ma tu fuggi, spietata, tu taci
ed invano mi senti languir?
Ah, cessate, speranze fallaci:
la crudel mi condanna a morir.

Ferrando:

But only to make you happy.

Fiordiligi:

Stop tormenting me.

Ferrando:

I only ask that you look at me.

Fiordiligi:

Leave!

Ferrando:

Not until you look at me less harshly.
Heavens! Why do you look at me with such
sighs?

I understand. That beautiful heart cannot
resist my tears.
You don't really mean to be cold and
unheeding to the affections of a friend.

My heart glows with radiance from your
longing and gentle glances.
It already responds to my warm desires;
you are already yielding to tender love.

But why do you spurn me with disdain, and
coldly leave me to languish and sigh?
Ah! False hopes. You are cruel and condemn
me to die.

Ferrando exits, leaving Fiordiligi alone.

Fiordiligi:

Ei parte, senti, ah no, partir si lasci.
Si tolga ai sguardi miei l'infausto oggetto
della mia debolezza.
A qual cimento il barbaro mi pose!
Un premio è questo ben dovuto a mie colpe!

In tale istante dovea di nuovo amante i
sospiri ascoltar?
L'altrui querele dovea volger in gioco?
Ah, questo core a ragione condanni, o giusto
amore!

Fiordiligi:

He's going, listen, ah no, let him go.
Take this object from my sight; it weakens
me.
What a test he has put me to!
It's the just reward for the wrongs I've done!

At this time, should I be listening to the
yearnings of a new lover?
Should I be sympathetic to his complaints?
Righteous love, you do well to condemn me!

Io ardo, e l'ardor mio non è più effetto
d'un amor virtuoso: è smania, affanno,
rimorso, pentimento, leggerezza, perfidia e
tradimento!

Guglielmo, anima mia!
Perché sei tanto ora lungi da me?
Solo potresti, ahimè!
Tu mi detesti, mi rigetti, m'aborri,
io già ti veggio minaccioso, sdegnato; io
sento i rimproveri amari, e il tuo tormento.

I burn, and my ardor is not with a virtuous
love. It's a craving, uneasiness, remorse,
regret, penitence, flightiness, treachery, and
betrayal!

Guglielmo, my love!
Why are you so far away from me?
I am powerless!
You would detest me, reject me, and hate me.
I already see you, menacing and scornful. I
feel bitter reproach and your anguish.

Adagio
FIORDILIGI



Per pietà, ben mio,
perdona all'error di un'alma amante;
Fra quest'ombre e queste piante
sempre ascoso, oh Dio, sarà!
Svenerà quest'empia voglia
l'ardir mio, la mia costanza;
perderà la rimembranza che vergogna e orror
mi fa.
A chi mai mancò di fede questo vano ingrato
cor!
Si dovea miglior mercede, caro bene, al tuo
candor.

Show pity, my love,
forgive the mistakes of a loving heart.
Amid these shadows and in this garden, it
will remain hidden for ever! It will!
My courage and constancy will stifle this evil
longing.
I shall forget what makes me feel shame and
horror.
I embraced temptation and lacked faith: my
heart is ungrateful!
Dearest love, I beg your forgiveness.
Your honesty deserved a more noble reward.

Fiordiligi departs.

Ferrando and Guglielmo enter. Ferrando is deliriously happy.

Ferrando:
Amico, abbiamo vinto!

Guglielmo:
Un ambo o un terno?

Ferrando:
Una cinquina, amico: Fiordiligi è la
modestia in carne.

Ferrando:
My friend, we've won!

Guglielmo:
The double, or the jackpot?

Ferrando:
A clean sweep. Fiordiligi is a model of
propriety.

Guglielmo:

Niente meno?

Ferrando:

Nientissimo. Sta' attento e ascolta come fu.

Guglielmo:

T'ascolto: di' pur su.

Ferrando:

Pel giardinetto, come eravam d'accordo,
a passeggiar mi metto;
le dò il braccio, si parla di mille cose
di differenti; alfine viensi all'amor.

Guglielmo:

Avanti.

Ferrando:

Fingo labbra tremanti, fingo di pianger, fingo
di morir al suo piè.

Guglielmo:

Bravo assai, per mia fè.
Ed ella?

Ferrando:

Ella da prima ride, scherza, mi burla.

Guglielmo:

E poi?

Ferrando:

E poi finge d'impietosirsi.

Guglielmo:

O cospettaccio!

Ferrando:

Alfin scoppia la bomba:
pura come colomba al suo caro Guglielmo
ella si serba;
mi discaccia superba, mi maltratta, mi fugge,
testimonio rendendomi e messaggio
che una femmina ell'è senza paraggio.

Guglielmo:

Bravo tu, bravo io,
brava la mia Penelope!
Lascia un po' ch'io ti abbracci per sì felice
augurio, o mio fido Mercurio!

Guglielmo:

Nothing less?

Ferrando:

Nothing. Listen and I'll tell you how it went.

Guglielmo:

I'm listening. Go ahead.

Ferrando:

As we agreed, we strolled in the garden
together;
arm in arm, chatting about a thousand
different things, and finally about love.

Guglielmo:

Go ahead.

Ferrando:

I pretended to stutter, I pretended to cry, I
pretended to die at her feet.

Guglielmo:

Terrific, you did well.
And she?

Ferrando:

At first she laughed, joked and teased me.

Guglielmo:

And then?

Ferrando:

And then she pretended to pity.

Guglielmo:

That vixen!

Ferrando:

But then, the bomb exploded.
She was as pure as Columbine to her
Guglielmo.
She chased me away, abused me, and then left
me, proving to me that she's a woman
without equal.

Guglielmo:

Good for you, good for me,
good for my Penelope!
Let me embrace you for such good news, my
faithful messenger!

Ferrando:

E la mia Dorabella?
Come s'è diportata?
Ah, non ci ho neppur dubbio!
Assai conosco quella sensibil alma.

