

# **The Mistress of the Inn**

*by Carlo Goldoni*

**translated for the stage by Robert Bethune  
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*Characters in order of speaking*

**Note:**

In this excerpt from the play, we have this scene (actually a sequence of scenes) between Mirandolina, the mistress of the inn, and the Cavaliere, is one of the world's finest comedic scenes. In it, Miradolina carries out her scheme of a cold-blooded seduction of a man who has sworn he will have nothing to do with women. Her game turns out to have consequences much beyond her imagining later in the play.

The notes which appear at the end are the same notes as appear in the full text. They will help the reader without Italian to more fully understand what is going on in Goldoni's text and my approach to translating the play.

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***Scene four***

*Mirandolina enters with a dish in her hands.*

**Mirandolina**

May I come in?

**Cavaliere**

What's that?<sup>1</sup>

**Servant**

Allow me.

**Cavaliere**

Help her set that down.

**Mirandolina**

*(Sets the dish on the table)*

Excuse me. Let me have the honor of serving this with my own hands.

**Cavaliere**

That's not your job!

**Mirandolina**

Oh *signore*, what am I? One of those ladies? I'm the servant of everyone who does me the favor of coming to my inn.

**Cavaliere**

*(Aside.)*

(Such modesty!)

**Mirandolina**

To tell the truth, I could easily serve everyone, but I don't, because of, well, certain reasons. I'm not sure you would understand. But with you, I can come right in and not worry about it at all.<sup>2</sup>

**Cavaliere**

Well. Thank you very, very much. What is this dish?

**Mirandolina**

It's my special sauce. I made it myself.<sup>3</sup>

**Cavaliere**

It will be wonderful. Especially since you made it yourself.

**Mirandolina**

Oh! You're too kind, *signore*. I don't know how to make anything wonderful; but I would love to know how to make something that such a true gentleman would really enjoy.

**Cavaliere**

*(Aside.)*

(To Livorno. Tomorrow!)

*(To Mirandolina.)*

If you have things to do, don't let me keep you.

**Mirandolina**

Not at all, *signore*. I have all the cooks and servants I need. I would love to know if this dish gives you pleasure.

**Cavaliere**

Of course, right away.

*(Tastes it.)*

It's good, it's marvelous. Oh, how delicious! I can't quite tell what's in it?

**Mirandolina**

Ah, *signore*, it's my own secret recipe. These hands can do some very nice things!

**Cavaliere**

*(To his servant, with feeling.)*

More wine!

**Mirandolina**

To go with this dish, *signore*, you should have something really good.

**Cavaliere**

*(To the Servant.)*

Give me some of that Burgundy.

**Mirandolina**

An excellent choice. The Burgundy is delicious. If you ask me, it's absolutely the best choice to go with a meal.

*His servant puts the bottle on the table with a glass.*

**Cavaliere**

You have good taste in everything.

**Mirandolina**

To tell the truth, I don't get fooled very often.

**Cavaliere**

Well, you've been fooled this time.

**Mirandolina**

By what, *signore*?

**Cavaliere**

By thinking that I deserve special treatment from you.

**Mirandolina**

*(Sighing.)*

Oh, *signor Cavaliere*...

**Cavaliere**

*(Changes his tone.)*

What's the matter? Why are you sighing?

**Mirandolina**

I'll tell you. I'm nice to you all, and it makes me sad when I think someone is ungrateful.

**Cavaliere**

*(Quietly.)*

I won't be ungrateful.

**Mirandolina**

I don't do it to deserve your thanks. I'm only doing my job.

**Cavaliere**

*(Pours some wine in his glass.)*

No, no, I'm sure of that... Look, I'm not as rough as you think I am. You know I mean you no harm.

**Mirandolina**

But... *signore*... I don't understand.

**Cavaliere**

*(Drinks.)*

To your very good health.

**Mirandolina**

I thank you very much. You're too kind.

**Cavaliere**

This wine is delicious.

**Mirandolina**

I'm just passionate about Burgundy.

**Cavaliere**

*(Offers her wine.)*

If you wish, you're the innkeeper.

**Mirandolina**

Oh! No, thank you, *signore*.

**Cavaliere**

Have you eaten?

**Mirandolina**

Yes, Your Excellency.

**Cavaliere**

Won't you take just one glass?

**Mirandolina**

I don't deserve such a favor.

