

Figaro's Follies or the Night of Misrule

A radio-audio podcast script

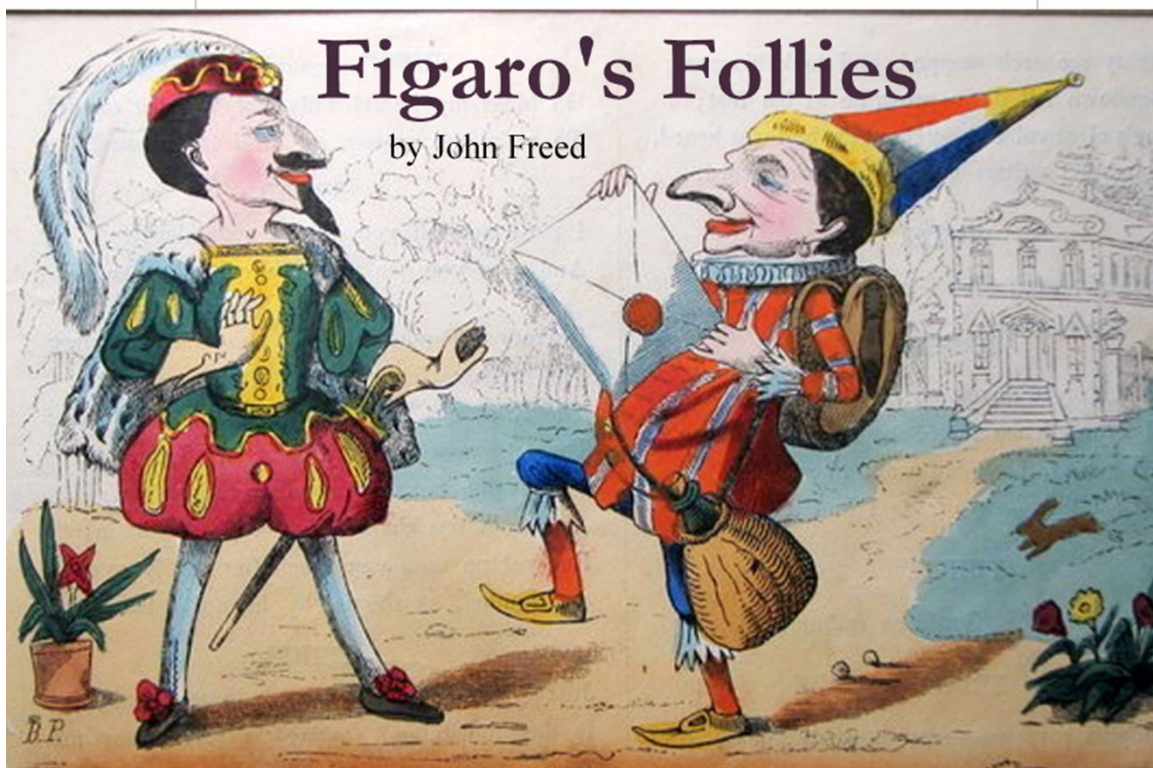
Beaumarchais newly improved upon

by

John Freed (2014 - 2018)
additional music by Jeff Dunn

with a little help from

Thomas Holcroft (1785)
and Elizabeth Griffith (1776)



Author's website:
<http://freed98.wix.com/johnfreedplaywright>

E-mail: (freed@brandman.edu)

Mobile phone: 503-915-4830

Synopsis

the claim of civil liberties for all

The audiences for “Figaro's Follies” who know Mozart's opera will find that they are in very familiar territory here and might well agree with Napoleon who said of Beaumarchais' original “Le Mariage de Figaro” – “It is the revolution already in action.”

John Freed’s primary goal in re-rendering this societal **emergence of civil liberties for all**, paradigm-shifting 1784 play is to preserve it by turning it into a much more watchable “well-made” one while retaining its main, late 18th century motifs, characters and very laughable, farcical plot elements in the David Ives' tradition.

His other goal in this translation/adaptation is to follow the advice transported across the galaxy by aliens and given to Woody Allen in *Stardust Memories*, "You want to make the world a better place? Tell funnier jokes.”

Lexi Diamond, Brown University / Trinity Repertory Company’s associate literary manager, commented: “On a personal note, I want to tell you how much I enjoyed reading FIGARO'S FOLLIES. I thought it was a fabulous adaptation, and that it both honored and enhanced its source material. Its cleverness and vitality made it a joy to read.”

Cast of Characters:

Figaro, (FIGARO) valet to the Count formerly barber to Doctor Bartolo

Susanna, (SUSANNA) lady's maid to the Countess engaged to Figaro.

Count Almaviva (COUNT) Signore of the castle, young to middle-aged

Countess Almaviva (COUNTESS) lady of the house, newly married to the Count, former ward of Dr. Bartolo, much younger than the Count , and possibly younger than all of the other women. Also referred to as Rosina.

Marceline (MARCELINE) Upper middle-aged housekeeper to Dr. Bartolo who lent money to Figaro on the bond of his marrying her if he defaulted, in love with Figaro. [NOTE: in panto tradition could be cast as a cross-dressing male.]

Doctor Bartolo, (BARTOLO) former protector of Rosina before she was the Countess seeking revenge on Figaro and the Count

Cherubino (CHERUBINO) post adolescent, distant nephew to the Countess, passionately in love with all of the women in the play, could be played either by a young man or woman as in Beaumarchais' original and Mozart.

Fanchette, (FANCHETTE) house servant, the gardener's daughter and six month's pregnant by the Count, in love with Cherubino

Antonio (ANTONIO) the elderly gardener father to Fanchette, uncle to Susanna

Don Guzman (GUZMAN) [pronounced Gooseman] the malapropish magistrate also could play the priest

Priest (PRIEST) in a black cassock.

Episode 1 – At Your Service

SFX: Open with 18th Century “Le Menuet d’Espagne” which fades out as the narrator begins --

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CADpGCssdJs>

***NARRATOR:** We are in the wardrobe room of a late eighteenth century Spanish castle near Seville. The room is placed between the two bedrooms of the Count and Countess. There is a rather large chair used for barbering with a sheet folded over one arm.*

There is a side table with a brandy bottle and ornate goblets on it as well as a quill pen, ink and writing paper and a large scale deck of playing cards.

On pegs on one side of the room are the Countess’ mantillas and colorful parasols. On the other side are the Count's three identical cloaks fully decorated with awards and ribbons from the king.

Figaro enters in a harlequinesque modified livery costume carrying a yellowed hemp clothesline and his guitar. He begins singing from a score on the table.

FIGARO

SFX – Jeff Dunn’s guitar MUSIC #1

Lover why art thou repining?
Cast away thy sighs and whining

So far not so bad from a man about to disembowel his well-preserved bachelorhood on the altar of matrimony.

(continues singing)

Love and Laziness claim a Part,
Both sharing my Heart.

Fie on it. That will never do. There must be a conflict between the two. *(thinking a bit then writing)*

Love and Laziness “**each**” claim a Part,
Both “**contesting**” for my heart.

Much better. Now from the start. *(picking up his guitar and singing)*

Lover, why art thou repining?
Cast away thy sighs and whining
Love and Laziness “**each**” claim a Part,
Both “**contesting**” for my heart.

I to each his Portion gave,
No injustice can be seen,
For though I’ve made one my Queen,
To the other I am still a Slave.

Cast away thy sighs and whining,
My dearer lover part,
Happily embrace your loving.
And for my laziness . . .

What should I do with the lazy part? No matter, I have more pressing matters.

NARRATOR: *He puts down the guitar, stretches the rope perpendicularly across the room and opens the brandy bottle. He takes a swig out of it then chooses one of the Countess' parasols. With the brandy bottle in one hand and the parasol in the other he begins a tightrope walk across the room carefully placing one foot in front of the other.*

FIGARO

. . . . Nine, ten, eleven . . .

***NARRATOR:** Susanna, enters from the door leading to the Countess' bedroom and picks out one of the Countess' largest mantillas to try on in front of a mirror.*

SUSANNA

The mirror just told me that this mantilla becomes me so. Doesn't it, Figaro?

FIGARO

Twenty two, twenty-three, twenty-four . . .

SUSANNA

Doesn't it, Figaro?

FIGARO

It certainly does. Thirty, thirty-one . . .

SUSANNA

Look at me. Admire it. It gives me such pleasure when you look at me.

FIGARO

The mantilla. . . ?

SUSANNA

Good so far and what does the mantilla do?

FIGARO

It makes you look extraordinarily . . .

SUSANNA

It makes me what?

FIGARO

It makes you look extraordinarily . . . fat.

NARRATOR: *Susanna takes down one of the parasols off the wall and starts poking Figaro with it.*

FIGARO

I meant to say extraordinarily fantastic. You better remove it before the Countess catches you.

SUSANNA

Not to worry. She said that I could pick one to wear at “my” wedding tomorrow. I “meant” to say “our” wedding but that doesn't seem so likely to me right now. *(blows her cheeks out and waddles around)* And I'm certainly not going to choose this one. The black ones are more slimming, don't you think? And maybe more appropriate to our nuptials. Have you ordered the marriage hearse yet?

NARRATOR: *Figaro falls to his knees hugging her legs.*

FIGARO

Oh, Do not forsake me, when my heart is beating with such anticipation on the threshold of love's richly laden pantry.

