

RIGOLETTO

Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Original libretto by Francesco Piave,
based on Victor Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse*
English version by Andy Gaus

ACT I

(A splendid party at the Duke's palace.)

DUKE

Still haven't scored with my little peasant darling. I think I need to press a little harder.

BORSA MATTEO

Is that the girl you see in church on Sunday?

DUKE

Every Sunday for three months now!

BORSA MATTEO

Where is her lodging?

DUKE

It's in a run-down alley. Some strange man keeps showing up at night there.

BORSA MATTEO

And does she know the truth about who you are?

DUKE

Of course not.

BORSA MATTEO

Beautiful girls! You see them?

DUKE

I'd give them all for the wife of Count Ceprano.

BORSA MATTEO

Watch out, the Count might hear you.

DUKE

So let him hear me.

BORSA MATTEO

Well, he might be offended.

DUKE

Let him howl as he may. She's all that matters.

"Questa o quella"

Women love me.

I tell them there's no one quite like them,

But the truth is,

One's much like another.

Never tell me,

"Choose one or the other,"

Because in my eyes

They're too much the same.

When a beautiful lady comes calling,

Then Life hands you a beautiful big bouquet.

But who knows when

The lovely bouquet will fade and wither

And the time has come

To throw it away,

The time has come, the time has come

To throw it away.

People tell me
Love has to be faithful to the end,
And I tell them,
That's not a good attitude.
I dispense with
Such meaningless platitudes.
How can I love unless
My heart is my own?

What do I care if husbands are jealous
Or gossips aghast at my misdeeds?
Beauty's pathway
Is all that I see, it waits for me
And I will follow
Wherever it leads,
I'll follow beauty's pathway
Wherever it leads.

(*To Countess Ceprano.*) You're leaving? How can you?

COUNTESS CEPRANO

My husband is leaving, and I'm leaving with him.

DUKE

Your presence is enchanting,
You surely cannot leave us so needy and wanting
When all your admirers are sighing and panting.
And I, more than any man,
Must helplessly adore you,
Must stand like a prisoner
In chains of love before you.

COUNTESS CEPRANO

Control yourself.

DUKE

Your kisses are the nectar
For which my lips are thirsting.
Alas, my heart is bursting.

COUNTESS CEPRANO

Behave yourself, behave yourself.

DUKE

My days are spent in pining,
My nights are spent in waking.
Your beauty floods my mind
And it fills my heart to breaking.

RIGOLETTO (*approaching*)

So what are you going to do, Count Ceprano? You see that? (*To the Duke.*) You see that? He's fuming!

BORSA AND CHORUS

Amazing!

RIGOLETTO

Oh yes!

BORSA AND CHORUS

The Duke throws a hell of a party!

RIGOLETTO

With all of the trimmings
And cups overbrimming!
The food and the wine of the vintage the best
And the glittering list of celebrity guests!
But the Count must have gotten the shock of his life
With the Duke standing right there seducing his wife! (*Exits.*)

MARULLO

Attention, attention!

BORSA AND CHORUS

What happened, what happened?

MARULLO

You've all got to hear this!

BORSA AND CHORUS

So tell us, so tell us!

MARULLO

Oh boy, Rigoletto...

BORSA AND CHORUS

Go on...

MARULLO

It's enormous!

BORSA AND CHORUS

We're waiting to hear you. Be pleased to inform us.

MARULLO

You'd never believe it! The hideous creature...

BORSA AND CHORUS

Keep going...

MARULLO

has a lover!

BORSA AND CHORUS

Has a lover! Amazing!

MARULLO

The hunchback is now stepping out as a gallant.

BORSA AND CHORUS

You hear that? It's magic! What magical talent!

DUKE (*enters with Rigoletto*)

Ceprano is one of my smallest concerns.

But still for his wife my heart gleams and burns!

RIGOLETTO

Abduct her then.

DUKE

I'd like to. Not easy.

RIGOLETTO

Just do it.

DUKE

The Count may not like that.

RIGOLETTO

That's what jails are made for.

DUKE

Well, no.

RIGOLETTO

Well then, there's exile.

DUKE

I don't think so, clownface.

RIGOLETTO

In that case, there's one good solution.

CEPRANO (*approaches*)

Am I really seeing this?

RIGOLETTO (*spots Ceprano and makes a motion as if decapitating him*)

So where is your hatchet?

I'll go now and fetch it.

So let's get things rolling.

We'll use it for bowling.

CEPRANO (*drawing his sword*)

You asshole!

DUKE (*to Ceprano*)

Put that down!

RIGOLETTO

He's making me laugh.

MARULLO AND CHORUS

The Count's in a frenzy!

DUKE

Hey clownface, come here.

BORSA

He's boiling and seething.

MARULLO

And rapidly breathing.

CHORUS

And jerking and heaving!

DUKE

You push a joke too far, that is your all-too-frequent error.

CEPRANO

I've had it! That bastard!

CEPRANO

RIGOLETTO

Besides being ugly, his jokes make me puke!

Well, let them take offense at me, I just don't feel much terror.

CEPRANO

BORSA, MARULLO, CHORUS

DUKE

I'll get him!

But how then?

They just might find a way to lodge a very sharp rebuke.

CEPRANO
At my place we'll gather
some men and some
arms. At nighttime.

BORSA, MARULLO, CHORUS
Yes, we're in!

RIGOLETTO
But if they mess with me, they'll
know they're messing with the
Duke.

CEPRANO AND OTHERS
We've got to shut him up,
He's made just one bad joke too many.
We'll beat some sense into his head
Because he hasn't any.

DUKE
Why do you do things
to embarrass me,
To make my foes
stand round and harass
me?

RIGOLETTO
You can't please everyone at once,
There's always some complaining
folks.
There's always one in every crowd
Who simply cannot take a joke.

CEPRANO
Avenge me! Avenge
me!

We need men of
courage, we just need a
few.

OTHERS
We'll get him yet!
We won't forget!
So we're all set!
We know what we will
do.

DUKE
You didn't think
beforehand
What trouble you
would brew.
The anger you've
aroused can still come
crashing down on you,
It can come crashing
down on you.

RIGOLETTO
Unless they're more of
a fool than I am,
They've got to know
that they'd be messing
with the Duke,
That they'd be messing
with the Duke.

CEPRANO AND OTHERS
We've got to shut him up,
He's made just one bad joke too many.
We'll beat some sense into his head
Because he hasn't any.

DUKE
Why do you do things
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To make my foes
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The anger you've
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crashing down on you,
It can come crashing
down on you.

RIGOLETTO
Unless they're more of
a fool than I am,
They've got to know
that they'd be messing
with the Duke,
That they'd be messing
with the Duke.

OTHERS
Here's your army!
Here's your army!

CEPRANO
Yes, my army!
Yes, my army!

DUKE AND RIGOLETTO
Glad that's over!
Now let's party!

ALL

What a party, it's tremendous,
Wine and dainties for the tasting,
Handsome servants to attend us,

Oh, let's party, time's a-wasting.
What a lovely celebration,
What a cause for jubilation,
It's the party of the year.
What a lovely celebration,
It's the party of the year!

MONTERONE (*enters*)

Let me speak to him.

DUKE

No!

MONTERONE

The Duke, please.

RIGOLETTO AND OTHERS

Monterone!

MONTERONE

Yes, that's my name, a name that makes you tremble more than a clap of thunder.

RIGOLETTO (*to the Duke, imitating Monterone's voice*)

Let me speak to him. Sir, you were plotting against us, yes, you were plotting against us. And we, and we, in a burst of clemency, forgave you. But what you need to realize is that your daughter is not a virgin because that's the way she likes it.