Guglielmo:

Eppur un dubbio, parlandoti a quattr'occhi,
non saria mal, se tu l'avessi.

Ferrando:

Come?

Guglielmo:

Dico così per dir!
(Avrei piacere d'indorargli la pillola.)

Ferrando:

Stelle! Cesse ella forse alle lusinghe tue? Ah,
s'io potessi sospettarlo soltanto!

Guglielmo:

È sempre bene il sospettare un poco in questo
mondo.

Ferrando:

Eterni Dei! Favella: a foco lento non mi far
qui morir, ma no, tu vuoi.
Prenderti meco spasso: ella non ama,
non adora che me.

Guglielmo:

Certo! Anzi in prova di suo amor, di sua fede,
questo bel ritrattino ella mi diede.

Ferrando:

And how did my Dorabella behave?
How did she handle herself?
I have no doubts!
I know that sensitive soul too well.

Guglielmo:

Between us, it wouldn't hurt to have a doubt
or two.

Ferrando:

What do you mean?

Guglielmo:

Just a thought!
(I love to sugarcoat the pill.)

Ferrando:

Heavens! Are you implying that she yielded to
you? I would never be suspicious of her!

Guglielmo:

In this world, it would be wiser to leave a
little room for some suspicion.

Ferrando:

What do you mean? Speak up! If you must
poison me, must it be drop by drop?
Stop joking with me; I am her love, and she
loves only me.

Guglielmo:

Of course! To prove her love and faith she
gave me this little portrait.

Guglielmo shows Ferrando his portrait that he removed from the locket.

Ferrando:

Il mio ritratto!
Ah, perfida!

Ferrando (furiously)

My portrait!
That traitor!

Ferrando gestures to depart.

Guglielmo:

Ove vai?

Guglielmo:

Where are you going?

Ferrando:

A trarle il cor dal scellerato petto e a
vendicar il mio tradito affetto.

Ferrando:

To tear out her heart and avenge my betrayed
affections.

Guglielmo
Fermati!

Ferrando:
No, mi lascia!

Guglielmo:
Sei tu pazzo? Vuoi tu precipitarti per una donna che non val due soldi?

(Non vorrei che facesse qualche corbelleria.)

Ferrando:
Numi! Tante promesse, e lagrime, e sospiri, e giuramenti, in sì pochi momenti come l'empia obliò?

Guglielmo:
Per Bacco, io non lo so.

Ferrando:
Che fare or deggio?
A qual partito, a qual idea m'appiglio?
Abbi di me pietà, dammi consiglio.

Guglielmo:
Amico, non saprei qual consiglio a te dar.

Ferrando:
Barbara! Ingrata!
In un giorno! In poche ore!

Guglielmo:
Certo, un caso quest'è da far stupore.

Allegretto
GUGLIELMO



Donne mie, la fate a tanti,
che, se il ver vi deggio dir,
se si lagnano gli amanti
li comincio a compatir.

Io vo' bene al sesso vostro,
lo sapete, ognun lo sa:
ogni giorno ve lo mostro,
vi dò segno d'amistà;

Guglielmo:
Stop!

Ferrando:
No, leave me alone!

Guglielmo:
Are you mad? Do you want to ruin yourself
for a worthless woman?

(I don't want him to do anything stupid.)

Ferrando:
Gods! All of those promises, tears, sighs, and
vows. How could everything turn so wicked
in just a few moments?

Guglielmo:
I don't know.

Ferrando:
Now what shall I do?
What can I cling to?
Have pity on me, and tell me what to do.

Guglielmo:
My friend, I wouldn't know what to tell you.

Ferrando:
The cruel, ungrateful woman!
In one day! In just a few hours!

Guglielmo:
It's certainly an astonishing case.

My ladies, you take in so many men,
that to tell the truth,
I've begun to sympathize
with lovers who complain.

I love womanhood.
You know it's true, as does everyone.
I show my friendship
to you every day.

ma quel farla a tanti e tanti
m'avvilisce in verità.

Mille volte il brando presi
per salvar il vostro onor,
mille volte vi difesi
colla bocca, e più col cor.
Ma quel farla a tanti e tanti
è un vizietto seccator.

Siete vaghe, siete amabili,
più tesori il ciel vi diè,
e le grazie vi circondano
dalla testa sin ai piè;
ma la fate a tanti e tanti,
che credibile non è.
Che, se gridano gli amanti,
hanno certo un gran perché.

But the way you play with so many men
really repulses me.

I've taken up my sword
a thousand times to defend your honor.
A thousand times I've defended you
with my words and with my heart.
But the way you play with so many men
is a tiresome vice.

You're pretty and lovable,
with many gifts from Heaven,
you're covered in charm
from head to toe;
but you play with so many men
that it's beyond belief.
If lovers complain
they certainly must have good reason.

Guglielmo departs.

Ferrando:

In qual fiero contrasto, in qual disordine
di pensieri e di affetti io mi ritrovo?
Tanto insolito e novo è il caso mio,
che non altri, non io basto per consigliarmi.
Alfonso, Alfonso, quanto rider vorrai
della mia stupidezza!
Ma mi vendicherò: saprò dal seno
cancellar quell'iniqua, cancellarla?
Tropo, odio, questo cor per lei mi parla.

Ferrando:

Why do I feel such a cruel conflict of
thoughts and affections?
This is something so unusual, that I don't
know what to do, and no one can advise me.
Alfonso. Alfonso, you will laugh at my
stupidity!
But I'll have vengeance. I'll wipe that wicked
woman from my heart. Wipe her away?
My heart speaks with so much hatred.

From hiding, Don Alfonso and Guglielmo overhear Ferrando.

Allegro
FERRANDO



Tradito, schernito
dal perfido cor,
io sento che ancora
quest'alma l'adora,
io sento per essa
le voci d'amor.

