

*Hero's Canon -by Don/Mike/Betsy***ACT I SCENE I**

Exterior. Porch of a town pub. Townspeople pass occasionally. Treble sits on the steps drinking his ale.

Treble *[to himself]*: Hear ye! Hear ye! The rattles of the town, the rumor of the riverside! For a bit o' ale, you can learn something about yourself that everyone in the town knows, except you. Hear--

Passerby: Ole Treble, at it again, eh? Why don't you give it up and get yourself a job?

Treble: Why don't you quit messing around with the governor's daughter and go home to your wife?

Passerby: How did you--

Treble: That's me job.

[Passerby walks off in a fury]

Hear ye! Hear ye! The chatter of the churchyard. The stories of the state! *[trails off]*

[Townsperson segment one. these are quick explanations of the plot from a lower class view that are exchanged in the crosses of the townspersons [4]]

Townsperson 1 *[crossing the stage]*: Ole Treble's in the courtyard with his trusty bottle of ale *[exits]*

Townsperson 2 *[crossing the stage in opposite direction]*: His affairs are in the gossip and he coyly spins his tale *[Townsperson 3 and four enter conversing. Townsperson 2 exits.]*

Townsperson 3 *[crossing the stage]*: I've heard his words a few times--

Townsperson 4: -- I believe just what he say.

Townsperson 1: So I'm sure the governor's daughter's got a baby on the way. *[all laugh]*

Treble: My friends I do not gossip--

Townspersons 1,3,4: --Yes, you do--

Treble: --No, I do not!
I merely create interest with the knowledge that I've got.
Since I listen to the whispers and put 'em up for sale
I can make an honest living.....and afford a little ale. *[he laughs]*

Townsperson 1: He says the king's a fruitcake--

Townsperson 3: --He says the queen's a nut!

Treble: It's true!--

Townsperson 1,3,4 *[leaving]*: --This town would have no problems if you'd keep your big mouth shut!
[laughing]

Treble *[without pause]*: Hear ye! Hear ye!

Barmaid: Will a little ale shut you up?

Treble: I doubt it, my lady, but it's worth a try.

Barmaid [*pouring ale*]: Ole Treble, one of these days you're really going to get yourself into a pickle. The Governor don't like drunkards bringing down his town value. He's gonna start laying down the law!

Treble: By the looks o' things, he'll be laying down the foundation for a new baby room too.

Barmaid [*laughing*]: What else is new? [*enter Legato and Harmonius*]

Treble: Keep pourin' and I'll keep talking. [*looking around, spots Legato and Harmonius*] See those young bucks over there. [*Barmaid nods*] I happen to know--

Barmaid: You always "happen to know."

Treble: I happen to know something about 'em. Notice the bewilderment and joy in the tall one's eyes. His heart right now is singing. Know why?

Barmaid: No, why?

Treble: He's just found his calling. The heavenly Lord has looked down from the heavens and plucked him out to be his servant.

Barmaid: Legato? A priest?

Treble: Yessiree. He'll soon find himself in the finest white praising the Lord's name.

Barmaid: And what about his friend, Harmonius?

Treble: The Lord had a friend named Harmonius? I think you mean Abraham.

Barmaid: N-no. I mean Legato's friend.

Treble: Abraham?

Barmaid: What in the Lord's name are you talking about?!?

Treble: Exactly.

Barmaid: What?

Treble: He'll be praising the Lord's name.

Barmaid: Who [*desperately*] Abraham?

Treble: Uh, Abraham has been dead for a long, long time. I'm talking about his savior's servant's friend's friend's friend.

Barmaid: Harmonius? [*both counting on fingers*]

Treble: 's friend.

Barmaid: Legato!

Treble *[like she's stupid]*: Ye-ah. Now, you drown the rim of this cup and I'll tell you what the problem is. *[whispering]*

Legato: Ah, Harmonius, we should thank the Lord for this beautiful day. *[Barmaid and Treble exchange glances and sigh]* The sun is shining, the birds are singing, the trees--

Harmonius: --you're thinking about becoming a priest again, aren't you?

Legato: Yeah. Is it that obvious?

Harmonius: You're starting to sound like a bad Beegees song.

Legato: Which one?

Harmonius: All of them.

Legato: But Harmonius, I feel, I feel--

Harmonius: Priestlike? *[unamused]*

Legato: Yeah! It's like, It's like--

Harmonius: Priestly?

Legato: Yeah! I want nothing more to be, to be--

Harmonius: --a professional wrestler?

Legato: No! I want--

Both: --to be a priest.

Legato: Yeah! **Harmonius**: I know.

Harmonius: Come on, Legato, think of all you'll miss. Women. You can never have a girlfriend. You can never hold someone late at night dreaming of the future. You can never come home from a day at the shop and have her there, eyes shining, lips puckered, hair flowing, hands outstretched--

Legato: I'll have the Lord to love me.

Harmonius: Yeah, but look around you. Look at all the women. They're beautiful. They're sensuous. They're-- *[enter Crescenda giggling obnoxiously]* Ok, bad example.

Legato: Cover for me. *[he ducks behind a platform]*

Crescenda *[singing]*: Harmonius! Bet you're super-duper extra-specially tickled pink to see me, aren't you?

Harmonius *[sarcastic]*: Melting with ecstasy.

Crescenda: Have you seen my super-sweet candy-coated love nugget?

Harmonius: Legato doesn't like you. He never has and never will. Can't your candy-coated head comprehend that?

Crescenda: Oh, you're silly. *[giggling obnoxiously]* Have you seen him?

Harmonius: Uh, yeah. He told me to tell you there's a super-coated extra-tickled present waiting for you *[looking around]* hidden beneath the mud trench in the market pig sty!

Crescenda *[giggling]:* I knew he liked me! Legato?!?! LEGATO! *[running off exiting].*

Harmonius *[watching her leave]:* IT's gone.

Legato *[coming out]:* O Harmonius, that's an ache that just won't go away. I appreciate it. *[enter two men, one tall and dressed in black, the other a wiry fellow]*

Barmaid *[shuddering]:* I hate to serve them, but for every pleasure *[gives Treble a wink]* there's a pain.

Treble: I'll be seeing you later, young lass.

Barmaid *[leaving]:* If it be in your tattles, nary a drop of ale will touch your lips again.

Treble: Do you know a quicker way?

