

First Intermezzo

(A room. Uberto, not fully dressed, and his servant Vespone. Later, Serpina enters.)

Uberto Waiting for something that never arrives, lying in bed and not sleeping, doing good deeds without a thank-you, These three things are like death!

This is a disgrace for me! I've been waiting for three hours for my servant to bring me the chocolate, with no relief! And I'm in a hurry to go out.

O blessed patience! Now indeed, I see That being nice to this woman, is the cause of all my troubles.

(Calling Serpina) Serpina! Come tomorrow!

(To Vespone) And what are you waiting for? Sitting here quiet as a puppet? What's that? You say? Eh, idiot! Go! I'll break your neck for you. Hurry! See what she's doing.

Just my luck! I took care of this little maidservant since she was a child. I caressed her, I embraced her, like she was my daughter! And because of this, now she has so much arrogance, she leads such a charmed life, that you'd think the servant will become the master! So I have to decide that enough is enough. And this other babboon... I suppose he's dead now!

Serpina Are you quite done? Do you have to shout at me? Look, I already told you, I'm not happy.

Uberto Amazing!

Serpina (To Vespone) You get back! The master might be in a hurry, But I'm not, get it?

Uberto Oh, splendid!

Serpina (To Vespone) Again! Oh, you really are trying my patience. If you want a pair of slaps, I'll give them to you! (beats Vespone)

Uberto Hey, where are you? Hey, Serpina! Shouldn't you stop?

Serpina Let me teach some manners to that rascal!

Uberto But in front of your master?

Serpina What, because I am a servant, I have to be trodden on, I have to be abused? No sir! I want to be respected, I want to be revered, like I was mistress, arch-mistress, mega-mistress!

Uberto Well, what devil has your illustrious ladyship all riled up? Tell us, who did it?

Serpina He was rude...

Uberto This One? You! (pointing to Vespone)

Serpina ... he bothered me ...

Uberto I've told you: be quiet!

Serpina ... in such shocking language ...

Uberto (to Vespone) Quiet! Quiet, damn you!

Serpina But he'll pay for it!

Uberto I sent him to you.

Serpina Why?

Uberto Why? Didn't I ask for the chocolate?

Serpina Yes, and?

Uberto And my soul is going to escape my body while I'm waiting for you to bring it?

Serpina Well when do you want it?

Uberto Now. When?

Serpina At this hour?! It's dinnertime!

Uberto So?

Serpina So? I didn't make it yet! Why don't you do it for me, my beautiful Patron... and then shut up about it.

Uberto Vespone, since I've apparently had my chocolate, wish me good health and bon appetit! (Vespone laughs)

Serpina What's that donkey laughing about?

UBERTO At me, who is more docile than a beast. But I will not be the beast! I will not have more patience! I'll shake the yoke! And what I have not done yet, at last I will do!

(To Serpina) I'm always at odds with you! And here and there, And up and down, And yes and no! Now this is enough, it has to stop.

(a Vespone) But what do you think? That I'll just have to die? My lord, no.

(a Serpina) But you will have to weep forever at your misfortune, And then you'll say 'I had it good there.'

(a Vespone) What's that you say? Is that so? Ah! What! No! Yes! But so it goes!

Serpina So to sum it all up, because I attend to your needs I'm to be treated badly?

Uberto (a Vespone) Poor thing! Do you hear that?

Serpina Because I care for you, I, wretched, ought to be abused?

Uberto But that's not right.

Serpina Go on, make jokes!

Uberto But this is not correct.

Serpina But you must have some little remorse for doing to me, and saying to me, the things you do and say.

Uberto Like that, eh? You talk like a Professor.

Serpina You hurl jokes at me, and I'll get angry.

Uberto Oh, don't get angry! Goodness, she's right.

(a Vespone) You don't have anything to add? Go, get my hat, sword and stick, I want to go out.

Serpina Look, that's not a good thing to do. But then what does Serpina know?

Uberto Well what the hell would you know about it?

Serpina I don't want you to go out now. It's noon – where do you want to go? Go get undressed.

Uberto And the great calamity you have caused me...

Serpina Oh, not this again! I want you not to leave. And so I'll lock the door.

Uberto But this seems to me maximum impertinence!

Serpina Well then fume away.

Uberto Serpina, do you know that you have split my head?

Serpina Angry little man, my angry little man! You make a big fuss, But that won't do any good. You have my decree Shut up, and do not talk. Shh! Serpina wills it so.

I think you understand me, because you have known me for many many days.

Uberto Very well.

(a Vespone) Do you understand? Now put everything back in its place, your lordship! My boss doesn't want me to go out.

Serpina That's fine.

(a Vespone) Go, and don't make a fuss about it. (Vespone wants to leave and then stops) You stop? You look? You wonder what it means?

