

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

By Voltaire Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2002

Table of Contents

<u>THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa</u>	1
<u>By Voltaire Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2002</u>	2
<u>ACT I</u>	4
<u>ACT II</u>	12
<u>ACT III</u>	17
<u>Scene I</u>	18
<u>Scene II</u>	20

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

By Voltaire Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2002

- ACT I
- ACT II
- ACT III

- Scene I
- Scene II

This Etext is for private use only. No republication for profit in print or other media may be made without the express consent of the Copyright Holder. The Copyright Holder is especially concerned about performance rights in any media on stage, cinema, or television, or audio or any other media, including readings for which an entrance fee or the like is charge. Permissions should be addressed to: Frank Morlock, 6006 Greenbelt Rd, #312, Greenbelt, MD 20770, USA or frankmorlock@msn.com. Other works by this author may be found at <http://www.cadytech.com/dumas/personnage.asp?key=130>

EText by Dagny

+++++

CHARACTERS

THE BARON

IRENE

A GOVERNESS

ABDULLAH, a Turkish Corsaire

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

PRIVY COUNCILLORS OF THE BARON

SQUIRES AND YOUNG GIRLS OF OTRANTO

A SQUADRON OF TURKS

+++++

The action takes place in the Baron's castle.

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

ACT I

A room in The Baron's Castle

(The stage represents a magnificent salon, the Baron is alone, dressed in a dressing gown, lying on his bed.)

BARON: (singing)

Ah! How bored I am!

I haven't yet had any pleasure this morning.

(rising and looking in the mirror)

This assures me that the days of my life

Must flow, flow without shadow of trouble.

I aspire to be rejoiced

By the least wish that I have.

Hola! My people, let me be forewarned

If I can have some pleasure.

(Enter a Privy Councillor in a huge wig, dressed in dead-leaf gown with a black cape, followed by petty squires and girls of Otranto.)

PRIVY COUNCILLOR: Milord, our unique wish

Is to see you happy in your barony;

For a lord like you, it's a unique destiny.

BARON: Ah! How bored I am;

I haven't yet had any pleasure this morning.

(They dress him.)

COUNCILLOR: Today's the day heaven gave birth,

In this famous castle, to our adorable master.

We are celebrating this day with really brilliant games.

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

BARON: How old am I?

COUNCILLOR: You are twenty–eight years old.

BARON: Ah! I've attained my majority!

COUNCILLOR: Barons,
At the age of their majority, have the most noble custom.
They are all wit, full of sensitivity.
When it pleases them, they make war on the Muslims,
Fleeing their vassals at their trembling orders,
Emptying their strong–boxes, or cutting off their ears.
They don't undertake anything without bringing it to a conclusion.
They do everything with a single word, quite often none at all,
And when they are lazy, they are still marvelous.

BARON: They always told me: I was well brought up.
Now then, answer me, my privy councillor,
Have I lots of money?

COUNCILLOR: Very little, but you can take that
Of your tax collectors, and not even return it.

BARON: And soldiers?

COUNCILLOR: Not one; but by saying two words,
All the peasants from here will become heroes.

BARON: Do I have some galleys?

COUNCILLOR: Yes, lord; Your Highness

ACT I

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

Has wood, a wharf, and, if he wishes,
Vessels shall be made: the Hellespont will tremble.
Your Majesty will be the sovereign master of the seas.

BARON: I see myself very powerful.

COUNCILLOR: No one is more so than you,
You taste in peace this noble and sweet destiny.
You don't meddle in anything; everybody works for you.

BARON: Being so fortunate, why am I yawning?

COUNCILLOR: Master, these yawnings are the result of a great heart,
Which feels itself above all its grandeur.
This fine day of festivity, this beautiful day of birth,
Celebrates its joy as well as its power:
And no question, Milord will have the complacency
To take some pleasure; since he wants to have some.
You will be harangued; that's the first duty.
The spectacles will follow; that's our ancient custom.