Betrayed and scorned
by her treacherous heart,
yet I feel I that still love
that adored soul.
I hear the voice of love
speaking on her behalf.

Don Alfonso:

Bravo, questa è costanza!

Ferrando:

Andate, o barbaro! Per voi misero sono.

Don Alfonso:

Via, se sarete buono vi tornerò l'antica calma. Udite:
Fiordiligi a Guglielmo si conserva fedel, e
Dorabella infedel a voi fu.

Ferrando:

Per mia vergogna.

Guglielmo:

Caro amico, bisogna far delle differenza in ogni cosa.

Ti pare che una sposa mancar possa a un Guglielmo?

Un picciuol calcolo, non parlo per lodarmi, se facciamo tra noi. Tu vedi, amico, che un poco più di merto.

Don Alfonso:

Eh, anch'io lo dico.

Guglielmo:

Intanto mi darette cinquanta zecchinetti.

Don Alfonso:

Volentieri. Pria però di pagar, vo' che facciamo qualche altra esperienza.

Guglielmo:

Come!

Don Alfonso:

Abbiate pazienza; infin domani siete entrambi miei schiavi, a me voi deste parola da soldati di far quel ch'io dirò.

Venite, io spero mostrarvi ben che folle è quel cervello che sulla frasca ancor vende l'uccello.

Don Alfonso:

Well done, this is constancy!

Ferrando:

Go away! I'm miserable because of you.

Don Alfonso:

But if you're good, I'll bring back your former peace of mind. Listen!
Fiordiligi stayed faithful to Guglielmo. But Dorabella was unfaithful to you.

Ferrando:

To my shame.

Guglielmo:

Dear friend, distinctions have to be made in everything.

Do you think a fiancée has the strength to betray Guglielmo?

I'm not boasting, but just compare the two of us. You'll see, my friend, there's more to be considered.

Don Alfonso.

I agree.

Guglielmo:

Give me my fifty sovereigns.

Don Alfonso:

Gladly, but before I pay I want to make another attempt

Guglielmo:

What!

Don Alfonso:

Be patient. You are both my slaves until tomorrow, and as soldiers, you promised to do as I say.

Come, I'm hoping to show you clearly that it makes no sense to count your chickens before they've hatched.

Don Alfonso departs, leaving Ferrando and Guglielmo confounded.

A room with several doors, a mirror, and a small table.

Despina:

Ora vedo che siete una donna di garbo.

Dorabella:

Invan, Despina, di resistere tentai: quel demonetto ha un artificio, un'eloquenza, un tratto che ti fa cader giù se sei di sasso.

Despina:

Corpo di Satanasso!

Questo vuol dir saper! Tanto di raro noi povere ragazze abbiamo un po' di bene, che bisogna pigliarlo allor ch'ei viene.

Despina:

Now I can see you're a woman of taste.

Dorabella:

I tried in vain to resist temptation. That wicked man has a cunning, an eloquence, and a bearing that makes me drop like a stone.

Despina:

The devil!

Now you're talking logic! It's so seldom that we poor girls have some pleasure, so you have to take the pickings as they come.

Fiordiligi enters.

Ma ecco la sorella. Che ceffo!

Here's your sister. Look at her face!

Fiordiligi:

Sciagurate!

Ecco per colpa vostra in che stato mi trovo!

Fiordiligi:

Disgraceful!

It's your fault that I'm in this state!

Despina:

Cosa è nato, cara madamigella?

Despina:

Dear madam, what's happened?

Dorabella:

Hai qualche mal, sorella?

Dorabella:

Sister, is there something wrong?

Fiordiligi:

Ho il diavolo che porti me, te, lei, Don Alfonso, i forestieri e quanti pazzi ha il mondo.

Fiordiligi:

I want the devil to take me, you, you, Don Alfonso, the strangers, and all the crazy people in the world.

Dorabella:

Hai perduto il giudizio?

Dorabella:

Have you lost your senses?

Fiordiligi:

Peggio, peggio. Inorridisci: io amo, e l'amor mio non è sol per Guglielmo.

Fiordiligi:

Worse. Prepare to be shocked. I'm in love, and not just with Guglielmo.

Despina:

Meglio, meglio!

Despina:

That's better!

Dorabella:

E che forse anche tu se' innamorata del galante biondino?

Dorabella:

And perhaps you are also in love with the handsome blonde man?

Fiordiligi:

Ah, purtroppo per noi.

Despina:

Mo' brava!

Dorabella:

Tieni settantamila baci:
Tu il biondino, io il brunetto,
Eccoci entrambe sposate!

Fiordiligi:

Cosa dici?
Non pensi agli infelici che staman e partir?
Ai loro pianti, alla lor fedeltà tu più non
pensi?
Così barbari sensi dove, dove apprendesti?
Sì diversa da te come ti festi?

Dorabella:

Odimi: sei tu certa che non muoiano in
guerra i nostri vecchi amanti?
E allora entrambe resterem colle man piene
di mosche. tra un ben certo e un incerto
c'è sempre gran divario!

Fiordiligi:

E se poi torneranno?

Dorabella:

Se torneran, lor danno!
Noi saremo allor mogli, noi saremo
lontane mille miglia.

Fiordiligi:

Ma non so come mai si può cangiar in un sol
giorno un core.

Dorabella:

Che domanda ridicola! Siam donne!
E poi, tu com'hai fatto?

Fiordiligi:

Io saprò vincermi.

Despina:

Voi non saprete nulla.

Fiordiligi:

Farò che tu lo veda.

Fiordiligi:

Unfortunately for us.

Despina:

Delightful!

Dorabella:

There were seventy thousand kisses.
You with the blonde, and I with the brunette.
And we're both affianced!

Fiordiligi:

What are you saying?
Don't you think of our poor soldiers who
have gone to the wars? Don't you think about
their tears and faithfulness?
How could we deceive them?
Are you enjoying and celebrating?