**Cavaliere**

Not at all; it would be my pleasure.

**Mirandolina**

I don't know what to say. But since you ask so nicely....

**Cavaliere**

*(To his servant.)*

Bring another glass.

**Mirandolina**

*(Taking the Cavaliere's glass.)*

No, no, if you please, I'll use this one.

**Cavaliere**

Wait—I used that one already.

**Mirandolina**

*(Smiling.)*

I drink to a handsome gentleman.

*The servant puts the other glass on the tray.<sup>4</sup>*

**Cavaliere**

*(Pours out more wine.)*

Well, aren't you clever!<sup>5</sup>

**Mirandolina**

Oh, my, it's quite a while since I last ate. I'm afraid this is going to my head.

**Cavaliere**

No danger of that.

**Mirandolina**

Would you mind giving me just a little piece of bread...

**Cavaliere**

*(Gives her a piece of bread.)*

Gladly. Here you are.

*Mirandolina stands awkwardly with her glass in one hand and the bread in the other, as if she doesn't quite know what to do next.*<sup>6</sup>

**Cavaliere**

You seem uncomfortable. Won't you sit down?

**Mirandolina**

Oh! I'm not worthy of that, *signore*.

**Cavaliere**

Go on, go on, we're alone here.

*(To his servant.)*

Bring a chair!

**Servant**

*(Aside, as he brings the chair.)*

(My master must have lost his mind. He's never acted like this in his life!)

**Mirandolina**

Oh, if the *Conte* and the *Marchese* knew about this, well, poor me!

**Cavaliere**

Why?

**Mirandolina**

They've tried to get me to eat or drink something with them a hundred times apiece, but I never wanted to do it.

**Cavaliere**

Come, make yourself comfortable.

**Mirandolina**

*(Sits down and takes a sip of wine.)*

As you wish.

**Cavaliere**

A moment.

*(To the servant, softly.)*

(Don't you dare tell a soul that the mistress of the inn sat with me at my table.)

**Servant**

*(Softly.)*

Don't worry.

*(Aside.)*

(This is amazing!)

**Mirandolina**

To the health of everyone who pleases you, *signor Cavaliere*.

**Cavaliere**

I thank you very much, my most charming little lady.<sup>7</sup>

**Mirandolina**

That toast had nothing to do with women.

**Cavaliere**

No? Why?

**Mirandolina**

Because I know you can't stand them.

**Cavaliere**

It's true; I never could stand them....

**Mirandolina**

May you always be that way!

**Cavaliere**

*(Realizes his servant is watching.)*

I don't want....

**Mirandolina**

What don't you want, *signore*?

**Cavaliere**

Listen.

*(Speaks in her ear.)*

(I don't want you to change the way I am.)

**Mirandolina**

Me, *signore*? How?

**Cavaliere**

*(To his servant.)*

Go away.

**Servant**

Do you want something?

**Cavaliere**

Cook up two eggs and bring them when they're ready.

**Servant**

How do you want them?

**Cavaliere**

Any way you like! Get going!<sup>8</sup>

**Servant**

Oh! No problem.

*(Aside as he leaves.)*

*(I think his eggs are already boiling.)*<sup>9</sup>

**Cavaliere**

Mirandolina, you are a charming young woman.

**Mirandolina**

Oh *signore*, you're making fun of me.

**Cavaliere**

Listen. I want to tell you something that's true, absolutely true. You'll be proud of it.

**Mirandolina**

I'll be glad to hear it.

**Cavaliere**

You are the only woman on earth that I can stand to talk to.

**Mirandolina**

Let me say this, *signor Cavaliere*: there's nothing special about me. Sometimes there's just something between two people that fits. It's a sympathy, a spirit; you feel it with someone you don't even know. I feel it with you—but not with anyone else.

**Cavaliere**

Now I'm afraid you want to really shake me up.

**Mirandolina**

Oh go on, *signor Cavaliere*, you're an intelligent man, don't let yourself down. Don't be weak like the others. Really, if I see that in you, I won't be coming in here again. I'm also feeling something I've never felt before; but I'm not going to go crazy over a man, especially not one who hates women, who may just be playing games with me, making fun of me, feeding me a line and leading me on. *Signor Cavaliere*, might I ask you for another taste of that Burgundy?

**Cavaliere**

*(Pours wine into a glass.)*

There! That's enough....

**Mirandolina**

*(Aside.)*

(He's right on the edge!)