SUSANNA

I'll forgive you just to stop you from poet-izing. What were you so busy about when I came in?

FIGARO

Measuring to see if the enormous bed down the hall, which our noble lord has so graciously promised to give us, will stand well here.

SUSANNA

In this chamber?

FIGARO

That's why I'm measuring “this” chamber.

SUSANNA

I won't lie in this chamber.

FIGARO

Why so?

SUSANNA

I tell you I won't lie in this chamber.

FIGARO

That's not a reason.

SUSANNA

What if I have no reason? What if I don't choose to give my reason?

FIGARO

So I should insult my master by refusing this honor because my wife-to-be chooses to give no reason. That is logic worthy of a wife.

SUSANNA

Are you or are you not my most obedient, most humble servant?

FIGARO

Your slave. But wherefore take exception to the most convenient room in the whole house becoming our bedroom?

SUSANNA

Yes, Yes it is the most "convenient."

FIGARO

Convenient is the word. If during the night my Lady should be taken ill, she rings, Ding Dong and crack! in three skips you are standing by her side. In the morning when my lord awakens, Ding Dong he calls, I start and pop three skips and I am there.

SUSANNA

Very true. And a little later that morning when my Lord has sent you on some fine errand of an hour's duration, he starts from his bed as soon as Mr. Figaro's back is turned, and Ding Dong Crack! in three convenient skips he . . .

FIGARO

He?

SUSANNA

Yes, he.

FIGARO

He?

SUSANNA

He! Do you not feel any thing?

FIGARO

Horns bursting through my forehead and buttons sprouting like mushrooms suddenly in my stomach. Yes, yes, it is a maddeningly convenient spot.

SUSANNA

Remember how liberal our Count appeared abolishing a certain ancient tradition of the manor to honor his new wife, the Countess?

FIGARO

Of sleeping the first night with every new bride to verify her virginity. I would not have married even my most desired Susanna in such a domain.

SUSANNA

But, Figaro, don't be fooled when the wolf puts on a sheep-skin coat.

FIGARO

What are you suggesting?

SUSANNA

Tired of stalking the wild beauties around the neighborhood, he has decided, like an invalid hunter, to shoot his penned-up game in his own garden from the comfort of his porch. Thus has he returned to his castle.

FIGARO

And to “his” wife.

SUSANNA

(snapping her fingers in Figaro's face)

And to “thy” wife.

Let me be more direct. Our most generous lord told me that renouncing his one night's “droit de seignior” was a ruse to throw you off any suspicions that he was interested in pursuing me. He even joked that when he's made ambassador you'll be elevated to “Royal Courier” and more importantly “Official Cuckold to the Count.”

FIGARO

That bastard. That he would so carelessly destroy my peace of mind for a little sport.

SUSANNA

“A little sport?” That's not a very flattering comment about your future wife. Maybe he finds me irresistibly attractive.

But did you really believe that the rich benefits he has suddenly showered down on us were your just rewards? What great fools you men of wit are. And a correction, bastards can't become counts.

FIGARO

(not listening turning to the Count's door)

Your trick, my most noble Count is common enough. A thousand blundering boobies have art enough to filch a wife from the side of her sleeping spouse. But to turn the tables on the poacher, make him pay dearly for a delicious morsel he shall never taste, infect him with the wasp stings of jealousy and fears for his own honor, to boot him about the stable . . .

SUSANNA

Hah, now you are in your element – purses and plots. But let him that diggeth a pit beware lest he fall into it.

SFX – the Countess' bell rings

My Lady is awake. I must run for she has strictly charged me to be the first at her bedside today.

FIGARO

Why the first?

SUSANNA

Old wives tell us that to first meet a young bride is lucky to a neglected wife. And I have another secret to arm you with. The Countess is still a virgin. She told me that the Count lost any passionate interest in her the instant that they were wed. She's about to burst like an over-ripe fig.

FIGARO

As am I. Give me a kiss before you go.

SUSANNA

But if I kiss my lover today what will my husband say tomorrow? There's all the kisses you shall get.

***NARRATOR:** She gives him air-kisses then exits into the Countess' room. Figaro alone walks up to the Count's bedroom door.*

FIGARO

I perceive your purposes, seigneur. So I am to be made your courier and sent often to the king with dispatches while Susanna's made the ambassadress of the back-stairs. I dashing hither and yon wearing myself to a skeleton for the good of my lord's family, and he laboring night and day for the increase of mine. It shall not be. Figaro, the illegitimate, defies you.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro pours the brandy into one of the crystal goblets, drinks it, then sets the glass carefully down. Slowly he nudges it off of the table to smash on the floor. Marceline and Dr. Bartolo enter.*

MARCELINE

Good morrow, Mr. Bridegroom. Don't cut yourself on the glass. Here, let me clean it up for you.

FIGARO

(startled)

Good morrow, Mistress Marceline. Leave it. I am surprised to see you.

MARCELINE

Not one of those good surprises, is it?

FIGARO

What! And have you also dragged the good doctor after you all the way from Seville? Is it really you my porcine friend?

BARTOLO

(still out of breath)

Yes, Knave's face.

FIGARO

As witty and no doubt as wise as ever. And have you come all this way to see me married?

BARTOLO

To see you hanged.

FIGARO

Most kind doctor. But who takes care of your mule? I know you have no more mercy on your beasts than you have for your patients.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro lightly tugs the hair over the doctor's ear.*

And who is your barber these days? You are long overdo.

BARTOLO

Do you hear the rogue?

FIGARO

Perhaps you have come to recover some stolen property – your young ward Rosina perhaps. Oh, I forgot she's called Countess Almaviva here.

BARTOLO

How dare you.

FIGARO

Easily. And you gentle, Marceline, do you still wish to marry me? Why do you drive me to hate you just because I cannot fall in love with you?

MARCELINE

Do you have the money that you owe me or are you prepared to forfeit your bond?

SFX – the Count's bell rings

FIGARO

You must pardon me, I need attend my lord.

NARRATOR: Figaro quickly exits.

BARTOLO

See how he disrespects us.

MARCELINE

(taking the papers out of the case)

Don't fret, we shall find a magistrate this very day and snare our Senor Fox.

They exit.

Episode 2 -- The Assination

NARRATOR: *Susanna enters the same middle room from the Countess' bedroom carrying a long blue ribbon.*

SUSANNA

I have forgotten what I have come in here for.

NARRATOR: *Cherubino rushes in from the hallway door..*

SUSANNA

Youth, catch your breath. Why are you in such a hurry?

CHERUBINO

I have been watching these two hours to find you alone.

SUSANNA

Well, what have you to say, now that you have found me, alone?

CHERUBINO

(amorously)

How does my beauteous Lady Susanna?

SUSANNA

Very well.

CHERUBINO

Have you heard that the Count is going to send me home to my mamma and poppa?

SUSANNA

Poor Child!

CHERUBINO

Child, indeed. And if my godmother, your dear lady, cannot obtain my pardon, I shall soon be deprived of the pleasure of your company, my fair Susanna, and have to throw myself in the river.

SUSANNA

What for heaven's sake for? You are all the day toying with Fanchette, and moreover in love with my lady and then you come rushing in here with tears in your eyes and grieving for the loss of my company.

CHERUBINO

Fanchette is kind enough to listen to me. That is more than you do, Susanna, for all the love I bear you. And your lady is so worthy to be beloved and so beyond my station that I stammer like an ill-trained parrot whenever we meet.

SUSANNA

Love that you bear “me”? Why you many-horned goat – you are in love with every woman you meet.

CHERUBINO

I am and I can't help myself. If nobody is by, I swear my love to the leaves on the trees . . . to the summer wind even. Just now I met this wonderful woman named Marceline in the hall, and I was instantly struck in the heart by the lightning in her eyes.

SUSANNA

(laughing heartily)

Marceline?

CHERUBINO

What's wrong with her? She is a woman.

SUSANNA

Figaro has told me that she is a witch. Beware she may have cast one of her love-spells on you. But tell me what did you do to infuriate the Count enough to banish you from the castle?

CHERUBINO

Last night he caught me in Fanchette's chamber. Be gone said he, you little . . .

SUSANNA

Little what?

CHERUBINO

He called me such a name, I cannot for shame repeat it before a lady such as yourself. He said that he would not tolerate such sinful scandal under the same roof as his most virtuous wife.

SUSANNA

What were you doing in Fanchette's chamber at such an hour?

CHERUBINO

Rehearsing her her part.

SUSANNA

What part?

CHERUBINO

Her part in the comedy that we are performing at your wedding festivities tomorrow. She's going to play Venus, and I her lover Cupid beginning as a tableau from the Count's painting in his bedroom.

SUSANNA

Were you both naked then.

CHERUBINO

The painting required as much,

SUSANNA

What do you suppose brought the sanctimonious Count to Fanchette's door so late at night? (*Cherubino moves slowly toward the Countess' bedroom door.*) And don't you dare open the Countess' private entrance.

CHERUBINO

This is the very doorway to the heavenly garden of earthly delights.

I would gladly change my sex even to change places with you. To dress her every morning! Undress her every evening. Putting her to bed. Touching her bare shoulder to wake her! Looking at her. Speaking to her.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino notices the ribbon in Susanna's hand and reaches for it which she pulls back but teasingly dangles it in front of him.*

Is it hers?