Dorabella:

Listen to me. How sure are you that our lovers
didn't fall in battle?
You know the saying, a bird in hand is worth
two in the bush. It's a big difference because
you're uncertain!

Fiordiligi:

But if they should return?

Dorabella:

If they return, it's their loss!
We'll be married, and what's more, we'll be
far away from here.

Fiordiligi:

But how can one change the way they feel in
just one day?

Dorabella:

That's a ridiculous question! We're women!
Therefore, you do what you have to do?

Fiordiligi:

But I'm not surrendering!

Despina:

You are quite mistaken!

Fiordiligi:

I won't! I'll never do it!

Dorabella:

Credi, sorella, è meglio che tu ceda.

Dorabella:

Believe me, sister, it's better to give in.

Allegretto vivace**DORABELLA**

È amore un ladroncello,
un serpentello è amor;
ei toglie e dà la pace,
come gli piace, ai cor.
Per gli occhi al seno appena
un varco aprir si fa,
che l'anima incatena
e toglie libertà.
Porta dolcezza e gusto
se tu lo lasci far,
ma l'empie di disgusto
se tenti di pugnar.
Se nel tuo petto ei siede,
s'egli ti becca qui,
fa' tutto quel ch'ei chiede,
che anch'io farò così

Love is a little thief,
a little serpent.
It brings peace
or takes it away, according to its whim.
He barely opens a route
to our hearts,
and a soul is trapped
and robbed of its freedom.
If you let him,
he will bring you sweetness and pleasure.
But if he fills you with longing,
you try to fight him off.
If he's seated in your heart,
he feeds there,
doing anything he wishes;
and I shall do the same.

Despina leaves with Dorabella.

Fiordiligi:

Come tutto congiura a sedurre il mio cor!
Ma no, si mora e non si ceda, errai quando
alla suora io mi scopersi, ed alla serva mia.

Esse a lui diran tutto, ed ei più audace,
fia di tutto capace, agli occhi miei
mai più non comparisca, a tutti i servi
minaccerò il congedo se lo lascian passar,
veder nol voglio, quel seduttore.

Fiordiligi:

How they're plotting to seduce my heart!
But no, I'd rather die, and I won't yield.
I shouldn't have talked to Dorabella or Despina.

They might tell him everything, and thus
encouraged, he'd act wildly. I must avoid him,
not even let him see me. I'll order my
servants, or dismiss them immediately if they
should dare let the seducer near me.

Guglielmo has been listening at the door, unseen by Fiordiligi.

Guglielmo:

(Bravissima!

La mia casta Artemisia! La sentite?)

Fiordiligi:

Ma potria Dorabella, senza saputa mia..
 Piano, un pensiero per la mente mi passa:
 in casa mia restar molte uniformi
 di Guglielmo e di Ferrando, ardir!
 Despina! Despina!

Despina:

Cosa c'è?

Fiordiligi:

Tieni un po' questa chiave, e senza replica,
 senza replica alcuna, prendi nel guardaroba
 e qui mi porta due spade, due cappelli e due
 vestiti de' nostri sposi.

Despina:

E che volete fare?

Fiordiligi:

Vanne, non replicare.

Despina:

(Comanda in abregedonna Arroganza!)

Fiordiligi:

Non c'è altro, ho speranza che Dorabella
 stessa seguirà il bell'esempio. Al campo, al
 campo: altra strada non resta per serbarci
 innocenti.

Don Alfonso:

Ho capito abbastanza.

Vanne pur, non temer.

Despina:

Eccomi.

Fiordiligi:

Vanne.

Sei cavalli di posta voli un servo a ordinar.
 Di' a Dorabella che parlar le vorrei

Despina:

Sarà servita.

(Questa donna mi par di senno uscita.)

Guglielmo: (to this friends)

(By Jupiter! What a model of virtue! Let's hear more!)

Fiordiligi:

I'm afraid Dorabella cannot be persuaded.
 Wait! An idea! Now I know what to do! By
 some good fortune Guglielmo and Ferrando
 left some uniforms. That's lucky!
 Despina! Despina!

Despina:

What is it?

Fiordiligi:

Take this key, and without asking any
 questions, go to the wardrobe and bring me
 two swords, two helmets, and two of our
 fiancé's uniforms.

Despina:

What are you going to do?

Fiordiligi:

Go, and don't question me.

Despina:

(Madam Arrogance has commanded!)

*Despina departs.***Fiordiligi:**

There's no other way. I hope Dorabella will
 follow my good example. To the battlefield;
 there's no other way for us to maintain our
 honor.

Don Alfonso: (to Despina)

I understand what's happening

Go, don't be afraid.

Despina: (to Fiordiligi)

Here I am.

Fiordiligi:

Go.

Have a servant order six horses.

Tell Dorabella that I want to speak to her.

Despina:

It will be done.

(I think she's gone mad.)

Despina leaves.

Fiordiligi:

L'abito di Ferrando sarà buono per me; può
Dorabella prender quel di Guglielmo.
In questi arnesi raggiungerem gli sposi
nostri, al loro fianco pugnar potremo
e morir se fa d'uopo.

Ite in malora, ornamenti fatali!
Io vi detesto.

Guglielmo:

(Si può dar un amor simile a questo?)

Fiordiligi:

Di tornar non sperate alla mia fronte
pria ch'io qui torni col mio ben;
in vostro loco porrò questo cappello,
oh, come ei mi trasforma le sembianze e il
viso! Come appena io medesima or mi ravviso!

Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti giungerò del
fido sposo,
sconosciuta a lui davanti in quest'abito
verrò.
Oh, che gioia il suo bel core proverà nel
ravvisarmi!

Ferrando:

Ed intanto di dolore meschinello io mi morirò.

Fiordiligi:

Cosa veggio! Son tradita.
Deh, partite!