**Cavaliere**

*(Gives her the glass of wine.)*

There you are.

**Mirandolina**

Thank you so much. But aren't you having any?

**Cavaliere**

Oh yes, I'm having some.

*(Aside, as he pours wine into his own glass.)*

(What if I got stinking drunk? Would that get me out of this?)<sup>10</sup>

**Mirandolina**

*(Sweetly.)*

*Signor Cavaliere.*

**Cavaliere**

What is it?

**Mirandolina**

A toast.

*(They touch glasses.)*

Long life to good friends.

**Cavaliere**

*(Unenthusiastic.)*

Long life.

**Mirandolina**

Long life... to those who mean well... and who do no harm!<sup>11</sup>

**Cavaliere**

Long life...

**Scene five**

*The Marchese comes in.*

**Marchese**

Here I am! Whose long life?

**Cavaliere**

*(Changing his tone.)*

What is it, my good *Marchese*?

**Marchese**

Do bear with me, my friend. I called, but no one answered.

**Mirandolina**

*(Makes as if to go.)*

If you don't mind...

**Cavaliere**

*(To Mirandolina.)*

You stay right where you are.

*(To the Marchese.)*

Do I barge in on you like this?

**Marchese**

Please excuse me. We're friends. I thought you were alone. I'm delighted to see you're getting acquainted with our adorable little mistress. Ah! Didn't I tell you so? Isn't she a masterpiece?

**Mirandolina**

*Signore*, I came to wait upon the *Cavaliere*. I suddenly felt faint, and he has been so kind as to revive me with a glass of Burgundy.

**Marchese**

*(To the Cavaliere.)*

Oh, is that Burgundy?

**Cavaliere**

Yes. It's Burgundy.

**Marchese**

Real Burgundy?

**Cavaliere**

It had better be. I paid enough for it.

**Marchese**

I know all about it. Let me taste it, and I'll know right away if it is or isn't the real thing.

**Cavaliere**

*(Calling.)*

Hey there!

***Scene six***

*The Cavaliere's servant comes in with the eggs.*

**Cavaliere**

*(To the Servant.)*

A glass for the *Marchese*.

**Marchese**

Bring a nice big glass. Burgundy isn't a liqueur. To judge it properly you have to try enough of it.

**Servant**

*(Starts to put the eggs on the table.)*

Here are the eggs.

**Cavaliere**

That will be all.

**Marchese**

What did you bring?

**Cavaliere**

Eggs!

**Marchese**

I never did like eggs.

*The Servant takes them away.*

**Mirandolina**

*Signor Marchese*, if the *Cavaliere* doesn't mind, try this sauce. I made it with my own hands.

**Marchese**

But of course. Hmm. A chair....

*(The Servant brings a chair and puts the glass on the tray.)*

And a fork.

**Cavaliere**

*(The Servant goes to get him one.)*

Go on, just set a place for him.

**Mirandolina**

*(Gets up..)*

*Signor Cavaliere*, I'm much better now. I'll be going.

**Marchese**

Won't you do me the favor of staying here for a little while?

**Mirandolina**

But *signore*, I have many things to do; and perhaps the *signor Cavaliere*...

**Marchese**

*(To the Cavaliere.)*

Would you mind if she stays a little longer?

**Cavaliere**

What do you want with her?

**Marchese**

I'd like you to try a little glass of some wine from Cyprus. You won't find another like it anywhere in the world. And I'd like Mirandolina to try it and tell us what she thinks of it.

**Cavaliere**

*(To Mirandolina.)*

Very well, to please the *Marchese*, do stay.

**Mirandolina**

The *signor Marchese* will excuse me.

**Marchese**

You won't try this wine?

**Mirandolina**

Another time, *Eccellenza*.

**Cavaliere**

Go ahead, stay.

**Mirandolina**

*(To the Cavaliere.)*

Are you giving me orders?

**Cavaliere**

I'm saying to you, do stay.

**Mirandolina**

*(Sits.)*

And I will do as you say.

**Cavaliere**

*(Aside.)*

(She's got me right where she wants me!)<sup>12</sup>

**Marchese**

*(Eating.)*

Oh, this is good! What a wonderful sauce! Ah, the smell! Oh, what flavor!

**Cavaliere**

*(Softly, to Mirandolina.)*

(The *Marchese* will be jealous of you being so close to me.)