SUSANNA

It is a most fortunate ribbon. It lives in the happy cap which at night enfolds the auburn ringlets of my young Countess.

CHERUBINO

Give it me. Nay give it me. I will have it.

SUSANNA

But I say that you shan't have it.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino chases her and snatches the ribbon.*

SUSANNA

Give it back. Right now.

CHERUBINO

Be as angry as you want, but you shall never have it again. You should have one of my eyes rather.

SUSANNA

I'll call for the Count and see how long you will be holding his wife's ribbon.

CHERUBINO

If you do not hold your tongue, . . . I'll kiss your mouth shut.

SUSANNA

Kiss me? Do not come near me or you'll lose your ears along with an eye. Beg my Lady to plead for you, indeed. The Count is right to remove you from the castle before you infect every woman or girl within it.

CHERUBINO

Pity rather than censure me, Susanna. How can I help myself? I only ask one favor of you.

SUSANNA

Give me back the ribbon, and I will consider it.

CHERUBINO

Take this paper and show it to your Lady.

SUSANNA

What is it?

CHERUBINO

A song. I can sing what I cannot speak.

SUSANNA

All right but only because you are about to be tossed out of the castle at any minute.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino hands Susanna the piece of paper and then reluctantly the ribbon after smelling it one more time.*

SFX – a light tapping from the Count's bedroom door

COUNT

(whispering)

Susanna, are you alone?

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino starts to panic running around the room, but Susanna hides him first behind her skirts when the Count enters and then scoots Cherubino behind the barber's chair when the Count comes closer to her.*

SUSANNA

You can come in now.

COUNT

So ma charmand, Susanna, have I found you alone at last? But you seem frightened, my gentle dove. Of me? How can that be?

SUSANNA

Consider, my lord, if anybody should come and catch you here.

COUNT

That would be rather mal-appropriate, but it seems rather unlikely at this time of day.

***NARRATOR:** The Count approaches to kiss her on the lips, but she manages to kiss him on both cheeks in the French manner while shooing Cherubino behind the barber's chair.*

She dodges the Count's next move to hug her by swinging him down on the barber chair with Cherubino hiding behind it.

SUSANNA

I was feeling a bit faint in your arms.

COUNT

Sit here until you recover.

***NARRATOR:** The Count tries to get her on his lap which she resists by pretending to collapse on the floor.*

You know, Susanna, that when I am the king's ambassador, I intend to take Figaro with me paying him a ridiculously high salary. And . . . as it is your duty as his wife to follow her husband, you will sadly have to leave my wife's service and be transferred along with Figaro into mine.

SUSANNA

I really don't understand you, my lord, I thought your affection for my lady was so overpowering that you took such pains to steal her from Dr. Bartolo. And to confirm your devotion to her you promised to abstain from a certain ancient privilege.

COUNT

For which all of the young girls are in great sorrow. Aren't they?

SUSANNA

I . . . I . . .

COUNT

Say no more, my sweet one, but promise me you will meet me this evening by the Cherry Pavilion in the garden and be certain that if you will but grant me this small favor you can not ask of me for anything that I will not grant you.

**SFX – the sound of a polite knocking
from the hallway door**

***NARRATOR:** At first alarmed, the Count gets up from the chair and takes a step forward. As he does so, Cherubino slips in behind him to sit in the chair and covers himself with the barber's sheet that is on its arm.*

Susanna directs the Count to hide behind the chair itself.

Fanchette enters obviously pregnant with official looking documents in her hand – the same ones that Marceline had in the earlier scene.

FANCHETTE

Cousin, pardon me. I did knock first as you always told me to do. Have you seen the Count? There are three visitors downstairs who request to meet with him as soon as possible. They gave me this note to give to him.

***NARRATOR:** The Count comes out of hiding as if nothing were out of the ordinary.*

COUNT

Hand it to me, girl. And go immediately to tell them that I am indisposed right now but will be down by and by.

FANCHETTE

Of course, my lord. My lord, exactly how long is by and by?

COUNT

By and by is whenever I appear.

FANCHETTE

Thank you, my lord, for teaching me so much. *(to Susanna)* Were you two playing hide the slipper when I came in? Cherubino and I love that game. *(to the Count)* Please, please, please don't send him away. He has only been here a week, but already I cannot live without him.

COUNT

My child, some day you will realize that by sending him away I am saving your eternal soul. His, I fear, is far beyond salvation.

SUSANNA

(whispered aside)

As is his own. They are birds of a feather.

COUNT

Deliver your message.

FANCHETTE

I'm so sorry. I forgot it already.

COUNT

Just say, "The Count will be down by and by."

FANCHETTE

"The Count will be down by and by."

COUNT

(irritated)

Not to me, to the visitors downstairs.

FANCHETTE

I shall, my Lord, faster than a mouse to its hole. Faster than . . .

COUNT

Just be gone.

NARRATOR: *Fanchette shuffles away as quickly as she can given her present condition.*

COUNT

It appears, my dear one, that Figaro, your husband-to-be and my courier-to-be, is in serious jeopardy from his previous employers. They want to prosecute for the breach of a contract that he had made with the doctor's housekeeper, Marceline, and take him back to Seville.

SUSANNA

What are we to do?

COUNT

As the final authority in this region's jurisdiction, I have much sway with our local magistrate.

But subverting the laws of the land comes at a price. Which I may be willing to pay. That is if you are willing to contribute your share.

SUSANNA

(aside to camera)

And I suspect I already know what collateral I possess.

COUNT

Let's negotiate a good faith deposit right now.

***NARRATOR:** The Count takes her by the hand, chooses an item of clothing from the Countess for Susanna to kneel on as padding in front of the chair and sits on Cherubino hiding under the sheet in the chair.*

CHERUBINO

OOOF.

COUNT

Cherubino! What the devil!

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino bolts out of the chair as well and does the lowest, most obsequious bow possible for the actor and holds it not saying another word for an uncomfortable few seconds.*

CHERUBINO

Might I rise, my lord?

COUNT

No, kowtow lower. It seems you have risen too often already. And so it was to receive this pretty youth that you were so desirous of being alone. And you . . . Get up, you fool.

CHERUBINO

Thank you, my lord.

COUNT

And you. Where are your manners? Forgetting all respect for your friend Figaro not to mention your godmother Countess, you're endeavoring to seduce her favorite maidservant. I, however, shall protect Figaro, a man whom . . . a man whom I, I esteem . . . sincerely to falling victim to your duplicitous assault on his intended wife.

SUSANNA

I must intervene. Knowing that you were angry with him, the poor boy came running to me, begging me to solicit my lady on his behalf, in hopes she might then engage you to forgive him. He was so terrified as soon as he heard you coming that he hid himself in the chair.

COUNT

An unbelievable story for I sat down in that chair as soon as I came in.

CHERUBINO

Yes, my lord, of course you are right. But I hid behind the chair when you first came in.

COUNT

False again for I hid myself behind it when Fanchette entered.

CHERUBINO

Pardon me, my lord, but as you approached I retired under the sheet in the chair where you then sat on me.

COUNT

You are a most irritating changeling . . . you're there; you're here; you're everywhere. You're like a serpent slithering into every crevice. (*turning to Susanna*) And he has been listening to our plans.

CHERUBINO

Indeed I did . . . all I could . . . to not hear a word.

Figaro enters with Fanchette.

FIGARO

What have we here? Penelope and her onslaught of suitors.

FANCHETTE

Have you forgotten my cousin's name, Figaro? It's Susanna not Penelope.

COUNT

(whispering)

Fanchette, fetch Dr. Bartolo and his associates and bring them to my rooms as soon as possible. I feel the need of a physic.

FANCHETTE

(whispering)

I will, my lord. Have you tried prunes and lentils? They always work for me.

NARRATOR: She exits through the hallway door.

FIGARO

Why the sad face, Cherubino? And even in the company of your beloved Fanchette.

CHERUBINO

It is because I shall never see her again. The Count has banished me from the castle.

COUNT

And yet you are still here.

CHERUBINO

It is because I keep my hope alive that my lord will forgive me my sins and grant me pardon. I confess my conduct has been rash, but I can assure your lordship that never the least word shall ever pass my lips about . . .

COUNT

Enough. Enough. Since everybody begs for him, I must grant. Instead of sending him home I shall commission him a captain in my regiment on one condition.

FIGARO

(aside to camera)

If I were made a soldier, I would make some in this castle dance to a different tune. *(to the Count)* Most generous, but what is the condition?

COUNT

That he depart immediately for Catalonia.

SUSANNA

A most Solomon like decision, my lord.

FIGARO

Can it be tomorrow, my lord, after our wedding?

COUNT

No, tonight. . . . I meant to say it must be right now. Figaro will accompany you to the stables. If I see your face again today, it is the dungeon with you. Go kiss Susanna goodbye.

FIGARO

Oh no. There's no occasion for kissing. He'll return in the winter. And in the meantime he may kiss me.

NARRATOR: Figaro gives Cherubino a mouth to mouth kiss.

CHERUBINO

I must learn how to be more courteous with men.

FIGARO

Whoa. Your regimental scene will be changed more radically than you suppose, my boy. You won't be running upstairs and down into your ladies' chambers stealing cream and kisses and sucking oranges. Instead you must sweat and stink and build your muscles, tan your face like leather, turn your delicate hands into claws. Handle your own musket, without a Fanchette's help. Turn to the right! Wheel to the left! And march into hell for the greater glory of your king. Unless, of course, you are stopped short by a bullet.