BARON: Quite often, all this makes me yawn more.
Harangues especially have this marvelous gift.
O heaven! I see Irene coming to these parts!
Irene is coming to pay me a visit this morning for sure!
Let my privy councillors vanish right away.
Harangues are superfluous cares for me.
My cousin appears: I won't yawn any more.

(Exit the councillors and enter Irene.)

BARON: (singing) Beautiful cousin, beautiful Irene,
My languorous melancholia
Vanishes when I see you.
Love flies to your voice,
Your eyes inspire giddiness,
Your heart makes my destiny:

ACT I

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

All that bored me, now interests me.
I am beginning to experience some pleasure this morning.
Why answer me in song, beautiful Irene,
In these parts a sovereign law is cherished,
Which neither king nor shepherd can set aside.
If they don't say much about it, it's only to sing.
You have a voice so tender and so touching.

IRENE: Cousin, it's not timely for me to sing.
I have no wish to do it; they're weeping in Otranto.
Your privy councillors are taking all our money.
You don't think of anything, and they make you believe
The whole world is very content.

BARON: I am with you; I put all my glory there.

IRENE: Know that to please me, you must change.
You must correct an unworthy softness;
Without that: no marriage.
You have virtues, you have courage.
Nonchalance has spoiled everything:
They gave you only sterile lessons,
They mock you, and your laziness
Renders all your virtues sterile.

BARON: My privy councillors—

IRENE: Lord, they are cheats,
Who have given you evil lessons,
And who nourish your pride and silliness,
So as to better pillage the barony at their ease.

BARON: Yes, they brought me up badly; yes, I've noticed it,
And I feel myself completely different when I see you.
They taught me nothing. Emptiness is in my head.
But my heart is full of you, and once full of my conquest
Will make me again pleasing to your beautiful eyes:
Being loved by you, I will become more worthy.

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

IRENE: Then, milord, when your virtue's returned.

I will resume for you the voice I have lost.

(sings)

Forever I will cherish you,

With all my heart I will sing.

Charming lover, always love Irene;

Reign in every heart, but prefer mine.

Let time strengthen such a tender bond,

Let time increase my fetters.

BOTH TOGETHER:

No, I'll never be bored,

I'll love you all my life.

Love, love, hurl your darts

Hurl your darts,

Into my ravished soul.

No, I'll never be bored:

I will love you all my life.

(A great noise and shouts can be heard.)

IRENE: O heaven! what terrifying screams!

BARON: What tumult! What uproar!

What strange celebration, each runs, each flees.

(A Privy Councillor enters.)

COUNCILLOR: Ah! milord, it's happened:

The Turks are in the town.

IRENE: The Turks!

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

BARON: Is this really true?

COUNCILLOR: You no longer have asylum.

BARON: What's this mean? Where did they all come from?

IRENE: This is what your privy councillors have produced.

BARON: Go tell my men to resist.
I shall run to aid them.

COUNCILLOR: Milord, your grandeur
Must protect the decency of its glorious rank.

IRENE: Alas! My governess and my ladies of honor
Are coming from all sides, all atremble.

(The Governess and the ladies of honor enter.)

GOVERNESS: Ah! Madam! The Turks—

IRENE: Ah! Poor innocents!
What are these cursed Turks doing?

GOVERNESS: The Turks—I can't stand it any more—
They spread through your apartment.
The Corsaire Abdullah is carrying everyone off,
And pillaging everything;
They enchain at the same time, father, child, wife, and daughter.
Madame! Do you hear the drums—the outcries?

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

THE TURKS: (at the back of the stage)
ALLAH! ALLAH! War!

GOVERNESS: Madam! I am dying!

(ABDULLAH enters followed by Turks.)

QUARTET OF TURKS: Pillage, pillage, great Abdullah!
Allah, ylla, Allah!
Conquer all,
Kill all,
Rape all!
Allah, ylla, Allah!