**Mirandolina**

*(Softly, to the Cavaliere.)*

(He's just another man to me—no more, no less.)<sup>13</sup>

**Cavaliere**

*(Softly to Mirandolina.)*

(But aren't you an enemy to all men?)

**Mirandolina**

*(As above.)*

(Just as much as you are an enemy to all women.)

**Cavaliere**

*(As above.)*

(So this is how my enemy takes her revenge.)

**Mirandolina**

*(As above.)*

(What, *signore*?)

**Cavaliere**

*(As above.)*

(Oh! You clever.... You'll see, oh yes, you'll see....)<sup>14</sup>

**Marchese**

*(Drinks some of the Burgundy.)*

My friend, to your very good health!

**Cavaliere**

Well? How do you like it?

**Marchese**

With all due respect, it's worthless. Try some of my Cypriot wine.

**Cavaliere**

And where is this Cypriot wine?

**Marchese**

*(Brings a tiny little bottle out of his pocket.)*

Right here. I brought it with me. I want us all to enjoy it: Oh! It's really something. Here it is.

**Mirandolina**

From what I can see, *signor Marchese*, you're not going to let your wine go to our heads.

**Marchese**

*(Opens the bottle.)*

This? You don't drink this, you sip it, like the finest liqueur.<sup>15</sup> Hey there—three small glasses.

**Servant**

*(Brings him a wineglass for the Cypriot wine.)*

**Marchese**

*(Covers the bottle with his hand.)*

No, those are too big. Don't you have anything smaller?

**Cavaliere**

*(To the Servant.)*

Bring the liqueur glasses.<sup>16</sup>

**Mirandolina**

I do believe it would be enough just to sniff it.

**Marchese**

*(Sniffs it.)*

Oh, marvelous! It has such a satisfying bouquet.

*The Servant brings three tiny little glasses on a tray. The Marchese pours very slowly, not filling the glasses. He gives a glass to the Cavaliere and to Mirandolina, saving the last for himself. He then recorks the bottle very carefully.*

**Marchese**

What nectar! What ambrosia! What pure distilled manna from heaven!

*They all drink.*

**Cavaliere**

*(To Mirandolina, softly.)*

(What do you think of this slop?)

**Mirandolina**

*(To the Cavaliere, softly.)*

(It's dishwater.)

**Marchese**

*(To the Cavaliere.)*

So! What do you say?

**Cavaliere**

It's very good, delicious.

**Marchese**

So! Mirandolina, do you like it?

**Mirandolina**

As for me, *signore*, I can't hide my feelings. I don't like it, I think it's disgusting, and I can't say it's good. More power to people who can pretend! But people who lie about one thing know how to lie about other things too.<sup>17</sup>

**Cavaliere**

*(Aside.)*

*(That was directed at me. Why? I don't understand.)*

**Marchese**

*(Finishes drinking.)*

Mirandolina, I see that you just don't understand this sort of wine. I'm so sorry for you. Really, you liked and appreciated that handkerchief I gave you, but you just don't appreciate Cypriot wine when you taste it.

**Mirandolina**

*(To the Cavaliere, softly.)*

*(Listen to him boasting!)*

**Cavaliere**

*(To Mirandolina, softly.)*

*(I don't act like that.)*

**Mirandolina**

*(As above.)*

*(You boast about how much you hate women.)*

**Cavaliere**

*(As above.)*

*(And you boast about how you conquer all the men.)*

**Mirandolina**

*(With charm, softly, to the Cavaliere.)*

(Not all of you.)

**Cavaliere**

*(Softly to Mirandolina, with some emotion.)*

(Yes, all of us!)

**Marchese**

*(To the Servant, who brings them on a tray.)*

You there. Three clean glasses.

**Mirandolina**

I don't want any more..

**Marchese**

No, no, don't worry, this isn't for you.

*(Puts a tiny bit of Cypriot wine in each of the three glasses.)*

My good man, if your master doesn't mind, go to the *Conte d'Albafioritita*, and tell him for me—loudly, so that everybody can hear it—that I would like him to come and try a bit of my Cypriot wine.

**Servant**

At your service.

*(Aside, as he goes.)*

(He certainly isn't going to get drunk on that.)

**Cavaliere**

*Marchese*, you are a generous man.

**Marchese**

Am I? Just ask Mirandolina.

**Mirandolina**

Oh, you are indeed!