COUNT

As you can see I must continue dressing. Figaro, I won't need you for the rest of the day.

(whispering to Susanna) You must meet me tonight at the pavilion for all to end well.

***NARRATOR:** The count exits.*

SFX – Countess' bell rings.

SUSANNA

And I to attend my lady.

FIGARO

(aside to Susanna)

What did the count whisper to you just now?

SUSANNA

I can't remember. A matter of no consequence I'm sure.

FIGARO

I'm not so sure. But off to your mistress, my love.

Susanna exits.

And you, my young friend, I might be able to employ with great effect. Come, let us work on recasting the Count's little comedia for this evening.

CHERUBINO

You forget, Figaro, I've been ordered to leave the castle immediately or be clamped in irons.

FIGARO

That's what the Count wants for you. But if you had your liberty what would you choose for yourself?

CHERUBINO

Am I allowed to choose?

FIGARO

Stop being tedious. Do you wish to stay or no?

CHERUBINO

More than anything in the world.

FIGARO

Follow my advice and so you shall.

CHERUBINO

How, how?

FIGARO

Speak to no one, but get your riding boots and I will escort you to the stables as the Count has directed. Gallop as far as the farm. Leave the horse there and return to the castle on foot taking care that no one sees you. . . . Then hide in the root cellar.

CHERUBINO

I will be there waiting. What will follow?

FIGARO

Still nesting in my brain. But fear not I think you will enjoy the part that I write for you. Get along now.

CHERUBINO

(bowing deeply)

I shall humbly obey.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino exits and Figaro addresses the Count's bedroom door.*

FIGARO

No, my most worthy lord and master, you have not got her yet. What did you once say to me, "Because you are a count, you fancy yourself clever." A child could refute you.

How came you to be the rich and powerful Count Almaviva? Why truly all you needed to do to attain such a lofty position in life was survive the travails of being born. By those standards, a newly birthed kitten has achieved an equal accomplishment.

The obscurity and poverty of my birth, however, have given me a great advantage over you for they required more shrewdness and abilities for daily sustenance than are required of a king to govern his entire kingdom. And what, most noble count, are your claims to distinction, to your pompous titles and preferments and immense wealth other than merely an accident of birth?

***NARRATOR:** Figaro picks up a large-sized deck of 18th century playing cards first revealing the backs to the audience.*

In heaven we are equal as cards until Fate deals our hands.

***NARRATOR:** He turns over the first card. It is the king of hearts.*

Here a master,

***NARRATOR:** He snaps that card on the table. He turns over another card. It is the deuce of spades.*

There a servant. But we have yet to discover which one of us wears the trump suit. I'm willing to wager my wife that I shall win, wilt thou, my lord, hazard yours as well?

***NARRATOR:** He snaps down the deuce on top of the king taking that trick.*

I need paper and a pen
For the next act to begin.

***NARRATOR:** He goes to the table and starts writing.*

Episode 3 – Marceline's Lawsuit

NARRATOR: *The scene opens in the Count's bedroom. Marceline and Dr. Bartolo pace back and forth. Guzman, the magistrate, is sitting on a stool acting a bit foolishly. There is a large nude painting of Venus and Cupid over the bed.*

BARTOLO

Does it not seem odd that my revenge on Figaro's betrayal is to prevent him from marrying Susanna and your revenge is filing a lawsuit to force him to marry you?

MARCELINE

Since you were never willing to punish me in like manner after capturing my virginity so many years ago, what other recourse do I have? Besides there is something about Figaro that makes him irresistible to me. Why else would I have been so foolish over the years to loan a wastrel like him so much money?

BARTOLO

At least you were wise enough to have him sign bonds for the repayment or else.

MARCELINE

And the “or else” is a fate worse than debt. He has to marry me. And there is no way that he can acquire so much money on such short notice. What do you think is taking the count so long?

BARTOLO

Don't worry we have time and the law on our side, and the Count, regardless of our prior history, has no other choice but to sustain your claim. Am I not right, Magistrate Gooseman?

GUZMAN

I am not a “goose” but a “Guz”-mann. But the answer to your question is that you are most unquestionably right my most horribly good doctor. With the law (*holding up the lawsuit*) and me as your advocates what hope does truth have to prevail?

NARRATOR: *The Count enters with legal papers in his hand which he passes to the magistrate..*

COUNT

Setting our former disagreements aside, explain in detail what your case is against my loyal servant Figaro?

NARRATOR: *The setting shifts to the Countess's bedroom. What is unseen by the audience is that Cherubino is already hiding under the covers of her bed. The Countess and Susanna enter together arm in arm.*

COUNTESS

Susanna, will you please close the door? And so Cherubino was hidden behind the barber's chair.

SUSANNA

Yes, madam.

COUNTESS

But how did he happen to be in your room in the first place?

SUSANNA

The poor boy came to beg me to prevail on you to obtain his pardon of the Count.

COUNTESS

Why did he not come to me directly? I should not have refused him a favor of that sort.

SUSANNA

Bashfulness, madam. “Oh Susanna,” says he, “She is divinity itself. How noble is her manner” and so on and so forth.

COUNTESS

Is that all true?

SUSANNA

How can you doubt it, madam? You must have noted how besotted he is with you. He can barely stutter out a word in your presence.

COUNTESS

He is a most absent-minded card player.

SUSANNA

That is because he is so countess-minded. You should have seen with what enthusiasm he snatched your ribbon from me. He would not give it back until I had promised to show you his song.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna hands her the paper which the Countess puts on her night-stand.*

COUNTESS

Enough of this nonsense. You are making me blush. And so my lord, the Count, endeavors to seduce you.

SUSANNA

Oh no, indeed, madam. He does not take the trouble to seduce me. He thinks he can purchase me like a Black slave. And because I refuse him, I fear he will prevent, or somehow make conditional, my marriage with my beloved Figaro.

COUNTESS

Knowing personally how hard Figaro worked in acquiring me on the Count's behalf, it is quite evident that my husband is a genuinely ungrateful man.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess walks up and down building up an emotion. Hyperventilating she begins to remove her dress and loosen her corset.*

A covetous and ungrateful man. Open the window will you? I am stifled for want of air. Vows, protestations of love and tenderness are all forgotten. My love now offends him. He has not touched me since putting this ring on my finger. It's now become a noose around my neck.

My caresses, even my young breasts, seem to disgust him. Oh, I long for a man that I can give the treasures of my love to for the simple return of his love.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino hearing her lamentations leaps out from under the covers having been hidden in the bed.*

CHERUBINO

I shall be he!

COUNTESS

Cherubino, for shame.

SUSANNA

What are you doing here?

CHERUBINO

Figaro told me that I am no man's man but my own. Free to do what I want.

SUSANNA

And what is it that you dare to do in my lady's bed chambers to risk your life for it?

CHERUBINO

I wa .. wa .. wanted to . . to say.

SUSANNA

What do you want to say to my beauteous lady?

CHERUBINO

(now looking at Susanna)

I wanted to say that I love her and shall love her as long as I live.

COUNTESS

Esteem, Cherubino.

CHERUBINO

Yes. That I esteem her. I meant “you” . . .

COUNTESS

Look at my eyes.

CHERUBINO

. . . as long as we both shall live.

SUSANNA

The boy is a gushing fountain of esteem and affection. As his punishment for invading your private chambers why don't you make him sing those verses that he wrote for you?

COUNTESS

For me? I thought you implied that he had written them for you.

SUSANNA

Which one of us did you scribble them for?

CHERUBINO

Ah. Ah.

SUSANNA

Since he can no longer speak, command him to sing, my lady.

COUNTESS

Please, pretty youth, I command you to serenade us.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna takes down a guitar
from the instruments hanging on the wall and
gives it to him.*

SFX DUNN guitar music #2 for

Cherubino's song –

<https://vimeo.com/user8588759/review/116990814/86f31585da>

CHERUBINO (singing)

To the Winds, to the Waves to the Woods I complain
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!
They hear not my sighs, and they heed not my pain;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!

The Heavens I view with their azure bright skies;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!
But heaven to me are still her bright eyes;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!

To the Sun's morning splendor the poor Indian bows;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!
But I dare not worship where I pay my vows;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!

The name of my goddess I engrave on each tree;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!
'Tis I wound the bark, but Love's arrows wound me;
Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!

COUNTESS

Sweet youth, we need to help you add a verse or two to your story.

SUSANNA

But first you must unlock your tongue and confess which of our goddess-like
names you hacked into that poor innocent tree.

CHERUBINO

Well . . . as on Olympus, as you know, there are many beautiful goddesses and . . .
.you both reside there. . .

SUSANNA

(whispered aside)

A cleverer answer than I expected.

COUNTESS

But which one will you give the golden apple?

CHERUBINO

To my great sorrow, my lady, I have come here without one.

COUNTESS

Never mind. Are you also sorry that you have to quickly run off and catch up with
my husband's regiment?

CHERUBINO

It frightens me. Please, madam, can you keep me hidden here? I take up such a
little space. I can sleep at the foot of your bed like your spaniel and warm your
feet.

