

The following is an excerpt from *Young Figaro*, a play by Victorien Sardou; translation by Frank J. Morlock, copyright © 2001, all rights reserved. The title character must outwit an angry husband, a spurned woman, a lecherous old man, and others, in order to be united with his love. The complete text is available for purchase from Rogue Publishing at [www.roguepublishing.com](http://www.roguepublishing.com).

MARCELINE *(to Figaro, before entering)* Aren't you coming?

FIGARO In fact . . . in fact, I've got to straighten out some important business. *(Marceline leaves.)* —Two things. Don Basile ought to have arrived. Doña Carmen is awaiting my protégée. Señor the count will not be here before nightfall. Suzanne has understood. She will come and I will take her away unless a brick falls on my head.

*Enter the brick in the person of Jacotta.*

JACOTTA Finally!

FIGARO Of course . . .

JACOTTA You were expecting me?

FIGARO Oh, no.

JACOTTA *(approaching him with open arms)* Figaro, my little Figaro!

FIGARO *(recoiling)* O, no, no, no—it's too much for one day.

JACOTTA Good heavens! Is it possible you no longer love me?

FIGARO Indeed, indeed—I will always love you. But in the cellar, Jacotta, in the cellar. Go wait for me in the cellar!

JACOTTA *(rejecting the idea)* To leave without you. Oh, yes, indeed!

FIGARO *(anxiously)* What?

JACOTTA But don't you know that my husband has just been released from prison, and that he is looking for you so he can kill you? But I will save you.

FIGARO My thanks.

JACOTTA I have packed everything, silverware, clothes, china, all on the mule below. That mule is stubborn. And I am, too. And will you nill you, I will throw you over the saddle and whip the animal on.

FIGARO Never!

JACOTTA What?

FIGARO Before nightfall! When your husband is laying in wait for us at every street corner—am I to expose to his anger his wife, his mule, his crockery? Come again!

JACOTTA What do you intend—?

FIGARO Time is needed to get some friends together—an escort to take arms, procure disguises, passports, provisions, my opera, my luggage, a cart . . .

JACOTTA Ta, ta, ta—too complicated. *(She gathers his things.)* En route.

FIGARO *(as Jacotta pulls him along)* Jacotta, I adore you. I idolize you. But don't do me any violence, Jacotta! I'll scream. . . .

JACOTTA *(releasing him, amused)* From chastity?

FIGARO (*squirming loose*) While if you are quite nice and if you will give me but a quarter of an hour—

JACOTTA You will flee?

FIGARO Word of honor . . . I will flee.

JACOTTA Then I'll wait below.

FIGARO At the door?

JACOTTA With my mule.

FIGARO The mule . . . (*Aside.*) For Suzanne . . . (*Aloud.*) No, no—not there. An animal at a doctor's house is common enough—but a gathering . . .

JACOTTA Someone's coming. . . .

FIGARO Through the window! . . . Hide!

JACOTTA Where?

FIGARO (*pushing her into the library*) In this corridor, center door, the library. (*He closes the door.*)

JACOTTA (*reopening the door*) If you deceive me . . .

FIGARO (*closing the door*) Shh!

CARASCO (*poking his head through the curtains of the window*) Caramba!

FIGARO Wonderful. The male now!

CARASCO (*climbing in*) Ah, I've got you . . .

FIGARO Not yet . . . (*At each step that Carasco makes forward, Figaro steps back, and they thus cross the scene during the following exchange.*)

CARASCO Ah, rogue, you take my customers, my linen, my mule, my china, the best of my furniture—my wife—

FIGARO (*getting Bartholo's table between them*) The worst.

CARASCO You made me— (*Figaro pushes him into the doctor's armchair and runs away to the right. Carasco jumps over the chair and chases Figaro again.*) Oof! You made me ridiculous in the eyes of the whole city—and you think that's the end of it?

FIGARO (*behind the table*) Oh that's not the end of it, not at all—at all!

CARASCO (*rapidly circling the table*) Señor Figaro—when a rake like you— (*Figaro has retreated around the table. Carasco lunges after him.*) —attacks a Castilian like me— (*And back again.*) —do you know what the Castilian does? (*He lunges to grab Figaro but only catches the air.*)

FIGARO (*dodging to the left*) He misses him!