Ferrando:

Ah no, mia vita!
Con quel ferro di tua mano
questo cor tu ferirai,
e se forza odio non hai
io la man ti reggerò.

Fiordiligi:

Taci, ahimè! Son abbastanza tormentata ed
infelice!

Fiordiligi e Ferrando:

Ah, che omai la mia/sua costanza a quei
sguardi, a quel che dice, incomincia a vacillar!

Fiordiligi:

Ferrando's uniform will be perfect for me;
Dorabella can wear one of Guglielmo's.
Disguised as soldiers, we two can go and find
our fiancées. If it must be, we shall fight
beside them. Even death shall not part us.

Off with this headgear, this inane decoration!
Oh, how I hate it.

Guglielmo: (to his friends)

(What can one give such a devoted lover?)

Fiordiligi:

It shall adorn my forehead only after I return
with my beloved,
and in its stead, this helmet will disguise me!
How my appearance has been transformed;
I'm certain no one will suspect I am a woman!

In a few moments I'll arrive
in the arms of my beloved.
I'll appear before him disguised in this
uniform.
Oh, how joyful his heart will be when he sees
me again!

Ferrando: (appears before Fiordiligi)

And meanwhile I'll die of grief.

Fiordiligi:

What is this? I've been betrayed.
Please go!

Ferrando:

No, my beloved!
You must take that sword
and strike this wounded heart.
And if you haven't the strength,
I'll hold your hand steady.

Fiordiligi:

Never! I have endured too much unhappiness
already!

Fiordiligi and Ferrando:

Her/my resistance is weakening. How her/my
courage is less steady, and my will is failing!

Fiordiligi:
Sorgi, sorgi...

Ferrando:
Invan lo credi.

Fiordiligi:
Per pietà, da me che chiedi?

Ferrando:
Il tuo cor, o la mia morte.

Fiordiligi:
Ah, non son, non son più forte...

Ferrando:
Cedi, cara!

Fiordiligi:
Dei, consiglio!

Ferrando:
Volgi a me pietoso il ciglio: in me sol trovar
tu puoi sposo, amante, e più se vuoi. idol
mio, più non tardar.

Fiordiligi:
Giusto ciel! Crudel, hai vinto, fa' di me quel
che ti par.

Fiordiligi e Ferrando:
E un conforto a tante pene
sia languir di dolce affetto,
di diletto sospirar!

Guglielmo:
Oh poveretto me! Cosa ho veduto, cosa ho
sentito mai!

Don Alfonso:
Per carità, silenzio!

Guglielmo:
Mi pelerei la barba, mi graffierei la pelle,
e darei colle corna entro le stelle!
Fu quella Fiordiligi! La Penelope,
l'Artemisia del secolo! Briccona!
Assassina! Furfante! Ladra! Cagna!

Fiordiligi:
Get up!

Ferrando:
You hope in vain.

Fiordiligi:
For pity's sake, what do you want from me?

Ferrando:
Your heart, or my death.

Fiordiligi:
My strength has gone.

Ferrando:
Give in, my darling!

Fiordiligi:
Gods, tell me what to do!

Ferrando:
Turn your eyes to me in pity. In me alone you
can find a husband and lover, and more if you
want. My beloved, don't delay.

Fiordiligi:
Good Heavens, you are cruel to me.
You have won, do with me what you want.

Fiordiligi and Ferrando:
All that we have suffered
will be soothed by our love,
and our delightful yearning!

Fiordiligi and Ferrando depart.

Guglielmo:
Ah poor me! What a thing I have just seen
and heard!

Don Alfonso:
For pity's sake, keep quiet!

Guglielmo:
I want to pull out my beard and tear my flesh,
and charge into the stars with my horns!
That was Fiordiligi, the Penelope and Artemis
of our century! Rascal! Assassin! Vixen!
Scoundrel! Robber! Bitch!

Don Alfonso:
(Lasciamolo sfogar.)

Ferrando:
Ebben!

Guglielmo:
Dov'è?

Ferrando:
Chi? La tua Fiordiligi?

Guglielmo:
La mia Fior, fior di diavolo, che strozzi lei prima e dopo me!

Ferrando:
Tu vedi bene: v'han delle differenze in ogni cosa. Un poco di più merto.

Guglielmo:
Ah, cessa amico, cessa di tormentarmi ed una via piuttosto studiam di castigarle sonoramente.

Don Alfonso:
Io so qual è: sposarle.

Guglielmo:
Vorrei sposar piuttosto la barca di Caronte!

Ferrando:
La grotta di Vulcano.

Guglielmo:
La porta dell'inferno.

Don Alfonso:
Dunque, restate celibi in eterno.

Ferrando:
Mancheran forse donne ad uomin come noi?

Don Alfonso:
Non c'è abbondanza d'altro.
Ma l'altre che faran, se ciò fer queste?
In fondo, voi le amate queste vostre cornacchie spennacchiate.

Guglielmo:
Ah pur troppo!

Don Alfonso:
(Let him get it off his chest.)

Ferrando: *(entering)*
Well!

Guglielmo:
Where is she?

Ferrando:
Who? Your Fiordiligi?

Guglielmo:
My Flower of the devil. First I'll strangle her, and then myself!

Ferrando: *(ironically)*
You see, distinctions have to be made in all things. There are more considerations.

Guglielmo:
Stop my friend, stop tormenting me, and more importantly let's think up a way of punishing them.

Don Alfonso:
I know how: marry them.

Guglielmo:
I'd sooner marry Charon's boat!

Ferrando:
Vulcan's cave.

Guglielmo:
The gates of hell.

Don Alfonso:
Then stay bachelors for ever.

Ferrando:
Will men like us ever lack women?

Don Alfonso:
There are plenty of them.
But others behave just like these!
Deep down you loved your crows, but you got plucked.

Guglielmo:
That's enough already!

Ferrando:

Pur troppo!