COUNTESS

Don't weep, my delicate youth, don't weep. *(moving closer to him.)* Come, come
let me comfort you.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess removes her
dress.*

Susanna, go to the next room and bring me one of your plainest dresses. We can
disguise him as your new under-maid and delay his parting hence.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess then removes
his shirt, and he lays his head on her breast.*

SUSANNA

Yes, madam, I shall immediately, but first I had better lock your door to keep out any tattling servants.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna locks the countess's entrance door and exits into the wardrobe.*

COUNTESS

Can you sing your song again to me?

CHERUBINO

To the Winds, to the Waves to the Woods I complain

Ah, well-a-day! My poor heart!

They hear not my sighs, . . .

SFX – the sound of a jiggling then a loud banging on the outer bedroom door.

COUNT

(muffled but shouting)

Open this door.

COUNTESS

(whispering to Cherubino)

We are both ruined if he finds you here.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess impulsively kisses him which dazes him for a moment. He jumps into the bed to hide under the covers, but the Countess pulls him out and shoves him toward her closet.*

Quick into the closet.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess takes the key out of the closet door and hands it to him.*

And lock yourself in.

COUNTESS

(yelling toward the door)

Who is it?

COUNT

(still muffled)

Who were you expecting? Open this door immediately or I'll break it down.

SFX – even louder pounding on the outer bedroom door.

COUNTESS

Just one minute.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess covers herself somewhat with the dress that she had just taken off. On her way to unlocking her outer bedroom door she notices Cherubino's clothes on the floor and stashes them under her pillow.*

SFX – the sound of the door being unlocked and opened from the inside by the Countess.

COUNT

Why is this door locked in the middle of the day?

COUNTESS

Because as you can see I am alone and yet to be dressed.

COUNT

Alone? I heard talking. Who were you talking to? And be more dignified.

***NARRATOR:** The Count hands her a robe.*

COUNTESS

Why, to you, of course, the door must have muted the sound.

COUNT

No, before I knocked. Who were you talking to? I thought I heard singing as well.

COUNTESS

Ah. Ah. That must have been Susanna, who I believe went off to rummage in the new room that you have so generously given her.

COUNT

But you seem so agitated, madam.

COUNTESS

That is not impossible because we were speaking of you.

COUNT

Of me?

COUNTESS

Of your indifferences, your other-wise engagements and covetous jealousies.

COUNT

I cannot say for indifference, my lady, and as for jealousy, you know best whether I have any cause.

COUNTESS

My Lord! You insult me! If I were a man, I would slap your face and challenge you to a duel in defense of your wife's honor.

***NARRATOR:** The Count holds up the letter that Figaro anonymously had sent him.*

COUNT

My lady there are people in this world, who are malicious enough to wish to disturb either your repose or mine. Just this afternoon, for example, I received this correspondence that a certain Thing called a Lover . . .

COUNTESS

Lover?!

COUNT

Ay or Gallant or Rogue or any other title you like better, meant to take advantage of my anticipated hunting absence and insinuate himself into my castle with the objective of plundering my wife.

COUNTESS

If this be so, I am surely the last to know of it for I have not felt well and have kept to my room all day.

COUNT

It's lucky for you then that your old protector, the good doctor Bartolo, is here today. I'm sure he knows best how to treat your indispositions.

SFX – A scuffling noise from behind the closet door

What noise is that?

COUNTESS

I heard no noise.

COUNT

No? You must be most confoundedly absent then.

COUNTESS

Oh, to be sure. You have made me faint from your anger.

COUNT

But there is somebody in your closet, madam.

COUNTESS

Who should it be?

COUNT

That's exactly what I want to know.

COUNTESS

A rat, possibly.

SFX – a more intense rattling sound of the door

COUNT

(attempting to open the closet door)

A trained rat most assuredly. Did you teach it how to use a key to lock itself in to keep from being disturbed?

COUNTESS

Oh I remember now, before I lay down I wanted Susanna to try on one my dresses to wear tomorrow.

COUNT

And there is Swiss cheese on the moon. You had just said that she was in her room.

COUNTESS

She slips so quietly into her room – my room – it is all one between us.

COUNT

Really, my lady, this Susanna of yours seems a most nimble, convenient kind of person.

COUNTESS

Really, my lord, this Susanna of yours seems to disturb your quiet exceedingly so.

COUNT

Very true, my lady, so much so that I am determined to see her right now.
Susanna, if Susanna thou art, unlock this door and show yourself. (more noise is heard in the closet) I will give you to the count of ten. One . . .

***NARRATOR:** Susanna peeks in from the other doorway, figures out the situation gets the countess' attention and slips in behind the window curtain.*

COUNTESS

That is enough. Would you have the girl come out half naked? Susanna, for the sake of female decency I order you to not unlock this door.

SFX – the loudest rattling of the closet door.

COUNT

Well if whoever is in there won't come out on his or her own, I will get one of the servants to force open the door. . . . (*shouting*) Antonio!

COUNTESS

Do. Do, my lord. Expose either your ridiculous jealousy or my outrageous adultery to your servants. Make yourself the laughing stock of the whole world.

COUNT

Madam, since you will not suffer the door to be opened by any other means will you kindly accompany me while I procure an instrument to force it myself.

COUNTESS

(relieved)

To be sure, my lord. I will enjoy the look on your face when I am vindicated.

COUNT

And in order that you may be fully vindicated without a speck of skepticism, I will make these doors fast.

***NARRATOR:** The Count locks the door to the other room and takes the key and locks the bedroom entrance door and takes that key as well.*

As for the Susanna in the closet, she will have the opportunity to make herself decent for our imminent return.

COUNTESS

This action greatly honors your nobility, my lord.

***NARRATOR:** After she gives a sign to Susanna hiding behind the curtain, both the Count and the Countess exit through the main bedroom door.*

SFX – the sound of the outer bedroom door shutting and being locked.

SUSANNA

Cherubino, Cherubino! Unlock the closet door. Quickly, it's Susanna.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino comes out of the closet wearing one of the Countess' fancier dresses; Susanna takes the key from him.*

CHERUBINO

Oh, Susanna.

SUSANNA

Oh, my poor Mistress.

CHERUBINO

What will become of her?

SUSANNA

All will be well, I assure you. I'm more worried about my own marriage.

CHERUBINO

What will become of me?

SUSANNA

Don't just stand there babbling, boy. Fly!

CHERUBINO

The doors are all locked fast. How can I?

SUSANNA

Don't ask me. Fly!

CHERUBINO

Here's a window. Underneath is a bed of flowers. I'll leap out.

SUSANNA

You'll break your neck!

CHERUBINO

Better that than ruin my dear lady. Give me one kiss, Susanna.

SUSANNA

Was there ever seen such a young . . .

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino removes the dress he has on, kisses Susanna then jumps. She looks out the window.*

He is safe. If that boy does not make many a woman's heart ache, I know not women. And now, my greedy Count, perhaps you will learn a lesson or two as well.

Episode 4 -- Discovery

NARRATOR: *Susanna locks herself in the Countess' closet right before the entrance of the Countess and the Count with a wrecking bar. The Count verifies that both entrance doors to the bedroom are still locked.*

COUNT

Everything is as I left it. Do you still persist in forcing me to break open the door? I am determined to see who is in there.

COUNTESS

Hold your hand. I confess that I have great love for another who is within this closet. Please show mercy for the love that you used to bear me. Dear one, please spare my door and show yourself. Our charade is at an end.

SFX – the sound of a key in the lock

SUSANNA

My lord, forgive us our little jest.

COUNT

But perhaps you were not alone in there.

SUSANNA

(aside to the Countess)

Fear not. He is not there. He has jumped out of the window.

COUNTESS

And broken his neck.

SUSANNA

He ran off as light and swift as a greyhound.

COUNT

Nobody there. Upon my soul, madam, you are a great actress. Your distress was completely believable.

SUSANNA

And am I not also an excellent actress, my lord?

COUNT

With the letter and the locked doors and your strange behavior, you can appreciate my confusion.

SUSANNA

Appreciate may be too strong a word, my lord.

COUNT

My dear Rosina.

COUNTESS

No, no. I am no longer that Rosina whom you loved with such affection. I am now nothing but the pathetic Countess of Almaviva. A neglected wife, not the beloved mistress.

COUNT

Nay, do not make my humiliation too severe or I will suspect that you two are the authors of this letter to gull me for sport.

SUSANNA

What letter?

COUNT

This one.

SUSANNA

The writing is in a man's hand.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro enters the bedroom.*

FIGARO

They told me my lady was indisposed. I ran to inquire and am very happy to find there is nothing to worry about.

COUNT

Very attentive, Figaro.

FIGARO

As she is your wife, it is my duty so to be, my lord. Come, come, my charmer, we must prepare for the wedding.

COUNT

Just how attentive have you been to my wife, Figaro?

FIGARO

As a lap dog to a lap, my lord. No less than you have been to my Susanna.

COUNT

You'd be better off keeping your nose away from where it doesn't belong. Where were you an hour ago when I sent for you?

FIGARO

At the stables putting Cherubino on his horse and pointing him in the direction of your regiment, my lord

COUNT

If I did not know that you are lying, I could have read it on your face.

FIGARO

Indeed, my lord? Then it is my face that lies and not I.

***NARRATOR:** The gardener, Antonio, enters half drunk with a broken flower pot, a half empty bottle of stout and his daughter Fanchette.*

ANTONIO

My great lord, if you don't have them windows nailed shut, I won't have a nosegay fit to give your lady. They not only throw out rubbish, but just now they tossed out a man.