MONTERONE

You piece of horsedung!
I hope my presence is not too scary
Just when your friends are making merry.
But there's a matter that's still unsettled:
My family's honor, with which you've meddled.
And if you murder me because I taunt you,
My ghost will rise again and come to haunt you.
You'll see me floating, you'll hear me shrieking
About the blood revenge, about the blood, the blood revenge that I am seeking.

DUKE

Enough! Get him out of here!

RIGOLETTO

He's crazy!

OTHERS

He's creepy!

MONTERONE

Both of you clowns can go to the devil.

OTHERS

Ah!

MONTERONE

To kick a man who's lying bruised and beaten, that makes me vomit. (*To Rigoletto*)
And you, you cretin, mocking a man who's in pain already!
My curse upon you!

RIGOLETTO

My legs feel unsteady.

DUKE AND OTHERS

How dare you appear at the height of the revels,
Exploding with spite like a legion of devils!

RIGOLETTO

He cursed me!

DUKE AND OTHERS

The Duke doesn't take to your ranting and raving.
You'll find there's a price for the way you're behaving.
The Duke doesn't take to your ranting and raving.
You'll find there's a price for the way you're behaving.
You've thrown down the gauntlet, you can't turn around.
You've stirred up a storm that will not simmer down,
You've stirred up a storm that will not simmer down.

MONTERONE

Curses upon you!

RIGOLETTO

The horror, the horror! Ah!

OTHERS

It won't simmer down.

MONTERONE

May you shrivel and die
And be laid in your grave
While your soul goes to hellfire
Where nothing can save you.

CEPRANO AND CHORUS I

Yes, you've thrown down the
gauntlet,
You can't turn around.
And you've stirred up a storm
That will not simmer down,
It will not simmer down.

OTHERS AND CHORUS II

Boo, boo, boo!
To hell with you!
You old blowhard,
The fault is your own.

MONTERONE

May you shrivel and
die
And be laid in your
grave
While your soul goes to
hellfire
Where nothing can save
you.

CEPRANO AND
CHORUS I

Yes, you've thrown
down the gauntlet,
You can't turn around.
And you've stirred up a
storm
That will not simmer
down,
It will not simmer
down.

OTHERS AND
CHORUS II

Boo, boo, boo!
To hell with you!
You old blowhard,
The fault is your own.

RIGOLETTO

I can feel it in my
bones! Ah!

May you shrivel and
die
And be laid in your
grave
While your soul goes to
hellfire
Where nothing can save
you.

Yes, you've thrown
down the gauntlet,
You can't turn around.
And you've stirred up a
storm
That will not simmer
down,
It will not simmer
down.

Boo, boo, boo!
To hell with you!
You old blowhard,
The fault is your own.

I can feel it in my
bones! Ah!

MONTERONE

Cursed be your flesh and bones!

OTHERS

If only you'd known!

RIGOLETTO

As cold as a stone,

Cursed be your flesh and bones!
Cursed be your flesh and bones!

Curses upon you!

You should have stayed home.
And now hope is flown.
Too bad, too bad, too bad,
Too bad, too bad, too bad!
Woe is you!

As cold as a stone,
As cold as a stone.
Oh dread, oh dread, oh dread,
Oh dread, oh dread, oh dread!
Woe is me!

(Change of scene. Rigoletto alone in a deserted street.)

RIGOLETTO

That old man laid a curse on me!

BENNY THE BLADE

Hey boss!

RIGOLETTO

No, I've no money.

BENNY THE BLADE

Not asking. Instead I'm offering my services for sale.

RIGOLETTO

What service?

BENNY THE BLADE

A well-placed dagger can dispose of any rival. I know you have one.

RIGOLETTO

How so?

BENNY THE BLADE

Well, sir, your lady is here.

RIGOLETTO

(What is this?) ...So how much does it cost to have someone disposed of?

BENNY THE BLADE

There'd be a hefty price tag.

RIGOLETTO

And how is payment made?

BENNY THE BLADE

Half of the fee you pay up front, the rest when all is done.

RIGOLETTO

(The devil!) ...What makes you certain that you can bring it off?

BENNY THE BLADE

Usually when I off a guy, it's not like in an alley. Usually it's at my place. It's very easy and quick.

RIGOLETTO

(The devil!) ...They come to your place?

BENNY THE BLADE

You bet they do. They come to see my sister. She's a dancer, pretty, great body. She lures them to me, and then...

RIGOLETTO

I hear you...

BENNY THE BLADE

Very quietly...

RIGOLETTO

I hear you...

BENNY THE BLADE

So this is what I offer. You want it?

RIGOLETTO

Not at the moment.

BENNY THE BLADE

Too bad for you.

RIGOLETTO

Could be.

BENNY THE BLADE

Benny the Blade's my moniker.

RIGOLETTO

A strange name.

BENNY THE BLADE

Don't forget it.

RIGOLETTO

If later I want to find you...?

BENNY THE BLADE

Here every evening.

RIGOLETTO

Fine.

BENNY THE BLADE

Benny the Blade, Benny the Blade. (*Exit.*)

RIGOLETTO

Go, go, go, go... Well, we're equal. I'm a jester, and he's a hitman. He cuts them down with daggers, I with my laughter... That old man laid a curse on me! O Providence, Mother Nature, why did you make me such a monstrous creature? Oh misery, being a hunchback! Oh misery, being a jester! To be seen always laughing, always comical! I'm the one guy who's not permitted to cry at all. As for my lord and master, fuck him. He's handsome. Ladies love him, sort of. And he yawns as he calls out: Clownface, do something funny! And I must try to please him. Oh, what damnation! As for you, all you snip-nosed little courtiers, how I love to cut and slash you! If I've been unkind, you made me do it to you... Why am I so bitter and so moody?... That old man laid a curse on me! I keep thinking about the old man's curse. Why does it faze me? Is something going to happen? But no, that is crazy! (*Gilda comes out of the house and hugs him.*) Daughter!

GILDA

My father!

RIGOLETTO

Just being at your side drives out the pain and lets the joy inside.

GILDA

I love you more than ever.

RIGOLETTO

What do I live for?

GILDA

I love you so!

RIGOLETTO

Moments we share together, that's what I live for.

GILDA

I love you so!

RIGOLETTO

GILDA

O my dear daughter!

O my father!

GILDA

You don't look well, Dad. What's on your mind, Dad? Please tell me. Please share it with your poor daughter. You've never told me, not even dimly: Where do we come from? Who is our family?

RIGOLETTO

There isn't one.

GILDA

What is your real name?

RIGOLETTO

What does it matter?

GILDA

If you won't tell me, then someone else will.

RIGOLETTO

Don't go outside.

GILDA

I'll go to Mass still.

RIGOLETTO

But otherwise...

GILDA

Just give me one answer and no other: I'd like to know something about my mother.

RIGOLETTO

Ah! Each time I think of what I lost,
Once more the pain shoots through me.
Once, once there was an angel
Who meant earth and heaven to me.
Friendless, a hunchback, penniless,
Yet she could love me still.
Then the sickness...
Soon after, the cold earth opened wide
And swallowed up her coffin.
But God left you with me.
He had a little mercy on me.
By just that much, by that much the blow was softened.

GILDA

Oh Father, I see, Father, I see.
I didn't know what I was asking of you.
Now I know, pardon me.

RIGOLETTO

So you alone are all I have to cling to.