Don Alfonso:

Ebben pigliatele com' elle son.
 Natura non potea fare l'eccezione,
 il privilegio di creare due donne d'altra
 pasta per i vostri bei musì; in ogni cosa
 ci vuol filosofia.
 Venite meco; di combinar la cosa
 studierem la maniera.
 Vo' che ancor questa sera doppie nozze si
 facciamo.
 Frattanto un'ottava ascoltate:
 felicissimi voi, se la imparate.

Tutti accusan le donne, ed io le scuso
 se mille volte al di cangiano amore.
 Altri un vizio lo chiama ed altri un uso,
 ed a me par necessità del core.
 L'amante che si trova alfin deluso
 non condanni l'altrui, ma il proprio errore;
 già che giovani, vecchie, e belle e brutte,
 ripetetelo con me: "Così fan tutte!"

Tutti:

Così fan tutte!

Ferrando:

Enough already!

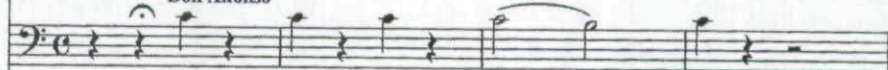
Don Alfonso:

Then take them as they are.
 Nature does not make an exception
 and create two superb human women, just
 because you would like it. In matters like
 these, there is need for philosophy.
 Come with me and we'll arrange to make
 your future happy.
 I want a double wedding to take place this
 evening.
 Meanwhile, listen to an old adage;
 take it to heart, and learn it well.

All men blame women, and I forgive them if
 they change their affections a thousand times.
 Some call this a vice, some a habit.
 To me it seems a necessity of the heart.
 The lover who finds himself disappointed
 should not blame others but himself.
 For young, old, beautiful and ugly, repeat
 after me: "That's how all women behave!"

All:

All women behave that way!

Andante**DON ALFONSO, FERRANDO, GUGLIELMO****Ferrando****Don Alfonso****Guglielmo**

Co - sì fan tut - te!

Despina enters.

Despina:

Vittoria, padroncini!
A sposarvi disposte son le care madame; a
nome vostro loro io promisi che in tre giorni
circa partiranno con voi.
L'ordin mi diedo di trovar un notaio
che stipuli il contratto; alla lor camera
attendendo vi stanno.
Siete così contenti?

Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:
Contentissimi.

Despina:

Non è mai senza effetto quand'entra la
Despina in un progetto.

Despina:

Victory!
The dear ladies have decided to consent to the
wedding, and shortly after, according to your
wishes, they will depart with you.
They gave me orders to find a notary to
arrange all the details. They are in their room
and await you.
Well, are you sufficiently pleased?

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:
Overwhelmingly!

Despina:

In affairs of this kind, depend upon Despina
to mastermind them!

*A hall, richly decorated and illuminated. An orchestra is in the back. A table with silver
candlesticks is set for four people. Four servants surround the table.*

Despina:

Fate presto, o cari amici,
alle faci il fuoco date
e la mensa preparate
con ricchezza e nobiltà.
Delle nostre padroncine
gli imenei son già disposti.

E voi gite ai vostri posti,
finché i sposi vengon qua.

Coro di Servi e Suonatori:
Facciam presto, o cari amici,
alle faci il fuoco diamo
e la mensa prepariamo
con ricchezza e nobiltà.

Don Alfonso:

Bravi, bravi! Ottimamente!
Che abbondanza! Che eleganza!
Una mancia conveniente l'un e l'altro a voi darà.

Le due coppie omai si avanzano,

Despina:

Hurry, dear friends!
Light the torches
and prepare a table
that is dignified and sumptuous!
Our mistresses' wedding
is almost ready.

Go to your places
until the couples arrive.

Chorus of Servants and Musicians:
Let's hurry, dear friends!
Light the candles
and prepare a table,
that is dignified and sumptuous!

Don Alfonso:

Excellent! Spectacular!
What richness! What elegance!
I'll give an adequate tip to each of you.

The two couples are coming.

fate plauso al loro arrivo, lieto canto e suon
giulivo empia il ciel d'ilarità.

Despina e Don Alfonso:

(No, più bella commediola non s'è vista, o si
vedrà!)

Applaud them when they arrive, and fill the
air with cheerful songs.

Despina and Don Alfonso:

It's the best comedy I've ever seen, or will
ever be seen!)

The two sets of lovers enter.

Coro:

Benedetti i doppi coniugi
e le amabili sposine!
Splenda lor il ciel benefico
ed a guisa di galline sien di figli ognor
prolifiche, che le agguagliano in beltà.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Come par che qui prometta
tutto gioia e tutto amore!
Della cara Despinetta
certo il merito sarà.
Raddoppiate il lieto suono,
replicate il dolce canto,
e noi qui seggiamo intanto
in maggior giovialità.

Chorus:

.A blessing to the two bridegrooms
and the two lovely brides!
Let heaven look kindly upon them.
May they have many children
as beautiful as they are.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

Life can hold no greater promise,
when it is filled with love and joy!
Thank you dearest Despinetta
for arranging our happiness.
Dearest friends, continue singing
your bright and merry song
of a happy future
and a life of pleasures.

The couples sit at the table.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Tutto, tutto, o vita mia, al mio fuoco or ben
risponde.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Pel mio sangue l'allegria cresce, cresce e si
diffonde.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Sei pur bella!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Sei pur vago!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Che bei rai!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Che bella bocca!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

Everything responds wonderfully to my
passionate feelings, my beloved.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Joy is rushing through my veins, increasing
and spreading.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

How lovely you are!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

How handsome you are!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

What lovely eyes!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

What a lovely mouth!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Tocca e bevi!

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Bevi e tocca!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Ferrando:

E nel tuo, nel mio bicchiere
si sommerga ogni pensiero.
E non resti più memoria
del passato ai nostri cor.

Guglielmo:

(Ah, bevessero del tossico, queste volpi senza
onor!)