Harmonius *[chuckling]:* Ah, yes. What else may compare with a woman's gentle affections? Her sweet caressing voice ever-searching the slops for her lover. Such gentle creatures I may only but dream of. But you, you are far more fortunate than I.

Legato *[under his breath]:* One more word and I'll . . .

Harmonius: You'll what? You've only just begun to consider becoming a man of the cloth (again), and yet you've already mastered the vengeful attitude that such a profession requires. I hope you'll consider taking a pulpit in another village.

Legato: How's that?

Harmonius: Well, as much as I'd enjoy watching you preach sin and vice all the while escaping the clutching, grasping arms of a far too energetic sinner . . .

Legato: Harmonius, you . . . *[sees the two men and cuts himself off]* . . . I . . .

Harmonius *[turning to look]:* What . . . ? *[sees them]* Ah. You're not leaving, are you?

Legato: Maybe not yet.

Barmaid: What'll it be, gents?

Man #1: Ale.

Man #2: Bourbon for myself. *[catches Legato's eye and ever so slightly sneers]* Or perhaps wine would be more to my taste. Yes. Make it a wine.

Legato *[standing]:* It's all that I can stand. I'm leaving.

Harmonius *[placing a hand on Legato's sleeve]:* Come along. Sit down. The party's only just begun and barbed comments can only drive a man away for so long.

Legato: No! There's only so much I can take. *[breaks free of Harmonius and runs out the door]*

Harmonius *[to the Barmaid who stands beside him]*: Here we go again. Every Saturday, I'm sure. One for the road, my lady?

Barmaid *[pouring the drink]*: Now you just be careful with him, Mr. Harmonius. Don't'chu go bringing up more stuff to clutter his mind or I'll ne'er attend you again.

Harmonius *[feigning astonishment]*: I could never be so unkind. Now you just serve our mutual friends, ma'am, and I'll see what I can do about our priest in training *[breaks into a run, brushing past Treble]* .

Treble *[to himself]*: Hear ye! Hear ye! The tale of a tad. The story of a stumbler. Who'll hear this woeful tale I tell?

Barmaid: Quiet you! Good thing he's not here. You'd only add to the lad's suffering.

Treble: Nothing to add. Nothing to lose. Serve your customers and I'll serve mine. *[clearing his throat]* Come hear a tale of poor Legato, so please don't interrupt.

Townsperson 1 *[crossing stage and taking a chair from the set with him]*: Your tale is wasted on the rich, why don't you just shut up?

Townsperson 2 *[crossing the stage with chair, gesturing towards the two men]*: The shorter one is Clef, with whom Legato once was friends.

Townsperson 3 *[crossing the stage with chair]*: The taller is a man named Fugue, with whom Harmonius is at ends.

Treble: Hear the tale of how they fell apart from this old seer.
And if you'd like to find out more come and buy yourself a beer.

[end of townsperson segment two and Scene One. Scene changes to that of the interior of a church. Legato is there kneeling in a pew. An Old Lady sits behind him, a scowl on her face. Harmonius enters, sees his friend, and kneels beside him. Legato pretends not to notice]

ACT I SCENE 2

Harmonius: . . . and please see to it that Daddy stops taking bribes from gangster nuns and that Mommy stops dancing with the gypsies at midnight. *[seeing that he's getting no reaction]* Hello? Anyone home? *[still no reaction]* Look, desperate times call for desperate measures. If you don't look at me this instant I'm going to go right out to that pig sty and call back your wo-man.

Legato *[not looking up]*: Even you aren't that cruel.

Harmonius: Oh so? *[Harmonius stands and goes to the back of the church. He clears his throat once then yells at the top of his lungs in an affected voice . . .]* Oh my honey bunny ducky downy sweetie chicken pie li'l everlovin' jelly bean, where are you ? ! ?

Legato *[jumping to his feet, then seeing his friend who is by now laughing loudly much to the annoyance of the Old Lady in the second pew]*: You!

Harmonius: Moi!

Old Lady: Sh!

Harmonius: A thousand pardons madam. *[turning to Legato]* Now are we going to talk about this? I'm sick and tired of being unable to finish a single drink with you whenever those two come on in for a meal.

Legato: Harmonius, you know I can't deal with those bumbling fools. Not after what they did--

Harmonius: Hey hey hey. I'm just as upset about Melody's death as you are. So we weren't blood-related, that doesn't mean I didn't love her as a second cousin three times removed too!

Legato: And for her death, I once vowed revenge. I know, though I love my blessed Lord, I still will never forgive those . . . those heathens.

Harmonius: Well, you can't entirely blame them for her death. They were drunk!

Legato: That doesn't make them any less guilty or her any more alive!

Old Lady *[looking sweetly up from prayer]:* Sh!

Harmonius and Legato: Aw...

Harmonius: You don't know it was them!

Legato: Drunk as a fish, coated in cinders, yes, I'd call it a positive identification! I saw it myself. One tall and slender, one short and stout. Do you think anyone could miss them running off into the wood? Nay, I've got my proof. And if it weren't for my faith, I'd have my revenge!

Old Lady *[looking gingerly up from prayer]:* Sh!

Harmonius and Legato: Aw...

Harmonius: Ok. So maybe you've got a good case. Neither has denied it. Neither has confessed. This whole situation just makes me sick. You--

Crescenda *[sing-song offstage]:* --Where's my snuggly wuggly banana-nut meatloaf surprise?

Harmonius: Speaking of sick.

Legato *[pleadingly]:* Harmonius, please?

Harmonius: I tire of this. *[giving in]* All right. Quick, get in the confessional. *[both enter a side of the confessional, Legato, where the priest should be. Enter Crescenda, looking around]* Forgive me father, for I have sinned. Its been a while since my last confession. *[Crescenda walks by]* Father, there is a situation that I'd like to call to mind. I sent a girl to the pig sty the other day in search of a false faith. Surrounded by pigs, she hurled herself into filth to find her heart's content. All she found was an aroused hog. The creature smelled of rotten eggs and looked like worm-eaten fecal slime. *[Crescenda takes a seat in a pew]* The hog was pretty nasty too.

Legato *[muffled]:* Quiet!

Harmonius: Bless me father.

Legato *[in a disguised voice]:* My son, you are forgiven for straying from the path of God. Repent and pray for your soul. Amen. *[Harmonius exits booth]*

Harmonius: Wait here a sec. I'll tell you when it's clear. *[approaching Crescenda]* Did you find your love waiting for you?