Now you are all that is left me,
All of my past and my future,
All of my wealth and my treasure
In my poverty.
You're still here,
Thanks God for His mercy,
His mercy and his graces!
You are all that's left me,
All of my past and my future,
All of my wealth and my treasure
In my poverty.
You're still here,
Thanks God for His mercy,

GILDA

Father, I see, Father, I see.
I didn't know what I was asking of you.
Now I know, pardon me.
Father, enough, please say no more.
Father, enough, please say no more.
Oh how it cuts me to the core,
Seeing your heart bruised and sore.
My father, oh my father,
Please try to calm down.
You know that it cannot be good for you
Going all to pieces.
Father, enough, please say no more.
Father, enough, please say no more.
Oh how it cuts me to the core,
Seeing your heart bruised and sore.
My father, oh my father,

His mercy and his graces!

Please try to calm down.
You know that it cannot be good for you
Going all to pieces.

GILDA

Your name, what is your actual name? And what's your awful secret?

RIGOLETTO

My name is Clownface. That's what I'm called. I am your actual father. Some people fear the sight of me, and others hold their grudges. One even laid a curse on me.

GILDA

Don't you have someone to turn to? Don't you have friends or family?

RIGOLETTO

What friends, what family? You're kidding. All that is left me and all that I ever hope to have is what I have in you.

RIGOLETTO

GILDA

All that is left me and all that I ever hope to have
for the rest of my life and hereafter, all my silver,
all my gold is you.

It gives my life such meaning, just knowing I'm
giving such comfort to you.
O dearest father! It gives my life, yes, it gives my
life such meaning just knowing I'm giving so
much comfort, such comfort to you.

GILDA

It's been three months now we're in this town here.
I haven't gone out or looked around here.
If it's all right with you, I'd like to try.

RIGOLETTO

Oh no, my daughter, you're too young to die!

GILDA

Please?

RIGOLETTO

No.

GILDA

What's so dangerous?

RIGOLETTO

You can't imagine: someone could rob you, someone could rape you! And they would say, "Hey funnyman son of a bitch, how's this for a chuckle?" My God! My God!

GIOVANNA (*comes out of the house*)

Signor?

RIGOLETTO

Giovanna, have you seen strangers lurking around here?

GIOVANNA

Oh no, there's no one.

RIGOLETTO

That's good. The door leading to the alley is always bolted?

GIOVANNA

Indeed it is.

RIGOLETTO

GIOVANNA

I hope it's true,
I'm trusting you.

It's locked up tight
From morn till night.

RIGOLETTO

Ah, veglia, o donna

Oh, guard her well, this precious flower
That now I give into your care.
Let its blooms be sheltered there
From winter snows and summer rain.
Though outside the winds may howl
And all the sky is dark and stormy,
Keep her safe here waiting for me
Till I see her bloom again.

GILDA

Father dear, there is no need
To be alarmed or disconcerted.
For you know that I am guarded
By an angel of the Lord.
I have everything I need
While heaven's ministers attend me
And my mother's prayers defend me
With their bright and flaming sword.

RIGOLETTO

Oh guard her well, this precious flower
That now I give into your—
Somebody's out there! (*Opens the door to the alley and goes out to check the street, while the Duke slips in and hides behind a tree, slipping money to Giovanna to buy her silence.*)

GILDA

Heavens! Everything makes him nervous.

RIGOLETTO (*re-entering, to Giovanna*)

On your way back from the church, did someone follow?

GIOVANNA

No.

DUKE

(Rigoletto!)

RIGOLETTO

If someone should knock here, be careful not to open.

GIOVANNA

What if the Duke knocks?

RIGOLETTO

Barricade the doorway! Goodbye, my daughter!

DUKE

(His daughter!)

GILDA

Goodbye, my father!

RIGOLETTO

Oh, guard her well, this precious flower
That now I give into your care.
Let its blooms be sheltered there
From winter snows and summer rain.
Though outside the winds may howl

GILDA

O Father dear, O Father dear, O Father dear,
There is no need to be concerned about me here.
So do not fear.
For God on high is looking down upon me here.
And up on high, an angel band is standing by

And all the sky is dark and stormy,
Keep her safe here waiting for me
Till I see her bloom again.
My one hope, my one joy, my one love,
Oh guard her well for me.
My one hope, my one joy, my one love,
Oh guard her well for me.

I pray to God to keep you safe
Till I see your face once more.
I pray to God to keep you safe
Till I see your face once more.
I pray to God, I pray to God,
To keep you safe.
Daughter, my daughter, I love you!

In case of danger to come streaking from the sky.
So do not fear.
For God has angels to protect me here.
So put your mind at ease.
Try not to worry, please.
For I am not afraid.
My heart is not dismayed.
So put your mind at ease.
Try not to worry, please.
For I am not afraid.
I'm not dismayed.
Have faith in God to keep me safe
Although the devil is at my door.
Have faith in God to keep me safe
Although the devil is at my door.
Have faith in God, have faith in God
To keep me safe.
Father, my father, I love you!

GILDA

Giovanna, I lied to Father.

GIOVANNA

What do you mean?

GILDA

Coming from church there was a man behind us.

GIOVANNA

Why tell your father about some lowlife who probably disgusts you?

GILDA

No, no, he's young and handsome, burning up with passion.

GIOVANNA

Does he look like a rich man, a man of substance?

GILDA

Don't want a wealthy man
To come and woo me.

I think a simple man, I think a humble man
Would mean more to me.

And as I lie awake,
Floating above me,

(The Duke comes out from hiding, motions to Giovanna to leave, and kneels in front of Gilda.)

All of my dreams of love
Whisper they love—

DUKE

I love you!
I love you,
Your dreams of love are now awaking
And coming true,
And my heart's for the taking.

GILDA

Giovanna! Giovanna! She left me here! My cries for help won't be heard by anyone. Oh God, I'm alone here.

DUKE

That's not true! I'm here with you. I want to help you, I want to show you the love you've been missing.

GILDA

How did you get in here? Who let you in?

DUKE

Love always finds a way, Love always wins.
I love you.

GILDA

Get out of here!

DUKE

Get out now! You're joking!
Now when this heart of mine is singed and smoking!
There is a god of love
Who's watching o'er us
Who has already made our choices for us!

È il sol dell' anima

Love makes its plans for us without our knowing.
A seed is planted, a love starts growing.
Love finds a way for us we never knew of,
The way to happiness, the way to true love.
And when we're hopelessly lost in the forest,
Behold! Our pathway will be lighted by an angel chorus.
Love stole my heart from me before I missed it.
I can't resist it, it's meant to be.
Love has found the perfect love
And called it You and Me.

DUKE

One perfect love:
It's meant to be.
Tall as the mountaintops,
Deep as the sea,
Love has found the perfect love
And called it You and Me.
Come close, my lovely one.
Come close, my sweetheart.
Come close, my darling,
Come close to me.

GILDA

I've heard that voice before in dreams of love.
In dreams of love I've heard the voice
That now speaks to me.
Is this a dream I'm dreaming?
Or can it really be
A dream of love that's coming true for me?
How many nights I lay awake and listened
As the gentle voices spoke of Love to me.
How many nights I lay awake despairing
That my dreams of Love would never come to be.

DUKE AND GILDA

Ah, ah, ah! Hear the voice of love! Ah! Hear the voice of love!

DUKE

You love me? That is what you said?

GILDA

You heard me.

DUKE

God, I'm so happy!

GILDA

But tell me what your name is. You haven't even told me.

COUNT CEPRANO (*outside, to Borsa Matteo*)

This is the house.

DUKE

Oh yes, my name...

BORSA MATTEO (*to Ceprano*)

OK! (*Exeunt Ceprano and Matteo.*)

DUKE

Gualtier Maldé... I am a student...and penniless.