**Marchese**

*(To Mirandolina.)*

Did you show the *Cavaliere* my handkerchief?

**Mirandolina**

No, not yet.

**Marchese**

Show him.

*(To the Cavaliere.)*

This little bit of comfort will soothe me all evening long.

*(Puts the bottle back in his pocket; there is still a drop of wine left.)*

**Mirandolina**

Be careful it doesn't go to your head, *signor Marchese*.

**Marchese**

*(To Mirandolina.)*

Ah! But do you know what truly goes to my head?

**Mirandolina**

What?

**Marchese**

Your beautiful eyes.

**Mirandolina**

Do they really?

**Marchese**

*Cavaliere*, I am desperately in love with her.

**Cavaliere**

I'm sorry to hear that.

**Marchese**

I see you have never felt love for a woman. Oh, but if you had, you would pity me.

**Cavaliere**

Yes. I pity you.

**Marchese**

I'm as jealous as a green-eyed dragon. I'll let her stay close to you because I know how you feel about women, but if it were anyone else, I wouldn't bear it for all the gold on earth.<sup>18</sup>

**Cavaliere**

*(Aside.)*

*(I don't think I like him any more.)*<sup>19</sup>

**Scene seven**

*The Servant comes in with a bottle on a tray and speaks.*

**Servant**

*(To the Marchese.)*

The *signor Conte* sincerely thanks *Vostra Eccellenza* and sends you this bottle of Canary wine.

**Marchese**

*(Stands and takes the bottle in his hands.)*

Oh, oh, does he think he can put his Canary wine up against my Cypriot? We'll just see about this. Poor lunatic! This is pig swill, I can tell by the stench.

**Cavaliere**

*(To the Marchese.)*

Taste it first.

**Marchese**

*(Leaving, and taking the bottle with him.)*

I will taste nothing. This is an insult from the *Conte*, just like all the his other insults. He always wants to put himself above me. He wants to crush me,<sup>20</sup> he wants to provoke me, to make me do some idiotic thing. I swear to God I will do something! I will pay him back a hundred times! Mirandolina, if you don't throw him out of here, something terrible will happen, yes, something terrible will happen. He's a rash, intruding fool. I am I. I will not endure such abuse!

***Scene eight***

*Mirandolina, the Cavaliere and his Servant.*

**Cavaliere**

The poor *Marchese*. He's insane!

**Mirandolina**

He's sick with anger but he took the bottle with him. That will make him feel better.

**Cavaliere**

He's insane, I tell you. You're the one who drove him out of his mind.

**Mirandolina**

Am I the type who can drive men mad?

**Cavaliere**

*(Breathless.)*

Yes, you are....

**Mirandolina**

*(Stands.)*

*Signor Cavaliere*, with your permission.

**Cavaliere**

You stay right where you are.

**Mirandolina**

*(Walking out..)*

Pardon me, but I haven't been driving anyone insane.

**Cavaliere**

*(Stands up, but stays by the table.)*

Listen to me.

**Mirandolina**

*(Walking out.)*

Excuse me.

**Cavaliere**

*(Commanding.)*

Stay here, I said!

**Mirandolina**

*(Turning haughtily.)*

What do you want from me?

**Cavaliere**

Nothing.

*(Confused..)*

Let's drink another glass of Burgundy.

**Mirandolina**

Go on, *signore*, hurry, hurry, I have work to do.

**Cavaliere**

Be seated.

**Mirandolina**

Standing, sir, standing.

**Cavaliere**

*(Gently offers her the glass.)*

Won't you take it?

**Mirandolina**

I'll give you a toast, and then I have to go. It's a toast my grandmother taught me.

Long live love, and long live wine!  
Both part of a soothing, sweet design--  
The lips are where wine likes to start  
But love goes straight from the eyes to the heart.  
I drink my wine, and my eyes can see  
How they do to you what yours do to me.

*She leaves.*

# Notes

This translation has been carefully compared to those of Clifford Bax, Lady Gregory, Ranjit Bolt, Frederick Davies and Robert MacDonald. The differences between these translations are enormous and will not be pursued here. Suffice it to say that of all five, only Bax can be said to closely follow the Italian text. The others are at least very free translations, or even adaptations which eliminate or rearrange large amounts of text and even whole scenes. In many, many cases, we find thoughts placed in Goldoni's mouth that he simply did not utter.