COUNT

A Man. Just as I suspected.

ANTONIO

In white stockings he was and missing his shirt.

COUNT

Where is this man?

ANTONIO

That's what I want to know. If chambermaids are permitted to toss men out of windows to save their reputations what hope is there for flowers and pots. Right, Fanchette? You wouldn't throw a man out of a window, would you?

FANCHETTE

Never have – never would.

ANTONIO

Good girl.

FIGARO

For shame, Antonio. Drunk almost blind so soon of an afternoon.

COUNT

What of the man?

ANTONIO

I followed him meself, my lord, as stumbly fast as an old man could, but somehow an unlucky false step whirled me into the garden gate and I sort of

forgot my errand. As my niece, Susanna can avow I am a man of great diligence and no stranger to catching angry geese. Can I make a toast to her good fortune on the day before her wedding day?

COUNT

(getting really angry)

What of the man? Should you know this man again?

ANTONIO

To be sure I should, my lord. If I had seen him that is.

COUNT

Either speak more plainly, you old fool, or I'll send you packing.

ANTONIO

Send me packing? Oh no. If your lordship has not enough, enough . . . to know when you have a good gardener, I know when I have a good place.

FIGARO

There is no occasion, my lord, for threatening my uncle-to-be. I shall solve this mystery for you. It was I who jumped out of the window into the garden.

COUNT

You?

FIGARO

C'est moi.

COUNT

Jump out of a two story window?

FIGARO

The ground was soft. I did hurt my right leg, a little. *(begins to limp)* just here at the ankle.

COUNT

But what reason had you to jump out of the window?

ANTONIO

Figaro, if it was you, you've grown awfully fast within the last half-hour. The man that I saw did not seem so tall by a full head and shoulders.

FIGARO

Does not one double one's self up when one jumps?

ANTONIO

It seemed he was a great deal more like my lady's godson, Cherubino.

FIGARO

Oh sure, Cherubino galloped all the way to the regiment and back again horse and all to leap out of this window.

ANTONIO

I'll swear my life on it. . . . I saw no horse leap out of that window.

FIGARO

There it is then. Come, Susanna, let us make preparations for the wedding.

ANTONIO

Well, Figaro, since it was you after all. I ought to return this paper which dropped out of your pocket as you fell.

***NARRATOR:** The Count grabs the paper out of Antonio's hands.*

COUNT

Ah, since it was you, you doubtless can tell us what this paper contains.

FIGARO

Oh my lord, I always carry such quantities of papers on my person. Here's a petition from that poor poacher whose whole family is starving while he is in your prison. I knew you had affairs much more serious on your hands to attend to it. Here's a whole handful of bills from your tailor for your lordship's ruffles and robes that have not been paid in over a year.

NARRATOR: Figaro keeps glancing toward Susanna and the Countess for some clue about the contents of the letter.

COUNT

(holding the paper up)

We know it's not those.

COUNTESS

(whispering to Susanna)

It's Cherubino's commission.

NARRATOR: Susanna knocks a candle off of the table. When she and Figaro stoop to pick it up, she whispers to him.

SUSANNA

(whispering)

It's the commission.

COUNT

Well it appears you know nothing of the matter.

FIGARO

Oh Lord!

(as if suddenly remembering)

What a stupid fool I am! It is the officer's commission for that pathetic boy Cherubino.

COUNT

Then tell me how you came by it. Why did he give it to you?

FIGARO

To .. to .. to

COUNT

To what?

FIGARO

To get. . .

COUNT

To get what? It wants nothing.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro desperately looks to the Countess and Susanna for help who look over the Count's shoulder. The Countess pounds her fist over her palm as if stamping a seal.*

FIGARO

A rock.

COUNT

A rock?

***NARRATOR:** Susanna quickly mimes a seal.*

FIGARO

A seal on a rock . . . is customary, my lord.

COUNT

Stop the gibberish. It's customary to do what?

***NARRATOR:** Susanna mimes stamping the paper.*

FIGARO

To affix your lordship's official “seal” on such an important document.

NARRATOR: The Count closely inspects the paper.

COUNT

The Devil and his Imps take you all. *Fanchette*, Tell the doctor, Marceline and the magistrate to meet me in the great hall at three this afternoon.

FIGARO

Are you going, my lord, without giving orders for our wedding?

COUNT

My most astute Figaro, it had slipped my mind. But there is a matter that needs to be resolved before you and Susanna can make wedding plans. We can meet at three this afternoon in the great hall to properly “adjudicate” that matter.

NARRATOR: The Count exits as does Fanchette and Antonio..

COUNTESS

Susanna, would you come with me to pick out a dress for this evening?

NARRATOR: The Countess exits into the wardrobe room.

SUSANNA

In one moment, my lady. *(to Figaro)*. A seal on a rock, really?

FIGARO

What was Cherubino doing in the Countess' bed chamber with the two of you?

SUSANNA

Singing.

FIGARO

So I put my position with the Count in peril so that Cherubino could be safe to sing in his lady's chambers. None of this bodes well for us. I did not like the way the Count pronounced “properly adjudicate” just now.

COUNTESS

Susanna, are you coming?

SUSANNA

Yes, my lady. *(to Figaro)* Know, my love, that I will do everything in my power to secure both our marriage and our positions.

NARRATOR: Susanna exits and Figaro addresses the audience.

FIGARO

Everything. That's exactly what I fear the most. . .

Do you suppose that I am forever doomed to be the football of Fortune? Son of who knows who. Stolen, I know not how, along with this ring, which I wear always like a birthmark under my shirt. Lying and thieving excepted, I did have the innate good sense, to escape a life so base as my infernal gypsy captors led

When I was younger I had the courage of an ape. Took what I needed when I needed it and daring down the consequences. My genius, though cramped, would not be subdued, and I spent what little money I had on books and study. I stole learning from wherever I could snatch it. Plucking it out of the air tucked in the corner of book shops.

I even had the audacity to attempt writing a comedy myself. But as I had the greater audacity to attack the favorite vice of the favorite mistress of the favorite minister, I was rewarded by being given free lodging with straw, bread and water included in one of our nation's most illustrious dungeons.

After I was released I decided on a second, safer birth in the lap of the barbering trade.

Then as fortune would have it in Seville I cut the hair of a lord who was madly in love with a beautiful young girl already spoken for. My wit procured for him what his could not and in return he now most gratefully honors me by seducing my future wife.

Who to demonstrate her great love for me, so she says, smilingly steps into his crude trap. That foolish little animal who had given me, up to now, such joy that I had never experienced before. Vanished. But have you really vanished, my sweet Susanna, or is that an illusion as well? Are husbands and wives and servants and masters as interchangeable as different hands pulling the puppets' strings?

Episode 5 – Plot and Counterplot

NARRATOR: *Susanna is brushing the Countess' hair in her bedroom when Fanchette knocks and immediately enters carrying a letter.*

FANCHETTE

Madam, pardon my existence, but Figaro told me that I was to deliver only to you personally this letter from my lord, your husband, the Count of Almaviva.

COUNTESS

Did you forget his Royal Ambassador to England title?

FANCHETTE

and royal ambassador to Finland.

COUNTESS

Close enough. Thank you, Fanchette, and while the doctor is here you should ask him about your condition.

FANCHETTE

I don't know what is wrong with me. I can't keep any food down and yet I keep getting rounder and rounder.

SUSANNA

Don't worry, dear cousin. It's a common ailment especially among actresses and young housemaids who work in this castle.

NARRATOR: *Fanchette takes her leave along with some perfume from the Countess' dresser.*

COUNTESS

Susanna, it seems that our little escapade today has produced some good results.

SUSANNA

How so?

COUNTESS

This letter from my husband in most affectionate terms pleads with me to appear around midnight to meet him in the Plum Pavilion. He further states that I am to send my reply to him only through Fanchette, our clandestine go-between. Isn't that romantic? I blush with anticipation.

SUSANNA

I don't want to douse your blushes with water, but as your dearest companion I must confess that I also received such a letter from your husband earlier today arranging a secret assignation this evening in the Cherry Pavilion.

COUNTESS

How cruel of you. I don't believe a word you are saying.

SUSANNA

Do you believe this?

***NARRATOR:** Susanna holds up the pin that the Count used to fasten the letter.*

COUNTESS

It is one of his favorites.

SUSANNA

In his letter he asked me to wear it as a sign of consenting to the arrangement.

COUNTESS

And, of course, you will refuse for my sake.

SUSANNA

Or should I accept, seemingly so to be sure, and you as well and snare him in his own nets? He apparently is debauched and deluded enough to think that he can have us both -- one after the other or together as if he were breeding cattle.

COUNTESS

There's one obvious solution.

SUSANNA

What's that?

***NARRATOR:** The Countess picks up a pair of scissors.*

COUNTESS

Let's take the bull by the balls and snip, snip, snip. *(putting the pin of Susanna)*
So wear this pin this afternoon in the great hall and tonight I shall dress in your clothes and you in mine and you shall go to the, the the *(looking at the letter)*
Plum Pavilion and I to the Cherry.