ABDULLAH: Don't massacre,
No, no don't massacre.
Enough, enough. Devastate everything,
But don't massacre.
Shackle,
Drink, violate,
Don't massacre.

(While they are singing, The Turks enchain all the men with a long rope, which they rap around the troupe, the end of which is held by a Levantine.)

BARON: (chained together with two councillors in great wigs)
Irene, you see if, in this posture,
I am making a noble figure of a baron.

QUARTET OF TURKS: Pillage, pillage, Great Abdullah!
Devastate everything,
Pillage, drink, violate.
Allah, ylla, Allah!

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

IRENE: What! These nasty Turks are not enchaining the women!
How much honor is there in these villainous souls?

ABDULLAH: (singing) O brave corsaires,
Scarecrows of the seas,
Let's go share,
Drink, possess.
To your devises,
I surrender the men,
And let them all know,
All the ladies are for me.
It's my custom,
All the ladies are mine.

TURKS: Pillage, pillage, great Abdullah!
Allah, ylla, Allah!

IRENE: (to the Baron as he's led away)
Go, my dear cousin, I flatter myself, I hope,
If this Turk is gallant, to get you out of this.
Perhaps you will say, by my cares restored,
That a woman is worth more than a Privy Councillor.

CURTAIN

ACT II

Same as Act I, later that day

IRENE: Let's console ourselves, my nursemaid.
We must, with cleverness,
Correct, if we can, traitorous fortune.
You know the bizarre destiny of the Baron?

GOVERNESS: Not at all.

IRENE: The Corsaire, heated by wine,
In the transports of joy, when his heart abandoned itself
Without being informed of the rank or name of anybody
Had, to enjoy himself, in the courtyard of the chateau
Assembled the captives, and through a new whim,
Made three of them draw lots for the work he would give them.
A grave magistrate finds himself kitchen help;
The Baron for his lot received muleteer.
These are, they tell us, the risks of fortune:
In Turkey this whimsicality is common.

GOVERNESS: Can it be that a baron, alas! is reduced to that?
And what is your place in the court of Abdullah?

IRENE: I don't have any yet; but if I am to believe
Certain bold looks, that from the height of his glory
The impudent lets fall casually on me,
I will soon have a nice enough situation,
And I will make, my nursemaid, a very honest use of it.

GOVERNESS: Ah! I've no doubt of it; I know that Irene is wise.
But, madame, a corsaire is a bit dangerous.

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

He seems willful and the passage dangerous.

IRENE: With no manners whatever he took the master's apartment.
"I am the master", he says, "and I have the sole right to be.
Wine, women, cash, all go to the strongest.
The Conqueror deserves them and the vanquished are wrong."
In this fine idea, his heart takes joy,
And for all the pleasures his good taste unfurls,
While my baron, a curry-comb in hand,
Shivers in the stables, and tortures himself in vain.
He's making the most beautiful ladies come here.
To do them justice, and to judge between them,
To expose their merit to the light of day, and exercise their talents
In the steps of the ballet, with postures and songs.
We are going to give him this little party;
And, if my eyes conquer his handkerchief,
I will use it to play him a trick,
Which will bring about the triumph of my glory and my love.
Already I hear his fifes, his drums.
Here are our enemies, and here are my rivals.

(The Levantines arrive, each giving his hand to a lady. Abdullah arrives to the sound of Turkish music, handkerchief in hand; the ladies of the castle of Otranto form a circle around him.)

ABDULLAH: (singing) Come, come, tender maidens,
My sword makes you tremble.
My word, dear young maidens,
Please me, disarm me,
Make me feel even greater honor
To surrender myself to love,
Than raping all the earth
With the terror of war.
Come, come, tender maidens, etc.

IRENE: (singing this air tenderly and with calculation)
It's to serve our adorable master,
It's to love him that heaven gave us birth.
Mars and Venus desired to form him.
His arm is feared, his heart is more loved.
From Cupid's tender mother,
Born on the breast of the waves,
To decorate our corsaire

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

With her most beautiful gifts.
(she speaks)
Your handkerchief is the most cherished wish
Of the beauties of our barony.
But none has the right to be flattered.
She may please you, but she doesn't deserve you.