Crescenda: No, my angel wasn't where you said he'd be. He's playing hard to get.

Harmonius: Where did I say he'd be?

Crescenda: Silly Harmy, at the bottom of the pig pen, that's where you said he'd be. I feel like I've sinned. Please excuse me, cheesecake *[turns towards confessional. Harmonius siezes her arm].*

Harmonius *[trying to make conversation, to keep Crescenda from the confessional]:* Cheese cloth? Is that your name for me? Well what should I call you?

Crescenda: Well, you can call ME your honey-fried apple dumpling. See you later Cheesey!

Harmonius: Uh! Wait up my little sun-fried animal dumping! I-er, did you, uh, You said pig pen, didn't you?

Old Lady *[looking warmly up from prayer]:* Sh!

Crescenda and Harmonius: Aw...

Crescenda: Huh?

Harmonius: I could have sworn I told you the community manure stockyard. Isn't that what I said?

Crescenda: Stockyard? Legato's waiting for me there? O my gosh, "pig pen" "stockyard" they almost rhyme! My brain doesn't work well with directions, you know. I'd better go meet him at the stockyards then. You wouldn't know where it is, would you?

Harmonius *[immediately]:* Not a clue!

Crescenda *[grabbing Harmonius]:* Sure you do. *[Exit both, Crescenda dragging Harmonius, Harmonius objecting. At the same time a young woman named Fermata enters. Legato jumps out of the confessional, yet sees Fermata about to enter. He jumps back in without her seeing.]*

Fermata *[Entering confessional]:* Forgive me, Father for I have deliberately ignored your preachings and kept myself celebant.

Legato: We can fix that!

Fermata: Pardon?

Legato *[with an Irish brogue]:* I said, er, what afflicts ye, me child? Why have ye done so?

Fermata: I don't know. I guess I need a man who isn't afraid to stand up and fight. One who doesn't back away from an insult, regardless of penalty or odds. I need a hero, Father, and won't give myself to any man until he's proven to be one. Father, forgive me for not choosing a man to partake in holy matrimony with. I know it is my religion, but I cannot.

Legato *[losing brogue]:* So, you want a hero, eh? *[resuming brogue]* Er, uh. If it be so, then tis the Lord's wish. There are plenty of women who save themselves for a great image.

[Re-enter Harmonius]

Fermata: I see. Father, what do I do?

Legato: Nothing, my child. Keep yourself pure and be keeping a watchful eye out for the Lord's choice.

Fermata: Thank you, father. [*Fermata exits. Shortly after, Legato comes out of the confessional*].

Harmonius: "Keep yourself pure and be keeping a watchful eye out for" . . . an average boy hiding in a confessional pretending to be a priest whose heart beats rampantly for you!

Legato: Oh, Harmonius, who was that sinful, sinful girl?

Harmonius: Be careful, Father. You've chosen celibacy for the Lord.

Legato: Celibacy??? That was before. This is now.

Harmonius: This is stupid.

Legato: This is love!

Harmonius: Same difference.

Old Lady [*standing gently, taking off her spectacles. Argument quiets. Looks of adoration, as if to say "Aw..."*]: AND THIS IS A WARNING FOR ALL LOUD-MOUTHED VAGRANTS! FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, SHUT THE HELL UP!!

[*A moment of silence. The boys exit and are outside the church only to bump into Clef and Fugue. There is a moment of charged silence. From offstage we hear the Barmaid yelling, "Treble, give me me blooming tip!" Enter the two of them.*]

Treble: If it's a tip you want, a tip you'll receive. "Don't count your chickens before they cross the road!"

[*Townsperson Scene Three. Townsperson One enters Stage Right. Each Townsperson picks up a chair as they go, each taking up their props at the appropriate times.*]

Townsperson 1: So you see, the plot doth thicken, the crime made long ago.

Townsperson 2 [*enters Stage Left*]: Both Legato and Harmonius certain of what they know

Townsperson 3 [*enter Stage Right*]: A year hath passed since Melody, Legato's cousin slept.

Townsperson 4 [*enter Stage Left*]: Upon the hay where foals and mares were picturesquely kept.

Townsperson 1 [*who has entered with Townsperson Stage Right*]: Twas midnight when across the lawn, two figures drunk as all.

Townsperson 4 [*to Townsperson 1*]: Made their way to Legato's barn, and crept into a stall. [*they exit*]

Townsperson 2 [*enter Stage Right*]: Both looking for a joyride in the middle night [*stay frozen center*]

Townsperson 3 [*enter Stage Left*]: A stallion kicked the two of them into the dung from fright. [*stay frozen center*]

Townsperson 4 [*entering with Townsperson 1*]: By consequence a lantern fell, and the barn engulfed in flame.

Townsperson 1: The soded figures left the scene, none knew their face or name. *[all Townspersons are now in a row]*

Townsperson 2: Legato sees them running off--

Townsperson 3: -- the lass is still inside

Townsperson 4: And so the barn burnt to the ground--

All Townspersons: --and her, she's fritter-fried. *[big finale]*

Legato *[upset]*: Guys! C'mon. This was my cousin, after all!

Townsperson 1: Oh. Sorry. *[all Townspersons dispense]*

Harmonius *[turning back to Clef and Fugue]*: See, Legato. I told you so. Though churchs may attempt to provide proper sanctuary from true freaks of nature, in the end we all gotta face 'em. *[bows]*.

Clef *[the tall one]*: I could attempt to reply to that, Harmonius, but as you can see I'm tounge tied against your wit. Well, Legato *[turning to him]* we thought we might be able to find you here. How's tricks?

Legato: I have no words for you.

Clef: Nor I any for you. However, I do believe my sword has something to say. He's been terribly offended by the rash and sometimes even rude mannerisms you've offered unto his carrier and my compatriote here. If my tongue won't lash, perhaps he will. Isn't that right, Fugue?

Fugue *[the short one]*: Grunt.

Harmonius: If it's a fight you're looking for, you've come to the right place. Legato has always been the sage of the sword. A ruler of the rapier. A . . .

Legato: Uh, Harmonius. *[to Fugue and Clef]* Your ill-reputed pardons for a minute.

Clef *[proudly]*: Sure. No problem.