SUSANNA

We shall out-trick that trickster.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna carefully takes the scissors from the Countess' hands and puts it aside.*

COUNTESS

The Count rather did look like a bull when he was going to crash down the closet doors to get at my faceless lover. But Cherubina does have a face, doesn't he, Susanna? As beautiful as any in an Italian painting. I do so pray the impending war will neither mar nor harden it.

SUSANNA

I do believe that you are falling in love with Cherubino.

COUNTESS

I think not with him but definitely I love his face.

SUSANNA

Then get him to a portrait studio as quickly as possible and you shall have love everlasting.

COUNTESS

We have other business to attend to first. Bring me the clothes that you were going to wear this evening and collect some of mine. We can also make good use of these masks. Then call for Fanchette. I am writing my reply to my loving husband.

***NARRATOR:** Lights fade out and then
fade in on Figaro beginning to shave the
Count in the dressing room's barber's
chair.*

COUNT

Come, come. Be sincere. Tell me how much did the Countess give you for lying about jumping out of her window?

FIGARO

As much as your lordship gave me for helping him steal her.

COUNT

Why is there continually so many elements of mystery in your words?

FIGARO

Because the words and conduct of others is so mysterious.

COUNT

(leaning his head back)

Appearances, my dear Figaro.

FIGARO

(lathering the Count's neck)

Appearances, my dear lord are frequently false. I, for example, am much better than I appear to be. Can the great nobility in general say as much or do they need to be cut down to size? *(threatening with the razor)*

SFX – the sound of polite knocking on the door interrupts the scene.

COUNT

Enter.

FANCHETTE

The doctor, Marceline and the magistrate . . .

COUNT

Let them wait.

FIGARO

Aye, let them wait.

COUNT

And do you expect to gain your cause?

FIGARO

With the assistance of Justice and my lord's good wishes. You respect youth too much yourself to force others to wed with age.

COUNT

Really, you can read my mind so easily, can you? You are aware that a judge can know no distinction of persons.

FIGARO

(a whispering aside)

Unless there is more gold on one side of the scales than on the other, that is.

COUNT

Fanchette, tell everyone to meet me in the great room in a few minutes. I need to compose myself.

NARRATOR: Susanna enters.

FIGARO

(whispering in passing as he begins to exit)

What are you doing here?

SUSANNA

The Countess requires the Count's smelling bottle.

NARRATOR: Figaro exits with Fanchette.

(to the Count) Are you in ill humor?

COUNT

A gadfly keeps biting me. But your presence brings me great relief.

SUSANNA

My lady has sent me for your lordship's smelling bottle. She has the vapours and taken to her bed.

COUNT

Here it is. And when she has done with it, you may return to borrow it for yourself.

SUSANNA

Oh no, the vapours is too noble a disease for a mere servant to aspire to.

COUNT

Fits may come to anyone. Love so intense as yours cannot bear much disappointment, and when Figaro marries Marceline. . .

SUSANNA

Suppose the worst judgment. We can pay Marceline with the portion your lordship has promised us.

COUNT

I promised you a portion?

SUSANNA

If my ears did not deceive me, I understood as much a while back.

COUNT

Your recent coyness has put me into doubt . . .

SUSANNA

It's never too late to admit one's emotional weaknesses, my lord.

COUNT

What does that mean? Will you take a walk this evening in the garden by the Cherry Pavilion or not?

SUSANNA

Do I need to speak it? Did you not note the pin that I am wearing?

COUNT

No more equivocations. Let us understand one another. No pavilion – no marriage.

SUSANNA

And no marriage – no pavilion, my lord.

COUNT

Touche. A “touch” on both sides. But tell me why have you always resisted a definite response like this morning for instance.

SUSANNA

This morning, my lord? With Cherubino behind the chair?

COUNT

I had forgotten. Will you go now and tell Figaro all?

SUSANNA

To be sure, my lord. I always tell him all – except what is necessary to conceal.

COUNT

What a charming cat you are. Run quickly back to your mistress. She is waiting and may suspect us.

SUSANNA

I shall immediately.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna exits.*

COUNT

She absolutely entrances me! I had sworn to think no more of her, but she winds me as tightly as she pleases even now.

***NARRATOR:** Lights fade out and then fade in on the Great Hall set up for Figaro's trial. Unbeknownst Cherubino is secreted behind one of the curtains.*

GUZMAN

Let me interrogate the facts for our ignoble judge, Count Almaviva. Marceline, you are the persecutor in this case, will you expound for the Court?

MARCELINE

I shall be happy, Monsieur Magistrate, to explain the justice of my cause.

GUZMAN

First we shall examine the case verbally.

MARCELINE

There is a promise of marriage.

GUZMAN

I comprehend . . . given by you to . . .?

MARCELINE

No given “to” me. And a certain sum of money . . .

GUZMAN

which you have received.

MARCELINE

which I have lent.

GUZMAN

And it has been repaid.

MARCELINE

No, it has definitely not been re-paid which is why we are all here, in front of the judge, our lordship.

GUZMAN

I comprehend. And the defensive man, Figaro, over there will marry you as propositioned and then pay you the money he owes.

MARCELINE

No, no, no. He will neither marry me nor has he any money to pay me.

GUZMAN

Do you think that I don't comprehend you?

MARCELINE

Your lordship, is there anything that you can do about this imbecile?

GUZMAN

I take offense at that accusation, your lordship. You, yourself elevated me to the rank of “moron” not six months ago.

COUNT

That may have been a rash decision. Marceline, since this is a domestic case I shall direct Monsieur Gooseman to simply read your claim.

GUZMAN

As you command. Plaintiff Marceline – Jane – Maria – Angelica Mustacio, spinster against Figaro Anonymous. I never heard the surname of anonymous before.

COUNT

It means he has no father. He's a bastard.

GUZMAN

What profession, Figaro? It's left blank.

FIGARO

Gentleman.

COUNT

Gentleman, indeed.

FIGARO

All right then just put down, Possible prince.

COUNT

Put down “barber.” And go on with it, or I'll demote you back to idiot.

GUZMAN

Against Figaro Anonymous, “barber.” The Question before the court relates to a promise of marriage given as bond for the repayment of a debt accumulated to 2,000 escudos borrowed over a five year period by the defendant from the plaintiff.

COUNT

Cut to the point of contention. Read the appended promise of marriage.

GUZMAN

“I acknowledge to have received of Marceline Mustachio the sum of 2,000 escudos during service in the residence of Doctor Bartolo. Which sum I promise to repay to the said Marceline Mustachio, and to marry her upon termination of that service.” Signed Figaro.

COUNT

Figaro, do you contest the validity of the bond?

FIGARO

Let me see that. There is in this case either fraud, error, malice or mischief for the actual words of the acknowledgment are, I promise to repay said amount “or” to marry her which is very different.

BARTOLO

I witnessed the document's signing. See my initials on the bottom there? And I affirm the word is “and.”

FIGARO

And I affirm that the doctor is an inept forger. As you can see the word “or” has been scratched out and crudely written over it.

BARTOLO

The document must have been damaged in its transport here.

COUNT

I will accept that as a concession on the part of the doctor and render my decision after conferring with the magistrate.

MARCELINE

(to Bartolo)

Their whispering forebodes me no good. I suspect that Susanna has corrupted our chief judge.

BARTOLO

It looks devilishly like it.

GUZMAN

Silence in the court.

COUNT

The judgment of the court is that the promise of marriage is disjunctive rather than conjunctive, It is the opinion of this court that the logic of the agreement and the disparity of the two parties makes it obvious that the original word was intended to be “or” rather than “and.” Therefore, Figaro is permitted to dispose of his own person.

FIGARO

The day's my own.

MARCELINE

I expected that the bias of the court would roll in Figaro's direction.

COUNT

But as the acknowledgment now clarified clearly states, “which sum I promise to pay said Marceline Mustachio **or** to marry her.” the defendant Figaro is ordered to pay the sum of two thousand escudos to the plaintiff within the next twenty-four hours **or** marry her if the appellant still so wishes.

FIGARO

I'm undone.

MARCELINE

(throwing her arms around Figaro)

He is mine at last!

BARTOLO

And I am finally revenged.

SUSANNA

(aside to the Count)

What have you done?

COUNT

I've just purchased insurance for your appearance tonight. The advantage is in my court, ma chérie.

***NARRATOR:** Everyone leaves the Great Hall with the exception of Figaro who finally prevents Marceline from dragging him with her.*

FIGARO

(aside to the camera)

The Count has check-mated me. How could I lose to that fungus Gooseman?

CHERUBINO

(leaping out from behind the curtain)

All is not lost, Cherubino is here!

FIGARO

Stop doing that. You are the chief cause of the Count's suspicions and anger with me. I have been looking all over the castle for you.

CHERUBINO

Are you going to join the regiment with me?

FIGARO

I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro takes Cherubino by the ear and marches him off the stage.*

**SFX Begin French- Spanish 18th century
music to transition to next scene**

Episode 6 – The Two Counts

NARRATOR: *The setting for the final two scenes is the castle garden, at midnight and dawn of the next day.*

Figaro enters carrying two painting easels and two placards – one with “Cherry Pavilion” written on it and the other with “Plum Pavilion” on it. He sets each one up in front of the appropriate love pavilion and lights candles to illuminate each.