Don Alfonso:

Miei signori, tutto è fatto.
Col contratto nuziale il notaio è sulle scale
e *ipso facto* qui verrà.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Bravo, bravo! Passi subito.

Don Alfonso:

Vo a chiamarlo: eccolo qua.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Touch glasses and drink!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Touch glasses and drink!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Ferrando:

In your glass and in mine,
let all thoughts vanish.
Let no memory remain
of the past.

Guglielmo:

(I wish they were drinking poison, these
dishonorable vixens!)

Don Alfonso:

My friend, everything is ready.
The notary will be here shortly with the
marriage contract.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

Terrific! I hope he comes soon.

Don Alfonso:

I'll call him. Here he is.

Despina is disguised as the notary and speaks in a nasal voice.

Despina:

Augurandovi ogni bene il notaio Beccavivi
coll'usata a voi sen viene notarile dignità.
E il contratto stipulato colle regole ordinarie
nelle forme giudiziarie, pria tossendo, poi
sedendo, clara voce leggerà.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Bravo, bravo in verità!

Despina:

Per contratto da me fatto, si congiunge in
matrimonio Fiordiligi con Sempronio,
e con Tizio Dorabella sua legittima sorella,
quelle, dame ferraresi, questi, nobili
albanesi. e, per dote e contradote...

Despina:

The notary Beccavivi wishes you well.
He comes to you from his dignified office with
the contract with the usual judicial
regulations. First a cough, then I'll sit, and
with a clear voice I'll read aloud.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

Marvelous!

Despina:

According to the contract I've written, to be
joined in matrimony are Fiordiligi with
Sempronio, and Tizio with her sister
Dorabella; ladies from Ferrara with Albanian
nobles. And, the dowry and endowment...

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Cose note, cose note,
Vi crediamo, ci fidiamo:
Soscriviam, date pur qua.

Despina e Don Alfonso:
(Bravi, bravi in verità!)**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

Never mind.
We believe you, we trust you.
Give it to us, and we'll sign.

Despina and Don Alfonso:
(Marvelous, indeed!)

*Only the two women sign the contract. Don Alfonso takes the contract.
The sound of drums and singing is heard.*

Coro:

Bella vita militar!
Ogni di si cangia loco,
Oggi molto e doman poco,
Ora in terra ed or sul mar.

Chorus:

A military life is beautiful!
There's a new place every day;
today there's much, but little tomorrow,
sometimes on land, sometimes on the sea.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Che rumor! Che canto è questo!

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Ferrando
and Guglielmo:**

What noise! What is that song?

Don Alfonso:

State cheti; io vo a guardar.

Don Alfonso:

Stay calm, I'll go and see.

Misericordia! Numi del cielo!
Che caso orribile!
Io tremo, io gelo!
Gli sposi vostri.

Mercy! Gods in Heaven!
What a terrible situation!
I'm shaking! I'm dumbfounded!
Your fiancés.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Lo sposo mio.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

My fiancé.

Don Alfonso:

In questo istante tornaro, oddio!
Ed alla riva sbarcano già!

Don Alfonso.

Right at this moment, they're returning and
disembarking at the shore.

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando e
Guglielmo:**

Cosa mai sento!
Barbare stelle!
In tal momento che si farà?

**Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Ferrando and
Guglielmo:**

What am I hearing?
What a cruel fate!
What can be done at a moment like this?

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Presto partite!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella (to their lovers)

Quickly, go!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Ma se ci veggono?

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

But what if they see us?

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Presto fuggite!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Hurry, leave!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Ma se ci incontrano?

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Là, là, celatevi, per carità!

Numi, soccorso!

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

But what if they see us?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Over there, hide, for pity's sake!

Gods, help us!

The servants remove the table, and the musicians hurry off. Ferrando and Guglielmo are led to a room to hide. Don Alfonso leads Despina to another room.

Don Alfonso:

Rasserenatevi.

Don Alfonso:

Don't panic.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Numi, consiglio!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Gods, help us!

Don Alfonso:

Ritranquillatevi...

Don Alfonso:

Calm yourselves.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Chi dal periglio ci salverà?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

Who can save us from this danger?

Don Alfonso:

In me fidatevi, ben tutto andrà.

Don Alfonso:

Trust me, everything will be all right.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Mille barbari pensieri tormentando il cor mi vanno.

Se discoprono l'inganno, ah di noi che mai sarà?

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

I'm tormented by a thousand terrible thoughts.

If they discover our deceit, what will happen to us?

Ferrando and Guglielmo enter, wearing their soldier's uniforms.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Sani e salvi, agli amplessi amorosi delle nostre fidissime amanti.

Ritorniamo, di gioia esultanti, per dar premio alla lor fedeltà.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

We return to the embrace of our faithful lovers safe and sound.

We return in exultant joy to reward them for their faithfulness.

Don Alfonso:

Giusti numi, Guglielmo! Ferrando!

Oh, che giubilo, qui, come, e quando?

Don Alfonso:

Good heavens, Guglielmo! Ferrando!

What joy! Here! How and when?

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Richiamati da regio contrordine,
pieno il cor di contento e di giolito,
ritorniamo alle spose adorabili,
ritorniamo alla vostra amistà.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

We were recalled by a counter-order.

With joyful hearts

we return to our delightful fiancées.

And we return to you, our friend.

Guglielmo:

Ma cos'è quel pallor, quel silenzio?

Guglielmo: (to *Fiordiligi*)

Why are you so pale and quiet?

Ferrando:

L'idol mio perché mesto si sta?

Ferrando: (to *Dorabella*)

Why so sad, my love?

Don Alfonso:

Dal diletto confuse ed attonite mute mute si restano là.

Don Alfonso:

They're confused and astonished; they're stunned.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

(Ah, che al labbro le voci mi mancano, se non moro un prodigio sarà.)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

(I have no strength to talk. It will be a miracle if I don't die.)