Legato: Thanks. *[to Harmonius a little ways away]* What are you doing? I can't fight them!

Harmonius: Whattaya mean you can't fight them? You've got your sword and I know it's not an anchor to you since you've sliced me many a time. What gives?

Legato *[piously]*: I have, if you'll remember, given my soul to God. My blade-dancing days are no longer.

Harmonius: What are you talking about? Two seconds ago you were ogling a beautiful young lady's . . . hair. Now you're right back to ashes to ashes and dust to dust. I don't mean to pressure you but you can't have your cake and eat it too. Choose now! "God or garbonzos?"

Legato: Shakespeare?

Harmonius *[nonchalantly shaking head]*: Hoffa.

Clef: You guys going to be all day?

Harmonius: One more minute, I swear.

Legato: Okay, let me weigh my options. If I'm a priest I'm guaranteed heaven.

Harmonius: If you're not a priest you're guaranteed frivolous promiscuousness.

Legato: ...meaning...

Harmonius *[rubbing hands together and smiling]:* Heaven!

Legato *[angered]:* ...MEANING....

Harmonius: Ok. Ok. Earthly pleasures.

Legato: Accepted. If I'm a priest, I enlighten burdensome souls.

Harmonius: If you're not a priest you enlighten burdensome bodies.

Legato: Ahem. That's the same thing.

Harmonius: It should be worth repeating! Come on, while the rest of us are sneaking out to the stables in the night for a heated encounter in the hay, you--you are sneaking out to the same place to read an elderly, but faithful, dairy cow her last rights. Is something not clicking here? Haven't you seen the light?

Legato: Indeed I have. And that is why I my sword remains sheathed.

Harmonius: Have it your own way, but I shouldn't have to remind you what the great philosopher Socrates of Athens said to a man in your position.

Legato: Socrates wasn't from Athens.

Harmonius: Exactly.

[both Legato and Harmonius have a puzzled look on their faces. Harmonius engages in combat while Legato turns his back to pray, partially worried about his friend, partially disconcerted. Reenter Fermata]

Fermata: Men. They are like the swine of the earth, dueling over grub, with shiny falices of what they wish they were.

Legato *[stopping prayer to respond, not realizing who it is]:* They have no sense of spiritual enlightenment, peace with society, or respect towards a greater being.

Fermata: But, oh, the sweat on their savage brows is enough to make any girl yell "Suey!" *[Legato notices who it is and reacts with distaste for his own remark]*

[Halfway through the fight, a sword nicks his hair.]

Legato: Interrupt my prayer, behave unmannerly before a beautiful lady, even gang up against my friend, here, *[Harmonius sighs unapprovingly]* but nobody touches the 'do. Step aside, Miss, I wouldn't want you to get hurt.

[fight resumes with Legato showing off. He licks them all. When it's done, Legato bows to Fermata. Fermata fights Legato and beats him.]

Fermata: I need a real man in my life, not a flowery religious nut. Come on, baby, let's leave these boys for some real fighting *[Clef grabs her hand and laughs obnoxiously. She elbows him in the gut and he squeals and then quiets. They exit with Fugue trailing behind.]*

Harmonius: Committed to the Savior, he says. My blade-dancing days are no longer, he says. Yoo-hoo. Hello in there. *[no reaction from the entranced Legato] Creamed-broccoli raisin nut bunt cake morsel!*

Legato *[snapping out]:* Whu-- Don't do that. Harmonius, did you see--

Harmonius: Forget it, pal. You've heard her twice now. You're not good enough. You're hittin' your head against the, uh...the, uh *[motioning towards head. Legato slaps him across the forehead.]*...

Legato: The wall?

Harmonius: Pink Floyd?

Legato: No, uh, a wall *[motioning towards head]*.

Harmonius: Oh. Well, I was going to say 1957 Chevy Convertable with dual exhaust and a pine air freshner, but I guess a wall will do just as—*[Legato enters a trance]* Now what's the matter with you? Are you thinking about her...again?

Legato: ...*in* the car...all leather interior with--

Harmonius: --Legato, come on--

Legato *[yelling]:* I will be good enough for her. I promise you that.

Harmonius: Well, you know what they say in Athens, "Don't count your chickens before they cross the road"

Legato: Who says that? Socrates?

Harmonius: Nah. He's not from Athens.

[they exit as the Barmaid and Treble enter from the other side.]

Barmaid: So she's dead?

Treble: By the looks of it. She just keeled over in the manure pile like she's found her place.

Barmaid: So what's the big secret then?

Treble: I happen to know--

Barmaid: You always happen to know--

Treble: I happen to know she had a considerable amount of green on her.

Barmaid: Warts?

Treble: No dough.

Barmaid: Sourbread?

Treble: No, woman, cash! *[he holds up a twenty. She snatches it. He reaches for it back and gets slapped with remembrance of the "tip"]* She packed up all her money and half her father's to run off with her lover.

Barmaid: Who would love her?

Treble: Her lover.

Barmaid: But who?

Treble: Her lover.

Barmaid: But who is her lover?

Treble: The person who would love her. *[she grunts, they move on]* Anyway, who says we don't ink ourselves into her last will and testament by claiming the bills for ourselves?

Barmaid *[unsure]:* Ahh *[she understands]* Ahh.

Treble: Uh huh. *[exchanging ahhs and uh huhs, they laugh obnoxiously and exit].*

[Townsperson Scene Four. We'll write it in later. Scene changes to the manure pile where we can see one of Crescenda's feet sticking precariously out of the bottom. Kinda a wicked witch of the east deal. The foot is not moving. How we'll manage to make a manure pile is anyone's guess. Enter Treble and the Barmaid.]

Treble: Thar she blows. A hump under a pile of sh . . . *[notices a lady is present]* . . . poop. Tis **Crescenda**, I say.

Barmaid: So it is. Happen to know if anyone else knows she's in there?

Treble: As a matter of fact, yes!

Barmaid: Yes, they know?

Treble: No. Yes, they don't know.

Barmaid: No!

TrebleFluster: Yes!

Barmaid: Well, ain't that a stitch. This calls for a celebration. Before we trek into that pile of sh. . . *[remembers that she is a lady]* . . . poop for our assets, I say we take in a drink or two to rally our spirits.