FIGARO

In these hard times I am pressed to serve as prop master, prompter, chorus and author of this sad farce. How I wish I could change it to a merry one but never has there been an author so compromised by his actors – one actress in particular. O woman, woman, inconstant moon driven woman. But each animal is obliged to follow the instincts of its nature and it is woman's nature to betray. What while swearing this morning to remain ever faithful she is plotting to betray me before the night is past – on the very eve of our wedding. I may be a man equal to my lord, but the nocturnal spells of that enchantress woman, soon may transform me into a monster. (checking the set) There appears to be something missing.

NARRATOR: *Figaro strikes himself lightly on the head and goes to lead in Cherubino, by the ear.*

CHERUBINO

That hurts, Figa . . .

FIGARO

Quiet someone is coming.

NARRATOR: *The Count appears double checking the pavilion signs; he enters the Cherry Pavilion.*

The Countess appears dressed in Susanna's clothing wearing a mask. She stops at the signs and moves a candle closer to read them. She enters the Cherry Pavilion as well.

FIGARO

Oh, my faithless Susanna. I wish I had enough gun powder to blow them both to hell.

FSX – a church bell begins striking midnight

***NARRATOR:** Susanna appears dressed in the Countess' clothes and wearing a mask. Both should also be wearing mantillas from Act I. She at first approaches the Cherry Pavilion in the dark, stops, reads the sign then changes directions toward the Plum Pavilion but pauses before entering. She finally enters as the twelfth bell is rung.*

FIGARO

Beware, my Countess dove; I'm about to loose my falcon. Wake up, Cherubino. This is your cue. Do not doubt your worthiness, my boy, your costume has transformed you into a lord.

CHERUBINO

I shall not disappoint my lady.

FIGARO

How chivalrous of you.

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino sprints towards the Cherry Pavilion. Figaro has to run after him and re-direct him to the Plum Pavilion.*

My directorial job is done. I need to rest for tomorrow's final act.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro lies down to sleep covering himself with the cloak.*

Lights dim then gradually come up to simulate dawn.

Antonio and Fanchette enter from the open V between the two pavilions. They are dressed for a celebration. They discover Figaro still sleeping under his cloak near the topiary and wake him.

ANTONIO

Awaken, Figaro. It's your wedding day.

FIGARO

Had you not heard about the outcome of my case?

ANTONIO

Everyone has heard. I can't sort it all out, but the one thing I know for certain is whichever the bride, you will be the groom.

***NARRATOR:** Marceline, Bartolo and a priest in a cassock enter.*

MARCELINE

(Shouting)

There is my husband!

***NARRATOR:** Marceline lifts Figaro off of the ground and holds him in her arms like a sack of flour.*

BARTOLO

And my scoundrel.

FANCHETTE

I wish my Cherubino was here to embrace me.

***NARRATOR:** The Count emerges from the Cherry Pavilion with a white scarf around his neck.*

COUNT

What is all this noise about?

MARCELINE

I have brought the priest to get married as quickly as possible before Figaro slips through my fingers once again.

COUNT

Figaro, have you now or are you likely to have by three of the clock today the requisite sum to redeem your bond?

FIGARO

You already know the answer to that.

COUNT

Well then.

***NARRATOR:** The Countess still dressed in Susanna's clothes and masked emerges from the Cherry Pavilion.*

FIGARO

What is this, my lord.

COUNT

We had hoped to protect your honor, but then here it is. Unbeknownst to you, Susanna had approached me recently about reversing my previous decision and exercising my rights of the seigneur of the manor to attest to her virginity in the traditional manner. And you'll be pleased to know, Figaro, that she was indeed a virgin. A most delectable one at that. You are a lucky man, my friend.

***NARRATOR:** The Count places the white scarf around her neck. While he is doing this, Susanna dressed as the Countess and also masked emerges from the other pavilion and stands there in silent witness.*

FIGARO

And, my lord, you'll be relieved that your wife knows what kind of husband she has married.

COUNT

What are you talking about?

***NARRATOR:** Cherubino enters dressed as the Count but still masked standing next to Susanna dressed as the Countess.*

And who the hell is that?

ANTONIO

I must give up the drink. I'm seeing two Counts..

FANCHETTE

So am I, father.

***NARRATOR:** The Count removes Cherubino's mask.*

COUNT

You. It is always you. Damn you and my dishonored wife.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna bows still in the guise of the Countess.*

SUSANNA

My cuckolded lord.

COUNT

Well , Figaro, at least I have beaten you to Susanna's maidenhead.

***NARRATOR:** Susanna now unmask.*

SUSANNA

I think not, my lord.

FIGARO

Now I am amazed.

COUNT

Then who is playing Susanna's part?

***NARRATOR:** The Count turns to take the mask off of the Countess.*

COUNTESS

The only person you should be making love to, your wife.

ANTONIO

(beginning to weep)

I'm really confused now.

FIGARO

My lord, I am pleased to echo your earlier announcement to the wide world that your wife has indeed been a virgin up until last evening. And I trust so has my wife.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro takes the white scarf off of the Countess and puts it around Susanna's neck.*

Appearances sometimes do hide realities, don't they, my lord. And fortunately there is a priest in attendance to hear your confession just in case you are about to be struck dead by God's righteous indignation.

PRIEST

These strange events may well strain even God's absolution.

COUNT

But Rosina's forgiveness is what I first must seek. Can you forgive me, my lady Countess? It certainly would be a most unmerited pardon.

COUNTESS

I shall on two conditions, my husband. First that you extend that same pardon to my godson, Cherubino, for all of his youthful transgressions and rescind his banishment from the castle.

COUNT

So granted him that pardon but I fear his impetuosity will some day become my undoing.

COUNTESS

So shall I grant mine to you. But there is another condition as well.

COUNT

And what is that?

COUNTESS

That you sing the song that first won my heart in Seville when that poor Lindor fellow was made rich only by his love for me. For truly this is the first day of our marriage.

COUNT

Thy will be done.

***NARRATOR:** He sings haltingly at first
then with fuller voice.*

SFX – DUNN guitar MUSIC #3

Behold your lover fearful grown
All his fond hopes are chased away

He does adore you while yet unknown
But now your will he dreads to obey.

In me a humble youth behold
With me a humble lot you'll prove.
I've neither titles, gems nor gold
Yet am I passing rich in love.

Here poor Lindor shall chant his refrain
At morn, at noon, at eve, at night.
And though his vows prove all in vain
Your beauty shall ever bless his sight.

***NARRATOR:** The Count and Countess
embrace.*

COUNT

(returning to himself)

BUT I do not pardon you, Figaro, for your part in the creation of this humiliating charade. Never forget that I am your irreducible reality. Come here Marceline . . .
(to Figaro). No money – No marriage to Susanna. No money – Until-death-do-you-part marriage to Marceline.

ANTONIO

(to Fanchette)

I told you Figaro would be married today.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro desperately pulls a
ring out from under his shirt on its chain
from around his neck.*

FIGARO

Marceline, please have mercy on me. Pawn this ring and accept it as a down payment on what I owe. I can not live without Susanna.

MARCELINE

How came you by this ring?

FIGARO

It is my entire patrimony. I have had it from infancy.

MARCELINE

Doctor, do you not recognize this ring? It is the very one that you gave to me on the birth of our son, Fernando. I had this chain made so that he could wear it as a talisman against the evil spirits of the night.

BARTOLO

It cannot be. *(to Figaro)* Did you not buy this from some passing gypsy?

FIGARO

It is all I had when they took me and all I took with me when I escaped.

BARTOLO

Figaro, Fernando rather, behold thy mother.

MARCELINE

And there behold thy father.

FIGARO

He, my father? Oh Lord, what a mixture of salvation and damnation.

MARCELINE

Had you never felt our shared natures pleading within you to be attracted to me?

FIGARO

No, . . .never.

MARCELINE

This must have been the secret cause of my unrelenting fondness for you.

FIGARO

No doubt since I tried so hard to repel you. . . . Come to think on it maybe that was the cause of my aversion, since you appear so lovely to me now.

MARCELINE

Susanna, embrace thy mother. Thy mother who will love you dearly.

SUSANNA

Now, I am amazed. And do you consent that I shall have your Figaro free and clear?

MARCELINE

Willingly. Here, my son, here is your first wedding present – the promise completely satisfied.

***NARRATOR:** Marceline tears up the promissory note.*

FIGARO

My manly pride would fain make me restrain my tears lest they flow in spite of me. Well let them. Let them flow. Joys like these never come twice. Oh, my Susanna, Oh my family.

***NARRATOR:** Figaro embraces the Doctor, Marceline and Susanna who breaks away.*

SUSANNA

(addressing the audience)

Dear friends, we shall conclude our play on this merry note. Figaro brought to tears of joy is such a moment to long remember. Much more so than his endless interrogations of me about what Cherubino and I were doing to pass our time in the pavilion while he slept. We will reserve that dialogue for another play on another day.

But before our follies are ended this night
Please pardon our errors and forgive any slight
So you can clap, sing and have the chance
To join with us in our wedding dance.

SFX Begin the French folk dance music –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KdqLrriKm0>

END of PLAY



Pierre-augustin Caron De Beaumarchais



**Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin at the Covent Garden Theatre
(c. 1790's)**



**EastBay Players staged reading cast for “Figaro's Follies”
(2014)**

**For information about licensing performances
contact John Freed directly.**



photo courtesy: © 2014 Stacy Alexander

(freed@brandman.edu)

**© Copyright (2014 - 2018) by John Freed
all rights reserved**