CARASCO (*hurting his leg and rubbing it*) Damn! —He cuts off both his ears and puts them in his pocket. (*He draws a knife, and continues towards Figaro, limping.*)

FIGARO (*pushing the armchair in front of him like a rampart*) My dear Señor Carasco—when a Castilian like you has a bad tooth that he refuses to allow anyone to extract— Do you know what we doctors do? (*He pushes the chair into Carasco's legs.*) We politely put him in the chair!

CARASCO (*twisting around and losing his equilibrium*) Ah, traitor!

FIGARO (*grabbing him by the shoulders and forcing him to be seated*) Take the trouble to have a seat. (*The two arms of the chair fold in on Carasco, imprisoning him.*)

CARASCO (*struggling wildly*) Ah, caramba!

FIGARO (*drawing his dentist's tool*) There—now don't cry out or I'll perform an extraction.

CARASCO (*frightened*) Mercy! Pity!

FIGARO So we intend to assassinate poor little Figaro? Your knife, quickly!

CARASCO Here it is, Señor Figaro.

FIGARO And your other weapons?

CARASCO In my left pocket. —Aiee! My arm!

FIGARO (*pulling a pistol from Carasco's pocket*) A pistol—is that all?

CARASCO In my right pocket—oh my stomach—oh, oh—

FIGARO (*drawing out a vial*) Poison! Any more?

CARASCO In my vest. Aie! Aie!

FIGARO (*drawing out a knotted rope*) A garotte! What else?

CARASCO That's all.

FIGARO That's all . . . an embarrassment of riches. (*He presents the weapons to Carasco.*) Which do you prefer?

CARASCO For me! Mercy, Señor Figaro—don't kill me!

FIGARO (*putting the pistol to his throat*) Ask my pardon.

CARASCO As for my wife . . . whom you have . . .

FIGARO Yes.

CARASCO Never mind—it's a deal. I ask your pardon!

FIGARO And you'll never start this over again?

CARASCO I swear it!

FIGARO Then I rest easy, and I will lock you in here for about an hour.

CARASCO An hour!

FIGARO (*menacing him with the pistol*) Not a sound, or if you do . . . (*He gags Carasco with his own bandana, and blindfolds him as well. Carasco struggles futilely, trying to speak.*) Yes, yes, you can explain later. March! (*He pushes the armchair into his chamber and closes the door.*) Word of honor, I'm making a collection tonight. (*Night falls during this speech.*)

*Suzanne enters from the dining room with her mantle in her hand.*

SUZANNE Figaro, are you there?

FIGARO (*taking his cloak and hat*) Quickly, quickly, or we'll lose time.

SUZANNE Where are we going?

FIGARO Are you afraid to follow me?

SUZANNE Ah! To the end of the world!

FIGARO Come then! (*Serenade in the street.*) By God—too late!

SUZANNE (*putting her mantle on the chair and running to the window*) A serenade! Masked musicians!

FIGARO Before the door?

SUZANNE All around the house!

FIGARO Hide yourself . . . (*He searches for a proper place.*) Behind this door. (*He puts her in the armoire.*) And whatever happens, don't budge. (*The*

*serenade continues.*) Now here's a wonderful opportunity for me to dispose of Jacotta. *(He opens the door to the library.)* Come, my love, come!

JACOTTA What's that music?

FIGARO To mislead the watch. Quick, in this chair! *(He places Suzanne's mantle on her.)* Put this on your head and be so obliging as to allow yourself to be carried off.

JACOTTA Carried off!

FIGARO Certainly. Carasco's about. You will pass for an invalid. Quick now! *(Jacotta puts the mantle on.)*

*Enter Almoviva, masked. Students scale the balcony.*

ALMAVIVA *(low)* Where is she?

FIGARO *(low)* In the armchair.

ALMAVIVA Asleep?

FIGARO *(showing Carasco's vial)* Through my efforts.

ALMAVIVA Bravo! I have my litter. Carry her off, my friends! *(Suddenly there's a knock on the center door.)*

BRIDOISON *(outside)* In the name of the King— O-open up!

FIGARO Bridoison! Oh, the beast. What the devil's he coming here for?

ALMAVIVA *(pointing to Jacotta)* Surround her!

BRIDOISON *(knocking at the door)* In the name of the King!