Treble: Rally our spirits with spirits? *[looks at the empty bottle in his hand]* Well, I've been on the wagon a good five minutes now. Me heart can't take much more. What the hey! *[They exit as the Old Lady enters, clasping the arm of the Passerby very tightly]*

Passerby *[attmpting to pry his mother off his arm]:* Mamar, you know I love spending all this time with you, but really I must be off!

Old Lady: Very well, dear. You go about and have your fun. *[lets go of his arm and gives him a kiss on the cheek. As he starts to walk away she calls out to him]* I'll just sit here by the manure and think lovingly of my favorite son who would abandon his mother next to a dung heap while she's probably going to die any day now. But never mind that, you ungrateful cur. After all, I only raised you from a lad. You only owe your frigging life to me! *[gives a little cry]* Just go! Go! *[sobs into her handkerchief]*

Passerby *[thinks about it for a moment then says cheerfully]*: Okay! By mother! *[mom reacts. exit Passerby]*

Old Lady *[suddenly stops crying and throws the handkerchief to the ground]*: You're off my Christmas list! *[enter Law enforcement agent 1 who sees the handkerchief on the ground and picks it up for the Old Lady.]*

Law enforcement agent 1: Here you are, ma'am.

Old Lady: Thank ye kindly, dear sir. *[looks at him over her glasses]* My, you're a handsome young buck, ain't'cha?

Law enforcement agent 1 *[startled]*: Come again?

Old Lady: Oh . . . uh . . . I said, my ore's ahead some yun backs.

Law enforcement agent 1: Ah. Of course. *[confused, he looks about]* Plummy day, isn't it?

Old Lady *[still looking at the law enforcement agent]*: Very fine.

Law enforcement agent 1 *[inhales deeply]*: The smell of the sunflowers, the sandelwood trees, the sun, the shi . . . *[looks nervously at the Old Lady]* . . . manure.

Old Lady *[proudly]*: A town relic! Been there since I was a little girl.

Law enforcement agent 1 *[looks at the manure]*: Perhaps you can then explain the shoes in the manure?

Old Lady *[looking at them]*: A blight on the scenery. Weren't there when I was a girl. No sirree, bob.

Law enforcement agent 1: Agreed. Now what would a pair of shoes be doing in . . . wait a minute. Legs!

Old Lady *[looking at her own]*: Do you like 'em? Wanna take a closer look? *[understanding situation]* I mean...you're right. Go take a closer look!

Law enforcement agent 1: You go look at them. You're the one that's so proud of the place!

Old Lady: That doesn't mean I want to waltz through it.

Law enforcement agent 1: Fine. Then we'll both go. *[hesitant, hoping for a no]*

Old Lady: We...can't...do that.

Law enforcement agent 1: Right.

Old Lady: Right.

Law enforcement agent 1: Right...why? *[looking for an excuse]*

Old Lady: Because...we...don't...own it!

Law enforcement agent 1: Right.

Old Lady: Right.

Law enforcement agent 1: Right...who owns it?

Old Lady: The city. Right? right. right. *[exchange glances]*

Law enforcement agent 1: So we have to have the governor do it! Right?.....your turn.

Old Lady: Right.

Law enforcement agent 1: Right!

Old Lady: We'll have to wait until tomorrow.

Law enforcement agent 1: Right. Why?

Old Lady: The governor's got a baby shower today.

Law enforcement agent 1: Oh, the governor's expecting?

Old Lady: Well he wasn't. But his wife was... *[both laugh accusingly]*

Law enforcement agent 1: So we shall wait. In the meantime, I have to go about my law enforcing duties.

Old Lady: Good luck *[resuming place on bench]*.

Law enforcement agent 1: Ma'am, is that your handkerchief?

Old Lady: Yes.

[he arrests her for littering. They both exit with him reading her her rites. Fourth Townsperson scene. They change surroundings to that of a marketplace]

Townsperson 1 *[crossing the stage]:* So Treble and his Barmaid are sitting on the stools.

Townsperson 2 *[crossing the stage]:* Celebrating their luck and being greedy fools.

Townsperson 3 *[crossing the stage]:* And Crescenda lies in a state, now much better than her life.

Townsperson 4 *[crossing the stage]:* And Legato's about to plead that Fermata be his wife.

Townsperson 1 *[crossing the stage]:* The town must wait for a baby shower that the governor didn't plan.

Townsperson 2 *[crossing the stage]:* Just to remove a stinky body that lays in a stinky land.

Townsperson 3 *[crossing the stage]:* Well that's a lot o' plot --

Townsperson 4 *[crossing the stage]:* but we said it all in time.

Townsperson 1 *[crossing the stage]:* Don't forget the nice Old Lady, who now pays a littering fine!

[exit all townspeople. Fermata wanders from market stand to market stand. Enter Legato]

Legato: What brings you before this market stand to stand here in the market.

Fermata *[unamused]:* Hunger.

Legato: What say you and me go for a pizza together to discuss our marriage and children?

Fermata: Sorry. I'm not interested. I want a hero.

Legato: So we'll go to Blimpie instead. I understand they have great turkey footlong heros.

Fermata: You don't seem to understand. I want a-- [*Legato grabs her basket and a cantalope from the stand they're by*]

Legato: -- nice, romantic, midnight picnic in the park [*holding up cantalope*] beneath the glorious moon. [*she, with a few quick slaps gets him to the ground and regains her basket and throws the cantalope into Legato's gut*]

Fermata: No, a hero, a brave man, a champion, a model, an ace, a hero! I don't want a weak little boy like yourself. [*she storms out*]

Legato: A hero, eh. Well, before the day is up she'll have a hero.

Harmonius [*frantic*]: She's dead! I killed her! Oh my lord, my lord! It's all my fault! I don't care if I never see the sun again [*he starts beating himself with the cantalope*]

Legato: Noble Harmonius. What speaks you?

Harmonius: Crescenda. I sent her to the dungheap...as a joke...she...she's dead, Legato. I didn't want for her to die. Oh, I'd give anything to see her smiling face once again. I killed such a beautiful flower, a delicate reed in the wind, a glorious star, a majestic waterbuffalo...waaaa

Legato: What?

Harmonius: Yeah. She's dead...my little honey-fried apple dumpling is dead.

Legato: Now, Harmonius, it's not your fault. You didn't know your sun-fried animal dumping--

Harmonius: --that's HONEY-FRIED APPLE DUMPLING...waaaa

Legato: You didn't know your honey-fried apple dumpling was going to kill herself in the dungheap!