One of the truly annoying things about the extant translations is that when they take these liberties with Goldoni's text, they do so silently. The reader who does not read Italian cannot know when they are reading Goldoni and when they are not, and will perforce accept everything as Goldoni's own work, which in fact quite a lot of it is not. Only Davies lets the reader in on the changes that have been made, and he significantly understates the scope of his rearrangement of the play.

That is why this translation includes the following notes. I have tried to make sure that every time I find it appropriate to provide a translation that is less than direct, I also provided an explanation of what I have done so that the reader can see what I have done with the original. That is also why I have provided the Italian text—so that the reader who does have the ability to examine the original can do so freely.

The guiding principle of this translation is to express in natural, idiomatic English the flow of situation, action, thought and feeling that underlies the Italian text, faithfully following Goldoni's work wherever it may lead.

<sup>1</sup> 1559 *Chi è di là?*

The Italian is utterly simple; it just means "Who is there?" as all the translators agree. But the *Cavaliere* knows who's there; he has been staying at the inn for three days and says he has seen all he needs to see of her (line 203-209.) The only way I can see this line making sense is to stage the scene so that the *Cavaliere* has his back to her when she appears. But why go to that bother? No point is made by doing so. Better to just fix the pronoun.

<sup>2</sup> 1577 *Da lei vengo senza scrupoli, con franchezza.*

Literally, "I come in here without scruples/doubts, with frankness/openly." In other words, she pretends to trust him. It still has to be translated more or less indirectly in order to sound natural.

<sup>3</sup> 1581 *Egli è un intingoleto fatto colle mie mani.*

Goldoni keeps coming back to this "*intingolo*" or "*intingoletti*," which seems to refer to a sauce rather than any particular dish. I find recipes for "*Uova sode con intingolo aromatico*," "*Ragusano con intingolo barocco*," and many similar tempting dishes.

<sup>4</sup> 1679 *Il servitore mette l'altro bicchiere nella sottocoppa.*

"The servant puts the other glass on the saucer." Or perhaps a tray or salver? Why is Goldoni so particular about it?

<sup>5</sup> 1682 *Eh galeotta!*

An idiomatic expression meaning "You are so clever!"

<sup>6</sup> 1693 *Mirandolina col bicchiere in una mano, e nell'altra il pane, mostra di stare a disagio, e non saper come fare la zuppa.*

Literally, she stands with the bread in one hand and the wine in the other, showing that she is uncomfortable and doesn't know how to *fare la zuppa*: literally, make soup. It's an idiom, but why do some translators seem to believe that Goldoni thinks she might dip the bread in the wine? That's what Bax thinks. Lady Gregory talks about not being able to drink, Davies circumlocutes, Bolt skips over and around it, rewriting the scene as usual. MacDonald just says "showing unease."

<sup>7</sup> 1729 *Vi ringrazio, padroncina garbata.*

Literally, "I thank you, charming little boss woman." I've tried to construct something equally patronizing here.

<sup>8</sup> 1761 *Come vuoi, spicciati.*

"*Spicciati*" is from the verb "*spicciarsi*," which is "to hurry up, get a move on." The line would literally mean, "How you want, hurry up." Bax: "Oh, anyhow—scrambled." Bolt: "Just bring the damned eggs!" Lady Gregory: "Whatever way you like, fool!" MacDonald shuffles the lines about so much that it's difficult to tell exactly which line translates what, but he seems to ignore the word and just has the *Cavaliere* say, "Get out!" Apparently Goldoni can't be trusted to write lines in an effective order and MacDonald must ride to his rescue. I wonder whose text will be around 250 years from now—Goldoni's Italian or MacDonald's English? I think I know which way I'll bet.

<sup>9</sup> 1766 *Il padrone si va riscaldando.*

Literally, "The master is getting scalding hot." Since they've been talking about eggs anyway, why not use it?

<sup>10</sup> 1802 *Sarebbe meglio che io mi ubbriacassi. Un diavolo scaccerebbe l'altro.*

Literally, "It might be better if I get drunk. One devil might drive out the other." The *Cavaliere* is looking for a way to escape from her, or more precisely from his feelings for her, and alcohol just might do the trick. However, the reference to devils won't mean much to an English speaking audience, so I simply have him express his feelings directly. In production, the actor found himself driven to take a huge swig straight from the bottle, much to amusement of the audience.