Uberto Yes, stop, Look at me, be surprised! Laugh at me, call me an ass, Give me a slap! I'll keep quiet about it, and afterwards kiss your hand. (Uberto kisses the hand of Vespone)

Serpina What are you doing... what did you do?

Uberto Stand aside, evil! Go away, insolence! In any case, this has to stop. Vespone, at this point, find me a wife. Even if she's a harpy, in spite of that, I want to marry. That way I won't have to remain subject to this wicked creature!

Serpina (Oh! The ass falls into my trap!) Sure, get married! Good, I approve.

Uberto She approves? Not bad, she approves! So I'll get married.

Serpina And will you take me?

Uberto You?

Serpina Sure.

Uberto Seriously?

Serpina Seriously'.

Uberto I don't know what's keeping me from...
(a Vespone) Get me my cane! Such impudence!

Serpina Oh! You can do and say what you like – Nothing alters the fact that you'll have to marry me.

Uberto Go away, my daughter.

Serpina Did you mean to say “my wife?”

Uberto O stars! or fate! Oh! This is killing me.

Serpina O death! O life! This is going to happen. I have made up my mind.

Uberto This is a new and darker devil.

Serpina I know those little eyes! Clever, sneaky, mischievous. I see that although so say no, you really mean yes!

Uberto Miss, you are deceived. You're flying too high. My eyes and I both say no. You're dreaming!

Serpina But why? Am I not beautiful, graceful and witty? Come on, look! What playfulness, what brio, what majesty!

Uberto (to himself) Ah! She's trying to tempt me, to make me do it!

Serpina (to herself) He seems to be falling for it. (to Uberto) I'm coming, sir!

Uberto Eh! Go away!

Serpina Make up your mind.

Uberto Eh! You're insane!

Serpina My affections are for you, and you'll have to marry me.

Uberto Oh what a mess this is for me!

Second Intermezzo

(A room. Serpina and Vespone, who is in a soldier's costume.)

Serpina Now that I've got you on my side, Vespone, give it everything you've got. If the trick should work, If the boss and I come to be married, whatever you want, you'll have it. At home you will be the second master, I promise you.

(Enter Uberto, dressed to go out.)

Uberto I hope that my servant – or now, better to say, my mistress – will grant me permission to leave the house.

Serpina Look at this! Without my permission, he got himself dressed.

Uberto Now indeed your impertinence has come to the summit. Arrogant! And she dared to ask me to marry her!

Serpina (a Vespone) Hide in that room for a minute, And at the right time, come out.

Uberto Here she is now. Let's get this over with. Can I or can not I? Will you, or will you not, my lovely mistress – ?

Serpina Ah, Sir, I'm done with this game. And you won't have to put up with me for very much longer.

Uberto I don't believe it.

Serpina You're about to get married.

Uberto I believe I will – but not to you!

Serpina I don't believe it.

Uberto Oh! Well that's how it is!

Serpina I guess so. But in that case I have to think about my own affairs.

Uberto Think about them, by the gods.

Serpina I thought about it.

Uberto Well, and?

Serpina I've found a husband for myself.

Uberto Good luck to you! And you found him at once, no sooner' said than done?

Serpina I found a better one in an hour than I would in a hundred years.

Uberto About time! May I know who he is?

Serpina He's a soldier.

Uberto Oh indeed! What's his name?

Serpina Captain Tempest.

Uberto Oh, brutal name!

Serpina And the name aligns with his character. He has very little patience.

Uberto That's bad.

Serpina Indeed, he's crazy.

Uberto Worse.

Serpina Her gets angry so quickly!

Uberto Worst!

Serpina And when he's good and angry, He smashes, overturns, brawls... and more!

Uberto You won't enjoy that, your ladyship.

Serpina Why not?

Uberto If you are this troublesome as a servant, just think, what you'll be like as a wife! Without doubt, Captain Tempest will become angry, and then there will be a tempest of blows for you!.

Serpina Serpina will think about that later.

Uberto I'd hate to see that. At the end of the day, I am fond of you, you know.

Serpina Much obliged. Meanwhile, take care of yourself Enjoy your beloved wife,
And don't entirely forget Serpina.

Uberto May heaven forgive you. But your arrogance drove me to such an act!

Serpina Every now and then think of Serpina and some day say, “Ah! poor thing,
once upon a time, she was dear to me.”

(to herself) It seems to me that bit by bit he's beginning to soften.

(to Uberto) If I was ever impertinent, Forgive me: I behaved badly, I see it now.

(to herself) He's squeezing my hand! The work couldn't be going better.

Uberto (To himself) Ah, I know how hard this is on her. But it's not my fault.

Serpina (To herself) Have it your way for now – in the end, things will turn out my
way.

Uberto Have no fear that I would ever be able to forget you.

Serpina Want to see my husband?

Uberto I would like it dearly.

Serpina I am going to send for him; He's waiting down in the street.