Harmonius: Sure it's my fault. If it wasn't for me, she'd be singing around here as she normally does, gracing the birds and animals with her lovely voice. Now, she's singing with the angels...waaa

Legato [*comforting him*]: There there. Don't worry about it. [*doesn't see Clef who has entered*] You might as well say 'I killed Crescenda.' You know the way I've treated her. [*run off Clef, astonished.*] You see? There's no way you should blame yourself. I feel just as horrible as you do. Let's just--

Fermata [*rushing in*]: O LORD! For the love of the forever-lovin' lord!

Legato & Harmonius: What ee sit?

Legato [*in a low, macho voice*]: Is there...some way I can be of assistance, milady?

Fermata [*out o' breath*]: My kitty! The most adorable pile of fuzz that ever hacked a hairball is but a Rapunzal in a towery oaken prison.

Legato [*again in the voice*]: Have no fear! I shall save your cat from the tree. I shall bring him safely to the ground. I shall be your hero...

Harmonius [to Legato]: How'd you...?

Legato [to Harmonius]: I've done research for this babe. [hands Harm a copy of How To Pick Up Chicks] She wants a hero... A protector... A warrior. You see... It takes a little pizzazz... You gotta have the know-how.

[**Fermata** steps on his foot] Aaaaaaaaah! What'd you do that for?

Fermata: You think YOU'RE a hero? [Laughing] No-no! I mean a real hero.. [with explosive emphasis] I want someone with less lip and more hip! I gotta have meat in the arms and legs, not in the tongue. I want wind [winding up a punch], not wind [as in talking, wind blowing, get it?] Strong, not string. Punch NOT PINCH! [poking him, flogging him, humiliating him] GUT NOT GAB! FLESH NOT FLASH! I NEED-- [no emphasis, spoken plain out] I need a hero... I don't need you. [exit left]

[Legato looks around, then at his friend Harmonius, who looks away, looks down, and runs off right]

Lights out END ACT ONE.

ACT II SCENE I

Lights back up in the same situation as at top of play. Treble's at steps of bar, the Barmaid fanning herself on porch of bar.

[enter Passerby]

Treble: Say, young man! My well is full but the bucket's empty. Give ya a tale for a little ale--

Passerby: Shut up you old kook. No one wants to hear yer yapping. And I ain't buying you ale, I haven't even enough to eat a' night, much less satisfy a drunken loony.../laughs/

Treble: Hear my yapping? Not enough for supper? A drunken loony? Well I'll have yee know, many a folk have asked this ole loony yet the tale of the day...course yee don't care, gotta eat yee say...

Passerby: S'right

Treble: We-hell... This'uns on me then. It's about man, not unlike yerself, says he haven't the coin to buy supper, not unlike yerself, s'been plucking a lot a chickens. Gettin' them at Kettledrum's ranch, one o'clock, south gate, with a butterfly net--

Passerby and Treble: --and a field of tomato twine--

Passerby: not unlike myself.

Treble: Mmmm-hmmmm....

Passerby: 'ere's a twenty. *[giving a smiling Treble a bill, feathers come with it. He runs off]* And you can keep the friggin' butterfly net...

Barmaid: Never cease to amaze me. But lay off the liquor wouldya?

Treble: You don't want me drinkin'?

Barmaid: No, and I've a lot to say on the matter...

Treble: Great, I'd love to hear ALL about it. Pour a couple glasses, we'll talk it over.

BOOM! *[a cannon explodes nearby]*

Legato *[offstage]:* AAAAAAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaHHhhH! *[splut]*

Barmaid: What was that?

Treble *[looking at his pocketwatch]:* Well, well, well. Tis three o'clock as the Legato flies. I'd say we'd best be a-goin', if that's acceptable with you m'lady?

Barmaid *[still looking off-staged]:* But what was that?

Treble *[slightly annoyed]:* Let me tell ye the facts of life for a moment or so. You've heard how love may rise above all obstacles to reach its goal. Well, I happen to know . . .

Barmaid: You always "happen to know".

Treble *[unflustered]*: I happen to know that right now a young love has suddenly realized the great lengths he'd go to for a certain lady. Come now, before we wonder of what we would have wasted. *[takes Barmaid's hand to drag her off]*

Barmaid *[dragged off-stage]*: But what was that noise?

[Enter people, including: Old Man Kettledrum, Forte, the little Old Lady, the Passerby, the townspeople, etc. from all directions muttering loudly about the noise. After they have filtered on-stage]

Forte *[to an old man whittling on two sticks]*: What in tarnation was that ruckus? Hey, Old Man Kettledrum, what you doing?

Old Man Kettledrum *[to Forte]*: I'm-ah whittling you fool. What's it look like I'm-ah doing?

Forte: I can see that. Why? What'cha making?

Old Man Kettledrum: Spikes, fool.

Forte: Ooooooooooh. *[pause]* What fer?

Old Man Kettledrum: For my monster trap, of course. *[townspeople immediately gather around Kettledrum to hear]* Haventchu heard? There's-ah big sucker out in the country-side these days.

Townsperson 1: I heard he stands 8 feet tall and has red eyes!

Townsperson 2: 10 feet tall! He ain't covered in fur, no sir! Just a black, drooly kinda, sticky, meshy--

Townsperson 3: web. That's what it is. An' he makes noises at night like you wouldn't believe. Howling. Wailing like soul in pain. An' if that ain't bad enough--

Townsperson 4: An' if that ain't bad enough *[pause]* I heard he's a re-publican. *[gasps!]*

Old Man Kettledrum: I heard that creature yuther night, scarin' up the chicken coop at ma ranch. I hear this scratchin' goin' on, these noises an' guess what...?

All: Whut-ee-sit?

Old Man Kettledrum: Woke up this morning an' two chickens were gone. *[gasps]* Just a pile-a bloomin' tick-infested feathers...

[Harmonius enters stage left]

Harmonius: Legaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaato! *[Everyone jumps]*

Forte: Lawd! **Harmonius** y'just bout scared the dicken's outta me! Whashoo up to?

Harmonius: Many pardons, Forte, you folks haven't seen my friend Legato about, have you?

Forte: Nay, ole chap. Haven't seen hide nor hair of the fellow. Hast thou, Kettledrum?

Old Man Kettledrum: Shut yer trap, fool.