GIOVANNA (*enters in a fright*)

There's crowds of people out there.

GILDA

Maybe my father...

DUKE

(*Could be that one of them is Monterone. And now I'll nab him.*)

GILDA

(*To Giovanna.*) Please help this man to leave by the back door. (*To the Duke.*) So go now.

DUKE

Speak, will you be mine?

GILDA

For how long?

DUKE

For all my life and more.

GILDA

Enough, enough, please go now. Enough, please go now.

DUKE

Goodbye now, goodbye now, tonight I'll dream of you.

GILDA

Goodbye now, goodbye now, tonight I'll dream of you.

DUKE

GILDA

My eyes will see you,

My ears will hear you,

My heart will know you,

My soul will need you,

Until we meet again,

Until we meet again.

Till then!

My ears will hear you,

My heart will know you,

My soul will need you,

Until we meet again.

Goodbye now,

Goodbye till then.

DUKE AND GILDA

My heart will cling to every precious second of these memories, these memories.

Till then, my heart will hold the only hope that you'll come back to me, to me,

My heart will hope that you'll come back to me, to me!

Goodbye now, goodbye now.

My past, my future, all I have is you.

Goodbye now, goodbye now.

My past, my future, all I have is you.

Addio, addio, addio, addio, addio!

GILDA

Gualtier Maldé! Surely a name from heaven.

On the tablets of my heart let it be graven!

Caro nome

What a joy to say your name,
What a sweet note to my ears!
Like the music of the spheres,
How it courses through my brain.
Everywhere you go, I'll follow,
As long as life endures.
And the last beat of my heart,
Rest assured, it will be yours.
Everywhere you go, I'll go with you,
For as long as life endures, ah!
And the very last beat of my heart,
You must surely know, ah, it will be yours.
Everywhere you go, I will go with you,
For as long as life endures, ah, while life endures.
And my final fading heartbeat,
And the soul that leaves my body,
And all my thoughts and all my hopes and all my dreams and all I am, all I am,
It will be yours, it will be yours.
My life, my love, and all I have I give to you.
My life and all I have I give, ah, to you!
Gualtier Maldé! Gualtier Maldé!

GILDA	BORSA MATTEO	COUNT CEPRANO	CHORUS
What a joy to say your name, What a sweet note to my ears! Like the music of the spheres,	That's her.	Well, look at her!	She's quite a beauty!

GILDA	MARULLO	CHORUS
How it courses through my brain. Gualtier Maldé! Gualtier Maldé!	She's like an angel!	She's much too pretty for Rigoletto!

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

Oh what a hot babe!
(*Out on the street, visibility is reduced by fog and darkness.*)

RIGOLETTO

Shivers! But why?

BORSA MATTEO

You fellows be quiet and listen up.

RIGOLETTO

Ah, it's the old man's curse on my mind still!... Who is that?

BORSA MATTEO

Be quiet, it's Rigoletto.

CEPRANO

That's great! Let's kill him! So much the better.

BORSA MATTEO

Not till we show him what's really funny.

MARULLO

No sweat, I'll fix him.

RIGOLETTO

Who's talking there?

MARULLO

Hey, Rigoletto! Shake!

RIGOLETTO

Who is that?

MARULLO

Hey, take it easy! I'm...

RIGOLETTO

Who?

MARULLO

Marullo.

RIGOLETTO

It's much too dark here to make out faces.

MARULLO

We're playing tricks on the Count Ceprano. Taking his wife for a little ride now.

RIGOLETTO

So I can breathe now. How will you enter?

MARULLO (*to Ceprano*)

(Give me your house keys.) (*To Rigoletto.*) That's not a problem.

Our plan is solid, we've all thought through it.

Here's how we enter. (*Shows the keys.*)

RIGOLETTO

Yes, that should do it.

(O foolish terrors, can I forgive you?)

Right there's the palace,

And I'll go with you.

MARULLO

We all have masks on.

RIGOLETTO

Is there an extra mask? If not, doesn't matter.

MARULLO

Yes, here you are. You'll hold the ladder. (*Blindfolds Rigoletto.*)

RIGOLETTO

Can't see a blasted thing.

MARULLO (*to the others*)

Don't worry, now he can't see or hear.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

Easy, easy, move slowly, keep quiet.

Don't do anything to start a riot.

All day long he keeps laughing at others.

Just for once the joke will be on him,
When he comes home and looks for his cutie
And we've taken her out for a spin.
By tomorrow the whole court will hear it.
Oh, how everyone will chuckle and grin.
Ha ha ha and tee hee hee,
Chuckle, chuckle, chortle, chortle!
They will laugh until they pee
And the joke will be immortal.
Now get ready, each man at his station.
We're too close to the goal to retreat.
If we make this a smooth operation,
We'll have vengeance and revenge will be sweet.
He's so snippy and so nervy,
But we'll turn things topsy-turvy,
And our triumph will be worthy
Of a monument in stone
To make it known.
He's so nasty and sarcastic
That it calls for something drastic.
This solution is fantastic,
It's as pretty as a poem
That sure hits home.
Easy, easy, easy, easy!
Steady, steady, steady, steady!
Keep your weapons at the ready.
And we'll all be sitting pretty.
Now keep your mind on what you're doing,
Try to keep from screwing
Up.

GILDA

Where are you, Father? Help me!

OTHERS

We've got her!

GILDA

Please help me! (*She is carried away.*)

RIGOLETTO

(*Not knowing what has happened.*) Is this some kind of joke? It isn't funny. This fucking blindfold! (*With great difficulty, removes the blindfold and sees that Gilda is gone.*) Ah! Ah! This is the curse, the curse come true!

ACT II

DUKE

(In his palace, talking to himself in agitation.) What's going on? Who did this? Somehow I knew some kind of evil plot was afoot, so I came back there. I was too late. In the meantime she'd been kidnapped. Doors busted open! And all the house deserted!
So where on earth is my beloved angel?
Among the angels, no face was ever fairer.
No other angel cast such pure and modest glances.
And even though heaven itself could scarcely spare her,
Still she floated down to earth, 'cause that's what angels do.
What happened and where is she?
Who dared to do this?
Vengeance on the dogs
Who laid their hands upon her!
She must have vengeance.
How can I call myself a man
If I don't defend her honor?
Somewhere I seem to see
Your teardrops helplessly falling.
Somewhere I seem to hear your voice
In desperation calling,
Stretching your arms to reach to me,
Calling again and again:
"Oh come and help me, sweet Gualtier."
After the love I swore to you,
After the kisses I gave you,
Where was I in your hour of need
To speed to your side and save you,
Speed to your side and save you,
Ready to fight and to die
Lest they should harm a single hair?
Where have they taken you?
Though it be somewhere farther than the moon,
I will still find a way to you, I'll soon,
I promise, soon, ah! I'll soon be there.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

Hey, your lordship!

DUKE

What's up?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

We carried off the lover of Rigoletto!

DUKE

Really? You mean it?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

Yes, we mean it.

DUKE

So what, tell me, did you do? What exactly did you do?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS (*diviso*)

We were a merry little band assembled,
Just as the sun had lately ceased to shine.
When we caught sight of her, we almost trembled.
Is that the babe? Oh boy, oh boy, she's looking fine.
We knew that that was Rigoletto's lover.
She took one look and fainted dead away.
We meant to hoist her out one way or other,
When at that moment Rigoletto came our way.
We said, "We're looking for Count Ceprano,
To take his wife away." We fooled him good.
He held the ladder wearing a blindfold.
We took his lover, and there he stood.
Can you imagine such a scene?
I mean, we'd paint it if we could.
We quickly whisked away the lovely victim.
Within a minute she was out of sight.