Uberto Go.

Serpina With your permission. (Serpina leaves)

Uberto Now let's guess who this man will be! Perhaps this penance will make her reconsider the way she treated her master. If it's true, what she told me, such a husband will be a terror to her: terror of the the stick. Ah! The poor thing!

And besides, I was thinking... but she's a servant... but it wouldn't be the first time... Well then, would you marry her? Enough... Oh no, no, never. Go, ribald thoughts! Get out of here. Still, I brought her up, from when she was born Eh! you're crazy! Softly, for heaven's sake! Eh... better not think of it. But... I have a fondness for her, And yet, that wretched girl... She's coming back... Oh, god! I'm back where I started. Oh what confusion.

I am all mixed up. I have something in my heart, And I don't know if it's love or if it's pity. I hear a voice telling me: Uberto, consider yourself. I stand between yes and no, Between "I want" and between "I don't want," And more and more I am mixed up. Ah! Miserable, unlucky, what will become of me!

(Enter Serpina with Vespone, dressed as above)

Serpina If it please you, Signor, this way.

Uberto Mistress. And this is?

Serpina This is he.

Uberto (To himself) What a brute! Truly, he has a stormy face.

(To Vespone) So, my dear Captain Tempesta, You plan to marry my girl? Well then, I am content.

(Vespone gestures to himself)

Well then – are you having some kind of trouble?

(Vespone as above)

Well then. He seems like a man of few words.

Serpina More like very few.

(to Vespone) Do you want me?

(to Uberto) With your permission.

Uberto (To himself) And in the arms of that foul vulture, shall rest this beautiful dove?

Serpina You know what he said?

Uberto Tell me, Serpina.

Serpina He wants you to give me my dowry.

Uberto Your dowry? What dowry! Are you crazy?

Serpina Don't scream, you'll make him furious.

Uberto Let him be as furious as Orlando Furioso: I'm not giving him anything.

Serpina Oh! God!

(Vespone pretends to be angry) You see how he already quivers.

Uberto (to Serpina) Oh! What a mess! Come over here.

(to himself) Let's see what I can do about this.

(to Serpina)

What did he say?

Serpina He wants at least four thousand crowns.

Uberto Damn! Oh! This is beautiful. He wants a trifle. Ah! My lord... (Vespone puts his hand to his sword)

No my lord... Serpina... Ah, curse him. Vespone! Where are you?

Serpina But, master you're looking for trouble

Uberto Listen, have you made any promises to him?

Serpina Well, I've promised and I haven't promised. Hang on... (pretends to talk to Vespone)

Uberto (to himself) I can already see that this damned Captain is going to assault me.

Serpina He has spoken.

Uberto And what did he say? (To himself) He speaks through an interpreter.

Serpina That, either you give me the dowry of four thousand escudos, or he will not marry me.

Uberto He said that?

Serpina He said that.

Uberto And what is it to me if he doesn't marry you?

Serpina But then I'll have to marry you.

Uberto He said that?

Serpina He said that, and that otherwise he'll cut you in pieces.

Uberto Oh! He never said that.

Serpina I guess we'll see.

Uberto He has spoken... yes, ma'am.

(Vespone nods threateningly at Uberto)

Eh! I'm not so bothered. If this is what fate has planned for me... Now I will marry her.

Serpina Give me your hand in his presence.

Uberto Sure.

Serpina Long live the master!

Uberto That's fine.

Serpina And long live Vespone, too! (Vespone removes his mustache)

Uberto Ah! Rascal! It was you? And this deception... Let go of me!

Serpina Not so hasty. I'm still your wife, you know.

Uberto That's true, you made me do it... and I'm glad.

Serpina And from servant I have become mistress!

For you, I have in my heart, is a little hammer of love, that strikes me evermore

Uberto I stand, for you in my heart with a drum of love and I beat it strongly
evermore

Serpina Ah, do you feel the ti-pi-ti!

Uberto I feel it, it's true, yes! Do you feel the ta-pa-ta?

Serpina It's true, I feel it already.

Uberto But how can this be?

Serpina I don't know.

Uberto Neither do I.

Together Dear one! Joy! Oh god! Well, I'll let you figure it out.

Serpina As for me, I don't know how to say it.

Uberto As for me, I can't understand it.

Serpina It will be – but it's not that.

Uberto It will be – nor is it that.

Serpina Ah! Clever one, to understand it!

Uberto Ah! Thief, you comprehend it. I want to tease you.

Serpina Will you be happy, do you have love for me?

Uberto I know my heart is happy, and I have love for you.

Serpina Tell only the truth.

Uberto This is the truth.

Serpina Oh god, I don't believe it!

Uberto Don't doubt me, dammit!

Serpina Oh, gracious husband!

Uberto My delightful wife!

Together This makes me glad. Only you make me glad.