Forte: He ain't not never been around here, none. Nosiree Bob! Why?

[Others ask "why?"]

Harmonius: No-no-no-no-no-n'no. He'd never forgive me. *[More begging from others]*

Old Lady: Get away from here, you vultures. He obviously doesn't want to tell. Come 'ere, honey *[he comes]*. If you don't want to tell, you don't have to... *[she leads him aside]* Okay, darlin', you wanna tell Ole Viola-Bow about what yer friend's been up to? I won't tell a soul.

Harmonius: I guess you wouldn't tell anyone.

Ole Viola-Bow: 'course not, hon. Just whisper soft-like into Viola's ear, here...

[He whispers something ending with the audible "I hope he isn't hurt anywhere..."]

Harmonius *[to all]:* So you haven't seen Legato, huh? *[All shake their heads]* Okay, then. *[Takes off into the audience all the while calling out Legato's name]*

Ole Viola-Bow: That poor boy. *[Looks to the left, looks to the right. Clef and Fugue enter]* Heh heh. He's gone. Hey, everybody! Guess what stupid thing Legato just done!

All: What-ee-sit?

Ole Viola-Bow: Well ... as I hear it, seems as if Legato gots the hot tamales for that little Fermata missy we's been seeing so much of these days. But as fate's decreed it, she can't stand sight nor smell of him. So, in a show of loyalty he's-ah gone and shot himself out of some new fangled modern day contraption trying to rescue her cat out of some tree somewhere.

[Everyone laughs and leaves except Fugue and Clef, falling over each other laughing. Enter Legato covered in shi...er...poop. He sees the two and starts to back away]

Fugue *[Spotting Legato]:* Woah-ho. What do you know! If it isn't . . .

Legato: Yeah yeah. Sure. Whatever. *[leaving]*

Fugue: Y'know, I could think of easier methods of grabbing a lady's attention. Hey *[noticing how Legato looks]* where have you been, anyway? You look *[sniffs]* . . . ugh!

Legato: Just leave me alone. I landed badly.

Fugue: What did you land in anyway? You smell like sh . . . oh! *[looks at nearby sign that says "To Manure Stocks"]* Heh heh heh. You landed in . . .

Legato: Just let it go, okay? *[tries to leave but Clef detains him]* What? *[Fugue is now rolling in laughter]* All right, this has gone on long enough. *[takes out sword]* I warn you, the blood of a thousand Celts runs within me.

Clef *[drawing as well]:* Then the blood of a thousand Celts can run out of you!

Fugue *[stops laughing]:* No, Clef. Let's go.

Clef: But—

Fugue: Lets go! *[exiting]*

Legato *[lowers sword and resheathes it.]:* Fine . . . see if I care. Upon your absence, I'll just entertain these folks with a brief story of long ago. *[A couple people are gathering]* I'll just sing to the sky the valor

of your deeds. How you heroically slaughtered my favorite relative. The girl closest to my heart. A beautiful, beautiful woman who's life was cut short by two ash-smothered villains, caught in the fire of their carelessness. One short, fat, and ugly, the other a tall and feminine fellow who--

Clef: All right, all right!!! You slander my name enough, Legato. Draw! *[notioning to Fugue]* Let's make this quick!

Legato: Done and done.

[A fight ensues, and for the first time ever, Legato is winning. Enter Law enforcement agent]

Law enforcement agent 1: What's all this, what's all this? A fight in my street? I won't have it! Who started this disturbance of the peace. Duels are to be done in the privacy of one's homes, not the middle of a street. Look, if every fool had his duel where he wanted it, it'd be anarchy. There'd be bodies lying dead all over the place. And we can't have that, now, so come on--

Ole Viola-Bow *[running onstage]*: She's dead! Crescenda's dead! Oh, thank goodness. Sir, I just found her, she's laying in the shi...er...poopile just down the road.

Clef: Legato, here, has just been to the dungheap, sir. And come to think of it, I do recall hearing him discuss Crescenda's death with a friend of his before. Something seems mighty suspicious if--

Legato: That's a viscious lie! The good Lord knows, Clef, that all liars are damned to hell!

Law enforcement agent 1 *[as two more agents enter and Clef sneaks off]*: Legato, he seems to have some evidence to his story--

Legato: What are you talking about evidence? *[looks down at clothes]* ooh.

Law enforcement agent 1: And were you discussing her death with a friend, as well?

Legato: No, of course not--

Law enforcement agent 1: Remember, God damns all liars, now.

Legato *[thinking back]*: Well, I--

Law enforcement agent 2: There seems to be a disturbance at the manure stocks, sir.

Law enforcement agent 1: What kind of disturbance?

Law enforcement agent 2: A couple of hoodlums appear to be...well, playing in the--

Law enforcement agent 3: What he means is that a lot of weird sh...er...poop is going on and you might want to come with us before they escape.

Law enforcement agent 1: That's were Viola-Bow says she saw the body of Crescenda, fellas. Let's go. Legato, you're coming too.

Legato: But I have to go save a cat.

Law enforcement agent 1: You have to-- I'm not even gonna ask. Let's go, boy *[exiting]*.

Legato: But--

Law enforcement agent 1: Let's go!

[Townsperson scenechange begins]

Townsperson 1 *[crossing the stage]:* Now the town knows Crescenda has met an untimely end.

Townsperson 2 *[crossing the stage in other direction]:* And Clef overheard Legato while he was talking to his friend.

Townsperson 3 *[crossing the stage in other direction]:* The stench that covers his clothes is enough to put him away.

Townsperson 4 *[crossing the stage in other direction]:* Since Legato cannot lie, he does not know just what to say.

Townsperson 1 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* The hoodlums in the poopyards are in search of Crescenda's green

Townsperson 2 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* In number two they're covered head to toe--

Townsperson 3 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* --and every spot between.

Townsperson 4 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* Fermata's cat is still in the tree--

Townsperson 1 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* --and that's the whole of it.

Townsperson 2 *[Fixing scenery on stage]:* So let's rejoin the scene around--

All townspersons *[exiting]:* --the enormous pile of....poop.

[the scene is set. the entire cast is filtering on stage, minus Clef and Fugue. In the distance we see three people covered in the poop. The one in the middle is Crescenda, who isn't moving.]