DUKE

Jesus!

DUKE

They've got her!
So then, where is she?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

When Rigoletto found out we'd tricked him,
There wasn't much that he could do but curse the night.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

You should have seen him stand and stare
And wave his arms and tear his hair.
Oh, it was so funny, what a delight!
There wasn't much that he could say,
We hauled his lover clean away.
Oh, it was so funny, oh what a sight!
It serves him right, it serves him right!
What a delight, oh what a sight!
It serves him right, it serves him right!
The perfect time, the perfect place
For such a funnyman to taste
A joke exploding in his face!

DUKE

What did you do with her, the girl in question?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

We brought her here, Boss, for you to see.

DUKE

At last, my heart is breathing free. (*As if to Gilda, aside.*)
(I've come to set you free
From a prison of doubt and desperation.
The long dark night is done,
And the morning is dawning bright and clear.

The long dark night is done,
And the morning is dawning bright and clear.
Come see me in the sunlight
Without that mask I wore.
And know, however much Gualtier may have loved you,
I love you even more,
More than my fortune, more than my dukedom,
More than my life, oh my darling, I love you.
Please believe I love you even more.)

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

I didn't catch a word of that. What did he say?
And who the hell's he talking to, just by the way?
One moment he's ecstatic and one moment he's subdued.
To what should we attribute all these various and transitory changes in his mood?
Who has a clue?
I don't. Do you?

DUKE

(Ah, I've come to set you free
From a prison of doubt and desperation.
The long dark night is done,
And the morning is dawning bright and clear.
The long dark night is done,
And the morning is dawning bright and clear.
Come see me in the sunlight
Without that mask I wore.
And know, however much Gualtier may have loved you,
I love you even more,
More than my fortune, more than my dukedom,
More than my life, oh my darling, I love you.
Please believe I love you even more.)

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

This definitely isn't getting clearer as we go along.

DUKE

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

I'll love you my whole life long. Is maybe something wrong?
I fear he might explode before too long.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

This definitely isn't getting clearer as we go along.

Is maybe something wrong?

DUKE

BORSA, CHORUS I

MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS II

I will come
to right the wrongs
That you have suffered
so long.
I fear he might explode before too
long.
There must be something wrong.
So who's he talking to?
I wish I knew what's going on.

Something's not right,
I know that something strange is going
on.
I know something strange is going on.
Who's he talking to?
I wish I knew what's going on.

(Rigoletto enters.)

MARULLO

Poor little Rigoletto!

RIGOLETTO
Da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da
dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum,
da dum.

CHORUS
It's him. Be quiet.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
Oh, good morning, Rigoletto.

RIGOLETTO
(The very ones who did it!)

COUNT CEPRANO
What's the word from the fool?

RIGOLETTO
I don't know. You tell me. You're just a bit more of an airhead than usual.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
Ha ha ha!

RIGOLETTO
Da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum... (Where do they have her hidden?)

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
He doesn't look too happy!

RIGOLETTO
Da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum.

RIGOLETTO
Da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
See? See? He's trying not to show it.

RIGOLETTO
Good to see you all up and feeling frisky after the night's exertions.

MARULLO
What exertions?

RIGOLETTO
Your idea of humor.

MARULLO
What? I was home sleeping.

RIGOLETTO
Ah, you were sleeping? Then I must have been dreaming! Da dum da dum da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum, da dum.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
See? See? Sinister and surly!

RIGOLETTO
That's not her scarf. Any sign of the Duke?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS
No, still too early.

PAGE
Is the Duke here? The Duchess wants to see him.

CEPRANO
Sleeping.

PAGE
Someone said that he had been here.

BORSA MATTEO

He got sleepy.

PAGE

He got sleepy so early?

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

He went and locked the bedroom door, saying no one should disturb him.

RIGOLETTO

Ah, she must be here then. She's with the Duke now.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

Who?

RIGOLETTO

The innocent young girl that you came last night and kidnapped. I'll get her back, just watch me. So, she's here.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

If you're talking about your babe, we haven't seen her.

RIGOLETTO

I want my daughter!

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

She's his daughter!

RIGOLETTO

Yes, she's my daughter. And the joke's on you now. What? Don't tell me it's not funny. She's inside. Let me in there! I want my daughter! *(He runs at the door but is blocked by the others.)*

All you toadies, the Duke's little henchmen,

Are you even still human, I ask you?

Is there nothing a man could put past you?

Is there no deed that gold cannot buy?

Give her back now. If you don't, I will kill you,

Strike you down with my bare hands to aid me.

There's no fear and no force can dissuade me.

For my daughter I'm willing to die.

Let me in now, you assassins, you hyenas!

Get out of the doorway, I've got to go rescue my daughter!

(Fights with them and finally gives up.)

Ah! The whole world is united against me.

Every single one. Ah! Come on, I'm begging.

Marullo, my brother,

We've been friends all these years with one another.

Have a heart, tell me where they put my daughter.

Marullo, my buddy, tell me, where are they keeping my daughter?

She's here? Yes, she must be. But where? Won't you tell me?

Come on, don't just stand there. You're silent? Good God!

Is there anyone here who has a shred of mercy left?

Is there anyone here who breathes a single merciful breath?

I'm an old man who just wants his daughter.

Is that too much to ask for?

She means nothing to you. She's the whole world to me.

Have mercy on me. Have mercy on me.

Oh give me back my daughter, just give her back.
She's the whole world to me.
Without my beautiful daughter, what life is left for me?
Why should I want to live?
Have mercy on an old man, before I fall down and die.
(*Gilda comes out and rushes into Rigoletto's arms.*)

GILDA

My father!

RIGOLETTO

Gilda, my Gilda! (*To the others.*) Your lordships, excuse me. I can't quite control my feelings. (*To Gilda.*)
Now your fears are over, Gilda, my angel! (*To the others.*) So this was...just a joke then? I see the humor
just as you do. (*To Gilda.*) But why are you crying?

GILDA

I'm too ashamed to tell you.

RIGOLETTO

Jesus! What's happened?

GILDA

Please, I can't tell you in front of all these people.

RIGOLETTO

(*To the others.*) Leave us alone, get going! And if by any chance the Duke shows his sweet face, you must
say, Don't go in there, the meeting's private.

BORSA, MARULLO, CEPRANO, CHORUS

He needs time here with his daughter.
Let them have a little space.
If he makes a ruckus later,
We'll be swiftly on his case. (*They leave.*)

RIGOLETTO

Gilda! What's happened?

GILDA

O God, give me courage to speak!
Many a Sunday morning,
Worshiping in the temple,
There was a young man eyeing me,
Handsome and sweet and gentle.
We never spoke, and yet somehow it seemed
Like our hearts needed no words to intertwine.
Suddenly late last evening,
Somehow he barged in boldly.
"I am a student, penniless."
Those are the lies he told me.
And with the greatest emotion he said
That his heart was forever and ever mine.
He left, he left. How my heart flew open
To waves of delicious passion,
When I was interrupted by
The coming of these assassins,
Who seized me roughly and forcibly carried me here

In an agony, ah! of doubt and fear.

RIGOLETTO

Ah! (*Looking heavenward.*) How many times, dear God, I prayed,
Begging that You might spare her,
Keep her from every harm,
And let nothing unclean come near her.
I'd do whatever You ask of me.
Why have You taken this last from me?
I feel like my whole world's starting to crumble,
I feel it tumbling down.
I feel my whole world collapse, dragging me down, ah!
(*To Gilda.*)

Cry, girl,
Pour out the grief in that innocent heart of yours.