<sup>11</sup> 1816 *Viva... chi si vuol bene... senza malizia tocchi!*

Literally, "Live...those who wish well... without malicious touch!" It's the last three words that are tricky. *Tocchi* is the noun form of *toccare*, to touch, which is often used in expressions in the context of something that comes upon one by circumstance, as in "*mi tocca andare*," ("I have to go") and "*sai che cosa mi è toccato fare?*" ("do you know what I had to do?")

<sup>12</sup> 1921 *Mi obbliga sempre più.*

Bolt: "She's putty in my hands." Davies: "She really does want to please me." Lady Gregory skips the aside as usual. Bax: "More and more obliging!" MacDonald: "More obliging by the minute!" However, as far as I can tell, "*mi obbliga*" means "she/he/it forces me [to do something.]" For example, "*e chi ti obbliga?*" ("who's forcing you to do it?") "*Sempre più*" is straightforward: "more and more." Grammatically, the pronoun "*mi*" is in the direct object position. So the *Cavaliere* seems to be saying, not that he is more and more in control of Mirandolina, but that Mirandolina is more and more in control of him. Hence the indirect translation.

<sup>13</sup> 1930 *Non m'importa di lui né poco, né molto.*

Davies: "He doesn't mean a thing to me." Bax: "He's nothing to me." Bolt: "Please! I don't care fig about him." He also introduces several ideas that aren't in the Italian at all. Lady Gregory skips it altogether. MacDonald: "He means nothing to me." I think the "*né poco, né molto*" is important. It's a deliberate ambiguity: "no more, no less." The *Cavaliere* is a man who can't stand ambiguity. Mirandolina's strategy is to drive him nuts, and it's working.

<sup>14</sup> 1945 *Eh! furba! Voi vedrete benissimo...*

The key word is “*furba*.” The idea is a clever, sly, cunning, smart person. The *Cavaliere* knows he’s being manipulated, and he knows how, and he can’t do anything about it. Lady Gregory skips these lines. Bolt completely changes the whole flow of ideas in this sequence. Bax and Davies settle for “rogue,” which is too literary. MacDonald skips the phrase. “Smartass” comes to mind, but that’s too modern.

<sup>15</sup> 1962 *Questo? Si beve a gocce, come lo spirito di melissa. Ehi? Li bicchierini.*

Spirit of melissa is a preparation based on an herb, *Melissa officinalis*, also known as lemon balm, or simply balm. It has a long history in herbal medicine, being used as a sedative, a sleep aid, and to calm the nerves. Searching the Web for the Latin name will bring up quite a few descriptions.

<sup>16</sup> 1970 *Porta quei da rosolio.*

Rosolio is a liqueur or cordial popular in southern Europe, usually flavored with rose petals. Glasses appropriate for rosolio would be the little glasses used for similar liqueurs.

<sup>17</sup> 1998 *Per me, signore, non posso dissimulare...Lodo chi sa fingere. Ma chi sa fingere...saprà fingere...*

This speech is the most amazing piece of barefaced effrontery imaginable. She claims she can’t hide her feelings, and scolds those who know how to lie and deceive, while we have just seen her do nothing but hide her feelings, lie and deceive with the *Cavaliere* for the last 450 lines.

<sup>18</sup> 2077 *centomila doppie*

Literally, a hundred thousand crowns. But why use specific numbers with coinage that means nothing to today’s audience? The key point is the largest sum of money imaginable. Why not “all the gold on earth?”

<sup>19</sup> 2080 *Costui principia a seccarmi.*

Literally, “He is starting to dry me out.” “Seccare” can also mean by extension “to bother.” Neither of those gives an audience much to go on. The point, of course, is that the *Cavaliere* is jealous of the *Marchese* because the *Marchese* does love Mirandolina in his big-brown-eyes, schoolboyish sort of way. So I’ve chosen to translate this line indirectly, by giving him a very straightforward, simple emotional reaction in keeping with Goldoni’s idea.

<sup>20</sup> 2096 . *Vuol soverchiarmi, vuol provocarmi, per farmi far delle bestialità.*

Literally, “He wants to overwhelm/overpower me, to provoke me, to make me do something idiotic. *Bestialità* is used in Italian to refer to a kind of sexual behavior, but the English word “bestiality” is a false friend, because it only refers to sexual behavior, while the Italian term is widely used in the sense of an act of stupidity, idiocy or foolishness, similar to the French *bêtise*.