Legato: It's Clef and Fugue! *[just as the two manage to get the money out of Crescenda's pocket, they hear Legato and turn around]*

Law enforcement agent 1 *[to other agents]:* Get them! *[other agents look at him, then at each other, then back at him, there is a pause, then they both talk at the same time]*

Law enforcement agent 2: My leg. It think it's broken *[continue on complaining].*

Law enforcement agent 3: I think I'm going into labor *[continue on complaining].*

Law enforcement agent 1: Somebody stop them. Someone! *[without hesitation, Legato draws his sword and dashes into the pile. The short, fat hoodlum draws as well and they duel. He bests the hoodlum and turns to find the taller one trying to escape through the pile with the money. Legato give the hoodlum a thwhap on the backside with his sword and the money goes flying all over. The hoodlum lets off a loud, high yelp and Legato grabs them both and shoves them towards the agents where they are sent to their knees by the agents' swords. Then Legato picks up Crescenda and carries her, bridelike, towards the crowd. He lets her down there and begins to pray over her body like a priest. Fermata, who was watching, is now almost drooling.]*

Ole Viola-Bow: That man is a hero!

Fermata *[stepping forward]:* He certainly is *[Clef and Fugue enter].*

Legato *[looking up for the first time]*: Wait a minute! If you're there, then who are these people! This is neither a Syracuse, nor an Ephesus, so I'm sure you haven't twins, but they look so like your forms covered head to toe in--*[suddenly he stops and for the first time wonders if he was wrong about Clef and Fugue murdering his cousin, Melody]* Y-y.....*[almost questioning]*... You're innocent.

Fugue: Always have been.

Legato: Why didn't you say something?

Clef: Would you have listened?

Legato: No, I guess I wouldn't. Some priest I'm cut out for. I don't even know a good Christian when I see one. I give up. I'm nothing but a--

Fermata: --a hero *[they stare into each other's eyes]*.

Harmonius: But then, who are the real murderers? I mean, who are they?

All *[whispering and huzzbuzzing "yeah"]*: Who ee sit?

Fat hoodlum: I can answer that little question of yours for a bit o' ale.

All: Treble!

Treble: ...or not...

Harmonius: And who is that?

Tall hoodlum: What's a girl got to do to get a tip around here?

Legato: The barmaid! So it was you who were in the stables that night. You were there when the fire started and Melody was killed.

Treble: I'm sorry, Legato, but tis true. But it was an honest mistake for we were belly and head full with drink and didn't know the horses from the donkeys.

Legato: Asses!

Treble: All right, from the asses.

Legato: No, you! All this time knowing that I was blaming Clef and Fugue and you still kept secret. Asses!

Treble: T'was all I could do to keep my neck in the clear, for they don't serve ale in the county jail, my boy.

Barmaid: Truly, we're sorry, Legato. We'll accept all responsibility and pray your forgiveness, but ol' Treble is right. It was honestly an accident.

Fermata: The good Lord teaches forgiveness to the humble.

Legato: You're right, my lady. And I know too well the teachings of the Lord and the trials he creates. I forgive you two for you deeds and *[to Clef and Fugue]* pray as well forgiveness from you.

Treble: Thank you, my boy. Godliness, deserves a reward. A toast!

Law enforcement agent 1: Not so fast, Treble. From the looks of it, you've got a bit of community service a head of you. Fellas, what needs to be done in this town.

Law enforcement agent 2: Nothing sir. Some stables need to be raised and the mayor requests help on a new baby room, but other than that, the town is in ship-shape.

Law enforcement agent 1: Well, I've got a special idea for our friend here. Due to the accident of one Crescenda Al Fine. I hereby notion for the town manure pile to be moved, shovelful by shovelful, to the edge of town. All those in favor.

All: Aye.

Law enforcement agent 1: Done. Treble, you and your ladyfriend can go grab a shovel, boys *[the other agents aid Treble and the barmaid offstage]*. Fine work, Legato, I'm sorry for blaming you for the deed. But I have a feeling you too will be expecting an award yourself *[winking and notioning towards Fermata. Suddenly Crescenda begins to stir on the ground]*.

Crescenda: Boy, oh, boy, oh, boy. Do I have a taffy-filled hum-dinger of a headache.

Harmonius *[kneeling by Crescenda]*: Crescenda. Oh, Crescenda, my love. Please, tell me you're ok.

Crescenda: My love? Ok? I'm better than Ok! I'm super-duper dill-pickled tarty-terrific *[she grabs Harmonius and kisses him. He pulls back]*.

Harmonius *[pause]*: Wow, that was skittle-diddle, chocolate-middled, great! *[he kisses her back. The town "aaaawwws" and they leave together]*

Fermata: I guess the gracious, magestic Lord was strong within your soul and allowed you to forget all danger.

Legato: Yeah *[blushing]*.

Fermata: I guess his glorious power is something that flows strong in an admirable man like yourself.

Legato: Yeah *[stronger]*.

Fermata: I guess I was wrong about everything. I really love a man that's close to the Savior.

Legato: Yeah?

Fermata: Now, I really know what I want.

Legato: Yeah? *[louder]*

Fermata: I want, I want...

Legato: Yeah!?!

Fermata: --to become a nun! *[the town slaps it's forehead and Legato frowns]* Just kidding! *[she grabs him and they kiss. Music rises as Legato picks her up, bridelike, and he carries her towards the pile. There he drops her in and she screams]* Leeeggggggaaaaattttttooooo! *[he dives in after her and the town exits laughing. The music is high as Legato runs off and Fermata chases him screaming. Seconds later, Treble and the barmaid walk on with shovels. Music cuts suddenly]*.

Treble: Ahh. This isn't all bad, now is it. I've heard many-a-story about the secrets of this manure pile. I happen to know--

Barmaid *[raising shovel]:* You always "happen to know!" *[she swings and misses and chases him offstage. Music raises once again.]*

[Curtain call: All but Crescenda, Fermata, Legato, Barmaid, Harmonius, and Treble enter and bow. They step back. Crescenda runs on giggling profusely, bows center. Harmonius chases up to her, she sees him and giggles away. He bows and chases her to the line of others. Treble runs center and bows. The barmaid chases to him as he runs away. She bows and chases him to the line of others. Legato runs center and bows. Fermata chases to him as he runs away. She bows and chases him around the line of others. They both are smiling. They continue to chase in a circle as the rest of the cast takes one final bow and the lights drop.]

[exit all]