RIGOLETTO

GILDA

Cry, girl,
Cry some for me, I can't cry any more.
Cry, girl,
Don't hold it in, let the tears fall away from you.
Cry, girl,
Don't let the pain eat away at your core.
Go on, pour your grief out.
Give some to me, I will bear it for you.
Go on, pour your grief out.
Grieve as you must till your grieving is through.
Pour out your grieving soul.
Let my love make you whole, ah,
Pour out your soul.
Daughter, I'll stand by you.
For life is worth living while I have you.

Father, just hearing your voice,
My failing spirit is restored.
You're my good angel, my angel!
Thank God you're with me,
You're with me.
So long as I have you I will not despair,
I know you're there for me.
So long as I have you I will not despair,
I know you're there for me.
Your words speak to my soul.
Your love renders me whole, ah,
Renders me whole.
Father dear, stand by me,
For nothing can harm me if I have you.

RIGOLETTO

And now let's be done with our moaning and grieving.
The sun is still shining, and we are still breathing.

GILDA

Yes.

RIGOLETTO

(It took just one day to tear everything down.)
(*A guard appears, leading Monterone in handcuffs to the door of a jail.*)

GUARD

Unlock, please. Monterone is going to jail.

MONTERONE (*to a portrait of the Duke*)

It seems that despite the effect of my curses,
You've suffered no sudden unpleasant reverses.
Your fortune's secure, and your life will be good.

RIGOLETTO

No, you shall have vengeance, and I'll have his blood!
Duke, that is enough, that is enough, your days are numbered.
Now, here and now, I avow I will have vengeance.

Hark, do you hear, drawing near, claps of thunder?
See bolts of fire whizzing by close to your head.
Justice will be done soon.
The trap will be sprung soon.
Your hour of doom, oh how soon it is approaching.
I may be a fool, but the joke will be on you.

GILDA

What fearful surprise, seeing your eyes savagely gleaming!
Where, where does it lead, what is this need, striving for vengeance?
Fear strikes me dumb, hearing your tongue plotting and scheming.

GILDA

God says to forgive, and as He says, so we must do.
Show forgiveness.
Please have mercy.
I whom he betrayed come to his aid, because I love him.
His heart is false, and yet mine shall be true.

Please forgive him!

God commands us to forgive,
And that's what we must do.
God commands us to forgive,
And that's what we must do.
God tells us that when we have been wronged we must
forgive,
And that's what we must do.

RIGOLETTO

I'll get him!
No!
No!

Your hour of doom, oh how soon it is
approaching.
I may be a fool, but the joke will be on you.
Though I may be a fool,
This time the joke will be on you.
Though I may be a fool,
This time the joke will be on you.
Though I may be a fool, as surely as you
live,
The joke will be on you.

ACT III

(Outside Benny the Blade's tavern.)

RIGOLETTO

You love him?

GILDA

Always.

RIGOLETTO

Feelings change; soon enough you may forget him.

GILDA

I love him.

RIGOLETTO

How can you let him use you, that filthy scoundrel? Ah, but I will have my vengeance.

GILDA

Have mercy, Father.

RIGOLETTO

And if you knew for certain that he was cheating, would you then still love him?

GILDA

Who knows? I only know he loves me.

RIGOLETTO

Does he?

GILDA

Yes.

RIGOLETTO

Well then, you need to see this.

GILDA

I see a tavern.

RIGOLETTO

Just wait a minute.

GILDA

Father, what is this?

DUKE *(enters the tavern disguised as a soldier)*

A room please, and also...

BENNY THE BLADE

Yes, boss?

DUKE

...bring some red wine from a good year.

RIGOLETTO

One more of his disguises!

BENNY THE BLADE

Coming right up, boss!

La donna è mobile

DUKE

Women are here-and gone,

Not to be counted on.

Loyalties ebb and flow,

Promises come and go.
One day they're sweet and nice.
Next day they're cold as ice.
One day it's "je t'adore."
Next day you're out the door.
If you want devotion
Deeper than the ocean,
My advice to you is,
Get yourself a dog,
Get yourself a dog,
Ah, get yourself a dog.
Don't give your heart away,
On some unlucky day.
After the first attack,
You'll wish you had it back.
Smiling so graciously,
Lying mendaciously,
Who can keep track of them?
Don't turn your back on them.
If you want devotion
Deeper than the ocean,
My advice to you is,
Get yourself a dog,
Get yourself a dog,
Ah, get yourself a dog.

(Benny comes back in with the wine. Maddalena comes down from downstairs. The Duke runs to hug her, but she pulls away. Benny steps outside and speaks to Rigoletto, apart from Gilda.)

BENNY THE BLADE

See that? We got him! Do I do him now or later?

RIGOLETTO

I'm coming back, just wait a little longer.

(Benny goes back in. Rigoletto brings Gilda closer to the tavern, where she can look in a window.)

DUKE

One day, as I went down the street,
I saw you bravely dancing.
You stole my heart in half a beat,
The sight was so entrancing.
Your slave now stands before you,
Predestined to adore you.

GILDA

The traitor!

MADDALENA

Ha, ha! You say you adore me,
Like twenty girls before me!
When men are really horny,
Their pickup lines get corny.

Yes, I'm just a beast.
 MADDALENA
 Now watch yourself, you pea-brain.

Oh, father, father!
 DUKE

Don't get all flustered.
 MADDALENA

Behave now.
 DUKE

Come on, don't holler at me just 'cause I'm a bastard. Every man wants a little love. Does that make me
 such a bad guy? (*Takes her hand.*) A hand by *Michangelo!*
 MADDALENA

You're mocking me, signore.
 DUKE

No, no.
 MADDALENA

I'm ugly.
 DUKE

You're beautiful.
 The traitor!
 MADDALENA

Crazy!
 DUKE

Crazy for you, dear.
 MADDALENA

Why do you need to mock me? I just don't understand.
 DUKE

I'm asking for your hand!
 MADDALENA

I do not want to hear it.
 DUKE

O lovely kindred spirit!
 RIGOLETTO (*to Gilda*)

So how much do you need?
 MADDALENA

I do not want to hear it.
 DUKE

O lovely kindred spirit!
 MADDALENA

I do not want to hear it.
 MADDALENA

It's worse than I had feared.
 RIGOLETTO

Is that enough to hear?
 GILDA

It's worse than I had feared.
 GILDA

I do not want to hear it.
 MADDALENA

O lovely kindred spirit!
 DUKE

I do not want to hear it.
 MADDALENA

Is that enough to hear?
 RIGOLETTO

Is that enough to hear?
 RIGOLETTO

DUKE
 When you sit within your narrow room,
 When you gaze upon the silver moon,
 Can you hear, love, how my heart is crying,

Can you hear the heart that cries, the heart that cries for you?
Can you see my brow, pale and trembling?
Can you feel the breath of despair and passion mingling?
Can you hear, love, how my heart is crying,
Can you hear the heart that cries, the heart that cries for you?

MADDALENA

Your advances might be funny if they only weren't so boring.

GILDA

Oh, it makes me feel like I never existed.

MADDALENA

You must think that I'm a stupidhead with applesauce for brains.

GILDA

Oh, his words of love are so evil and twisted.

RIGOLETTO

Quiet, this is no time for crying.

DUKE

Have a heart now.

Come fulfill all my
fondest dreams,
My fondest dreams.
When you sit within
your narrow room,
When you gaze upon
the silver moon,
Can you hear, love,
how my heart is crying,
Can you hear the heart
that cries, the heart that
cries for you?
Hear how my heart
cries,
It cries for you,
Hear how my heart
cries,
It cries for you.
See your slave who
bows before the throne
of beauty.