Guglielmo:

Permettete che sia posto quel baul in quella stanza.

Guglielmo:

Please allow me to place my trunk in that room.

The servants carry Guglielmo's trunk. Despina enters, without her notary's hat.

Dei, che veggio! Un uom nascosto?

Un notaio? Qui che fa?

What's this? A man hiding?

A notary? What is he doing here?

Despina:No, signor, non è un notaio; è Despina mascherata
Che dal ballo or è tornata e a spogliarsi or venne qua.**Despina:**No, sir, it is not a notary. It is Despina in disguise.
I've come back from a ball, and I was changing here.**Ferrando e Guglielmo:**

(Una furba uguale a questa dove mai si troverà!)

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

(She's a sly one, and you won't find anyone like her!)

Despina:Una furba che m'agguagli
Dove mai si troverà?**Despina:**A sly one without equal.
Where can you ever find one like me?*Don Alfonso indiscreetly lets the signed marriage contract fall to the floor.***Fiordiligi e Dorabella:**La Despina? La Despina?
Non capisco come va.**Fiordiligi and Dorabella:**Despina? Despina?
I can't understand how it could be.**Don Alfonso:**Già cader lasciai le carte,
raccoglietele con arte.**Don Alfonso:** (softly to the lovers)Here's the evidence you need.
Take this document and read it.**Ferrando:**

Ma che carte sono queste?

Ferrando: (taking the paper)

What is this paper?

Guglielmo:
Un contratto nuziale?

Guglielmo:
A marriage contract?

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Giusto ciel! Voi qui scriveste;
contradirci omai non vale:
Tradimento, tradimento!
Ah si faccia il scoprimento
e a torrenti, a fiumi, a mari
Indi il sangue scorrerà!

Ferrando and Guglielmo: *(to the ladies)*
Good heavens! You signed it!
You can't deny it.
You betrayed us!
All will be revealed
and torrential rivers,
of blood will flow!

The ladies try to escape, but they are restrained.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Ah, signor, son rea di morte e la morte io sol
vi chiedo.
Il mio fallo tardi vedo: con quel ferro un sen
ferite che non merita pietà!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Sir, I am guilty, and death is the only
punishment that I ask for.
I see my wrongs too late. Take your sword
and strike my breast. It deserves no pity!

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Cosa fu?

Ferrando and Guglielmo:
What happened?

Fiordiligi points to Despina and Don Alfonso.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
Per noi favelli il crudel, la seduttrice!

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
Speak for us, cruel man and temptress!

Don Alfonso:
Tropo vero è quel che dice, e la prova è
chiusa lì.

Don Alfonso:
It's true what they say, and the proof is in
here.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:
(Dal timor io gelo, io palpito; perchè mai li
discopri!)

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:
(I'm shaking with fear. Why did they have to
find out?)

*Don Alfonso points to the room where the lovers had gone. Ferrando and Guglielmo go into the
room for a moment, and then come out, without their hats, coats and beards,
but with the outer clothing of their former disguise.*

Ferrando:
A voi s'inchina, bella damina,
il cavaliere dell'Albania!

Ferrando: *(to Fiordiligi)*
Lovely lady, before you, bows the knight from
Albania!

Guglielmo:
Il ritrattino pel coricino ecco io le rendo,
signora mia.

Guglielmo: *(to Dorabella)*
The little portrait for your heart. I return it to
you, my lady.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:
Ed al magnetico signor dottore rendo l'onore
che meritò!

Ferrando and Guglielmo: *(to Despina)*
And the doctor with the magnet, I give the
honor he deserves!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Despina:

Stelle, che veggo!

Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:

Son stupefatte!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella e Despina:

Al duol non reggo!

Ferrando, Guglielmo e Don Alfonso:

Son mezze matte.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Ecco là il barbaro che c'ingannò.

Don Alfonso:

V'ingannai, ma fu l'inganno disinganno ai
vostri amanti,
che più saggi omai saranno, che faran quel
ch'io vorrò.

Qua le destre, siete sposi.
abbracciatevi e tacete.
Tutti quattro ora ridete,
ch'io già risi e riderò.

Fiordiligi e Dorabella:

Idol mio, se questo è vero,
colla fede e coll'amore
compensar saprò il tuo core,
adorarti ognor saprò.

Ferrando e Guglielmo:

Te lo credo, gioia bella,
ma la prova io far non vo'.

Despina:

Io non so se veglio o sogno,
mi confondo, mi vergogno.
Manco mal, se a me l'han fatta,
che a molt'altri anch'io la fo.

Tutti:

Fortunato l'uom che prende
ogni cosa pel buon verso,
e tra i casi e le vicende
da ragion guidar si fa.
Quel che suole altrui far piangere
fia per lui cagion di riso,
e del mondo in mezzo ai turbini
bella calma proverà.

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Despina:

Heavens, what I'm seeing!

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:

They're stunned!

Fiordiligi, Dorabella and Despina:

I can't bear the pain!

Ferrando, Guglielmo and Don Alfonso:

They've almost lost their senses.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella: (to Don Alfonso)

Here is the cruel man who deceived us.

Don Alfonso:

I deceived you, but its purpose was
to disillusion your lovers.
They're wiser now, and they will do what I
wish them to do.

Take each other's hand, you are betrothed.
Embrace each other and say nothing.
All four of you laugh,
and laugh along with me.

Fiordiligi and Dorabella:

My love, if this is so,
I'll make it up to you
with love and faithfulness.
I shall always love you.

Ferrando and Guglielmo:

I believe you, my love,
but I shall not put you to the test.

Despina:

I don't know if it's real or a dream.
I'm confounded, and I'm ashamed.
At least, if they did it to me,
there were many others I deceived.

All:

Happy is the man who takes everything for
the best,
and uses reason to guide him in every
situation.
What causes others to weep will be a reason
for laughter for him.
In the midst of the world's turmoil he will
find peace.

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