Grant me this one boon.
Hear me now.

Hear how my heart
cries,
It cries for you.
Hear how my heart
cries,
It cries for you.

MADDALENA

I've heard all your lines
before, sir.
They don't cut it any
more, sir,
Or so it seems.
Ha ha, it's been many
years since I have heard
such utter nonsense.
Please don't tell me
that you mean it or I'll
really start to laugh.
Just as much as anyone
I like to have a sense of
humor, ha ha, ha ha.
Oh, what a joke, ha ha!
Oh, what a joke, ha ha!
Oh, what a joke, ha ha!
Oh, my!
Sir, you seem to be
becoming more
uncivilized each
moment.
Does perhaps a change
come over you in
certain phases of the
moon?
Sir, you seem to have
the mental disposition
of an eight-year-old, ha
ha!
Oh, what a joke, ha ha!
Oh, what a joke, ha ha!
Oh what a joke, ha ha!
Oh, my!

GILDA

Be strong, my heart.
Somehow keep beating.
Be still, my lips, and do
not scream.
No, no, do not scream.

How he's betrayed me,
How he's shamed me!

Ah, what can I do?
How to keep my aching
heart
From bursting forth in
grief and pain?
The pangs of hurt and
rage I feel
Are greater than I can
contain.
Somehow I've got to
find a way
To hold it all inside and
not explode, no, no, no,
no, no, no!

I don't know to keep
my aching heart
From bursting forth in
grief and pain.
To keep myself from
drowning in
The waves of deep
regret and shame.

RIGOLETTO

Please be quiet. This is
no time for crying.

Think about what all
this means.

So he was lying,
Now you have seen and
cannot doubt it.

I'll know what to do
about it,
I will have my
vengeance soon.

I'll know what to do
about it, I will have my
vengeance soon.

You filthy dog, get set
to meet your doom!
While he laughs and
takes his ease,
The bolts of my
revenge will hurtle
down.
Now the time is getting
closer, I will have my
vengeance soon.
Now the time is getting
closer,

See your slave who bows before the throne of beauty.	Sir, I hasten to remind you, while there surely are no gentlemen, There is in fact a lady who is present here within the room.	Somehow I've got to find a way To hold it all inside and not explode, no, no, no, no, no, no.	I will have my vengeance soon. You filthy dog, get set to meet your doom! While he laughs and takes his ease, the bolts of my revenge will hurtle down.
Grant me this one boon.	Your behavior is unseemly, you had better keep it down.	I don't know how. When the waves of shame come over me, I feel them pulling me down.	Every moment brings me closer to the vengeance that I vow.
Hear me now.	Your crude behavior, Please keep it down.	When the waves of shame come over me, I feel as if I could drown.	Every moment brings me closer, I will have my vengeance now!
Come close and feel my fevered brow.	Will you stop acting Like such a clown. Oh what a joke!	Ah me! What now? How to not explode?	I'll bring him down!
Come close and feel my fevered brow.	Oh what a clown! All of your loving is a dumb joke to me!	Ah, me!	Leave that to me!
Come close, come now.			
Come close to me!			

RIGOLETTO (*to Gilda*)

Listen! You go on home now. Take some money, get on horseback, wearing clothes that disguise you as a man, and hasten to Verona. Tomorrow I'll be there.

GILDA

Travel with me.

RIGOLETTO

I can't do that.

GILDA

Father...

RIGOLETTO

Go!

(*Gilda leaves. Benny the Blade comes out of the tavern.*)

RIGOLETTO

We agreed on twenty thousand. Ten grand beforehand, the rest upon completion. He's sleeping over?

BENNY THE BLADE

Yes.

RIGOLETTO

I'll be back at midnight to finish up.

BENNY THE BLADE

No hurry. Getting rid of the body is no problem.

RIGOLETTO

Oh no, I must have that pleasure.

BENNY THE BLADE

Sure thing. What's his name, boss?

RIGOLETTO

What the hell does it matter? Gualtier Maldé if you must know, but who cares? (*Looks at the sky.*) See those clouds getting thicker? The storm is coming in now.

DUKE (*grasps Maddalena's hand*)

Maddalena...

MADDALENA (*pulling her hand away*)

Just a moment, here's my brother Benny.

DUKE

Forget him.

MADDALENA

Thunder!

BENNY THE BLADE

The rain is just beginning.

DUKE

All the better! A little rain makes it more cozy when you're lying with someone special.

BENNY THE BLADE

I hear you.

MADDALENA (*softly to the Duke*)

(You need to go now.)

DUKE

In this weather?

BENNY THE BLADE

(Aside to Maddalena.) (We have a contract on him.) *(To the Duke.)* More than happy to offer you a bedroom. I can go with you if you would like to see it.

DUKE

Yes, please. That would be nice. So then, let's go now.

MADDALENA *(to herself)*

God, he's so handsome! Why must we kill him? *(Listens to the driving rain.)* Heavens, what awful weather!

DUKE *(in bedroom above)*

This room should suit me nicely. So I'll see you in the morning.

BENNY THE BLADE

Good night and pleasant dreams, boss. *(Returns downstairs.)*

DUKE

Now it's time for some rest. I'm getting sleepy.

Women are here-and-gone,

Not to be counted on.

Loyalties ebb and flow,

Promises come and go.

One day it's out the door,

Next day it's...devotion...the ocean...

My to you advice is get myself a dog.

A dog, I think I'll get a dog, nice dog, nice... *(Falls asleep.)*

MADDALENA

The young man is really a lovable fellow.

BENNY THE BLADE

He certainly is if he's worth twenty thousand.

MADDALENA

Just twenty? That's nothing. You should have got more.

BENNY THE BLADE

He'll sleep with his sword off. Go bring it down here.

(Maddalena goes upstairs. Gilda appears outside the tavern, wearing a man's riding clothes.)

GILDA

What can I be thinking? I go where Love drags me. O Father, forgive me. How dreadful and stormy! I feel evil here.

MADDALENA *(inside, to Benny)*

I got it!

GILDA

Who's speaking?

BENNY THE BLADE

Now where is that sack? *(Looks around and finds it.)*

MADDALENA

He looks like a Greek god, he's beautiful. I love him. He loves me. Let's stop now, we don't have to kill him.

GILDA

Oh heavens!

BENNY THE BLADE

This sack needs some patching.

MADDALENA

What for?

BENNY THE BLADE

As soon as he's done, he goes inside the sack, then into the river.

GILDA

I'm watching the devil!

MADDALENA

We can't lose the money, but let's think it over, perhaps we can save him.

BENNY THE BLADE

Let's just save the money.

MADDALENA

No, listen. There's a way we can easily do it. You say that he gave you ten thousand already. You say that he's bringing the rest here at midnight.

MADDALENA

GILDA

Just kill him, and that way it makes it all simple. Oh Jesus! My father!
You keep all the money, and you're saving a
life.

BENNY THE BLADE

You've got to be kidding. That's out of the question. You think I'm a street punk? You think I'm a bandit? To knock off a client is strictly forbidden. He gives me the money, I give him the goods.

MADDALENA

Well, make an exception...

BENNY THE BLADE

That's how I do business.

MADDALENA

I'm going to go warn him!

GILDA

At least she has feelings!

BENNY THE BLADE

We can't lose the money.

MADDALENA

You're right.

BENNY THE BLADE

So forget it.

MADDALENA

I don't want to kill him, I don't want to kill him.

BENNY THE BLADE

If someone comes in here between now and midnight,
We could use the body of some other guy.

MADDALENA

The night is too dark, and the weather's too stormy.

The street's emptied out, not a soul passing by.

GILDA

Oh what a temptation, to die for that scoundrel.

But think of my father! I'm too young to die!

GILDA

MADDALENA

BENNY THE BLADE

Heaven, have mercy,
Mercy on a sinner.
Heaven have mercy,

The night is too dark, and the
weather's too stormy.

If someone comes in here
between now and midnight,

Mercy on a sinner.

The street's emptied out, not a
soul passing by.

We could use the body of some
other guy.

Have mercy,
I'm too young to die!

No, no, no,
there's no soul passing by.

But whatever we decide, we
mustn't lose the twenty grand.
Cut the crap, you want the
money, and I'll tell you, so do I.

(A bell tolls the half hour.)

BENNY THE BLADE

We got thirty minutes.

MADDALENA

Please, Benny, don't rush things.

GILDA

What! That woman crying? She loves him like I do. I know, yes I know, he betrayed me and shamed me,
but I can't just leave him to die, I must save him. *(Knocks on the door.)*

MADDALENA

You hear that?

BENNY THE BLADE

Just wind noise. *(Gilda knocks again.)*

MADDALENA

There's somebody knocking.

BENNY THE BLADE

Amazing! Who's there?

GILDA

(Calling through the door.) A homeless man begging. Just let me come in from the storm for a little.

MADDALENA

The Lord must have heard us!

BENNY THE BLADE

Just hold on a minute. *(Looks in a drawer for appropriate weapons.)*

MADDALENA

It's time to get going, be strong and be brave now,
Let one life be saved now and one life be damned.

BENNY THE BLADE

As long as we don't lose the money we've earned
'Cause I'm mostly concerned with the cool twenty grand.

GILDA

I pray to the Lord, find a way to forgive them.

The deed they commit, I'm committing it with them.

GILDA

O Father, forgive me, please
forgive me, Father,
I must save my lover, try to
understand.

Forgive me!

Forgive me!
My father!

MADDALENA

Time to get going, be strong and
be brave now,
Let one life be saved now and
one life be damned.
Come on, get going,
This is our chance now to save a
life.

Heaven heard our prayers.

BENNY THE BLADE

Just so we don't lose the money
we're earning,
I'm nervous concerning the cool
twenty grand.
I don't care who lives and who
dies.
I don't care about your
handsome guy.
I will give anything a try.
It's just that time is going by.

My father!
I don't want to hurt you, Father.

No one loves me like you do.
I just have to save my loved one,
Father,

Father, please understand!
(Knocks a third time.)

Thank you for your kindly
welcome.

I know we mustn't lose all the
money
But I just want to save that
young man.
This is our chance to save him.
I just want to save that young
man.

Let this homeless beggar be
damned.
(To Benny.) Get in place.
(Opens the door.) Come in, sir.

You're welcome.

This better work is all that I'm
saying.
I just want to keep the money.
I don't care about your guy,
frankly. We could screw up very
easy
And let twenty thousand slip
from our hand.
*(Positions himself behind the
door with a dagger.)* Open.

You're welcome.

(The rain has let up, but there are still flashes of lightning and thunder.)

RIGOLETTO

Oh, what sweet vengeance! How I've longed for this moment! Trying to keep from sobbing, forcing myself through my capering and laughter, giving the service of a fool. *(Tries the door of the tavern.)* The door's locked. That's funny. I guess it isn't time. I'll wait here. What dreary, brooding darkness! Storms in the highest heavens, and here on earth a murder! Here in this landscape, I feel like a giant. *(The bell tolls twelve. Rigoletto knocks at the door.)* Hey, it's midnight!

BENNY THE BLADE

Who's there?

RIGOLETTO

Your client.

BENNY THE BLADE

One moment. *(Goes in and returns dragging a sack.)* There's the guy that you wanted.

RIGOLETTO

That's perfect! Bring a lantern.

BENNY THE BLADE

Too risky. Now, where's the money? *(Rigoletto gives it to him.)* Well then, let's go feed the fish.

RIGOLETTO

No, I can do that.

BENNY THE BLADE

Fine, suit yourself, boss. If you head down that way, the river gets a little deeper. Hurry, you don't want people watching. See you round, pal! *(Goes back in, locking the door.)*

RIGOLETTO

There he lies, justice is done. I'd like to see him, but no matter. He's not looking his very finest. World, take a look at me now! I am a jester. He was a mighty ruler. There he lies, food for maggots. O victory, O triumph!

My plan of vengeance has done all I could ask it:

His grave will have no marker, a sack will be his only casket.

Next stop: the river! *(Starts to drag the sack toward the riverbank, when he is surprised by the Duke's voice passing by at a distance.)*

DUKE

Women are here-and-gone,

Not to be counted on.

Loyalties ebb and flow,

Promises come and go.

RIGOLETTO

Don't tell me...

DUKE

One day they're sweet and nice,

Next day they're cold as ice.

DUKE

One day it's "je t'adore."

Next day you're out the door.

If you want devotion

Deeper than the ocean,

My advice to you is,

Get yourself a dog.

RIGOLETTO

It's not real.

I'm going crazy.

No, no!

No!

How the devil could he escape me?

That piece of shit deceived me.

DUKE

Is that clear?

Do you hear me?

Get yourself a dog.

Yes, that is my advice to you! (*His voice fades in the distance.*)

RIGOLETTO

Then who is this I'm holding? (*Tears the sack open.*) I'm trembling. This is a body. (*A flash of lightning allows him to see.*) My daughter, Jesus, my daughter! But no! No, it can't be! She's en route to Verona. I was wrong. (*Another flash.*) It is her! (*Kneels.*) Oh, my Gilda! My daughter! Speak up, say something! Name the swine who attacked you. You dogs! You cowards! You rats! My daughter, my Gilda! Oh, my daughter!

GILDA

Is that you, Dad?

RIGOLETTO

She is speaking and moving and breathing. She's not dead. Oh, the only joy I have on earth, your father is here and you will be all right.

GILDA

It's you, you're here, Dad!

RIGOLETTO

What has happened? So strange! Where are you wounded? Tell me.

GILDA

It hurts...here... That's where the knife...

RIGOLETTO

What scoundrel struck you?

GILDA

It was my fault. The lovable villain
Was in danger. They were going to kill him.

RIGOLETTO

God in heaven, in my taste for the slaughter,
I ensnared my own beautiful daughter!
Dearest angel, look up, hear me speaking.
Darling, speak to me. Darling, I love you.

GILDA

Let me be silent. Forgive both me and my lover. One last blessing for your daughter.
O my father,
High up in heaven, I'll be with my mother,
In all eternity praying for you.

RIGOLETTO

Please do not die, O my treasure, don't leave me.
Stay with me here, I have nothing but you,
I have nothing but you.

GILDA

High up in heaven, I'll be with my mother,
In all eternity praying for you,
Praying for you.

RIGOLETTO

Please don't die.

GILDA

For you, praying for you.

RIGOLETTO

If you slip away here, then here is where I die.
I will never return, I'll die with you.

GILDA

Please find a way...

RIGOLETTO

O my daughter!

GILDA

RIGOLETTO

...to forgive him.
I love you. Good bye now!
High up in hea... High up in hea...
Praying for you,
For you, praying for... (Dies.)

O my Gilda!
Please don't leave me, don't die!
Please don't die.
I can't live without you.
Please don't die.

RIGOLETTO

Gilda! My Gilda! My Gilda! God, send a bolt to strike me down!

END