(Abdullah smokes on a sofa; the ladies present themselves in review
before him. He makes faces at each one, and finally gives the
handkerchief to Irene.)

ABDULLAH: Grasp the handkerchief,
You richly earned it.
Let all the other maidens,
Less graceful, less beautiful,
Wait till later.
That's my sovereign will.
(he makes Irene sit beside him)
Sing to me, Irene.
And all the rest of you, go.
(they all go, bowing to him)
Fine, fine. they'll do,
For another time,
For another time.

ABDULLAH: Dear Irene,
Now sit near me.
Love is goading me, consuming me.
(he makes her sit near him)

IRENE: (beside Abdullah on the couch)
Lord, my soul is penetrated by your bounties;
I've never spent a more beautiful evening.
Before, when I feared the Turks, so proud in battle,
My heart, my tender heart didn't know you.
No, it's not with Turks you are comparable.
I think that Mahomet was much less lovable.
And to complete these sweet pleasures,
I am counting on having the pleasure of dining with you.

ABDULLAH: Yes, yes, sweetie, we will let us smoulder together

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

Privately, one vis a vis the other, without slavery,
One to one, we will drink Greek wine, and sing, and play
With each other opposite each other; yes, yes, darling, by God.

IRENE: After so many bounties, do I still have the audacity
To implore a new bounty from my Turk?

ABDULLAH: Speak, speak, I'll do anything.
What you will, hurry, hurry.

IRENE: Lord, I am a baroness, and formerly, my father
Ruled Otranto with his laws.
He was Constable, or Count of the Stables.
It's a dignity I've always cherished.
My heart is still so occupied with it,
That before supper, if you'll allow me to,
I'll go command, for a quarter of an hour,
Where my father commanded.
It's the greatest pleasure you could do me.

ABDULLAH: What! In the pigsty?

IRENE: In the pigsty, Signor.
In the name of tender love, I beg you again.
A hero like you, made for tenderness,
Could he harshly refuse his mistress?

ABDULLAH: The lady is crazy.
The stables are stinky.
You will need a little flask of
Orange water to clean yourself.
Then, so as to give you pleasure,
I concede it, go, sweetie, and return.
(Irene leaves)
(singing)
Every young maiden
Clings to some fantasy
Resembling lunacy.
But my anger would be vain.

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

Enough, let the maidens
Be clever and pretty;
Everything will be excused.
Every young maiden
Clings to some fantasy.

CURTAIN

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

ACT III

Scene I

(The stage represents a corner of a stable.)

IRENE: (sings) Yes, yes, I must hope for all;
Everything is set to deliver us.
Yes, yes, I can hope for all;
Love protects you and inspires me.
Your misfortune made me weep,
But by deceiving this Turk, that I am making sigh,
I'm ready to die of laughter.

BARON: When you see me, curry-comb in hand,
If you were laughing it was with me.
I really deserved it; in my supreme grandeur,
Alas, I was unworthy of sovereign power,
And of the charming object that I love.

IRENE: No, fickle fate
Has no power over my heart.
I loved you in grandeur,
I love you in slavery.
Nothing can humiliate us,
And when my tender lover becomes a muleteer,
I love him for it even more.
(she repeats)
And when my tender lover becomes a muleteer,
I love him for it even more.

BARON: One must deserve such a perfect love;
Thus as my fate changes in a single day,
Irene and my destiny awakes my courage.
(to his vassals who appear, armed)
Friends, sword in hand, let's beat out a passage
To our own hearths, ravished by these brigands.
Let's enchain, in their turn, these insolent conquerors,
Plunged in their intoxication, and delivering themselves
In prey to the security of their brutal joy.
You, guard this gate; and you, wait for me
Near my own room, at the top of these steps

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

Which give to the palace a secret entrance.
I will open the gate unknown to the public.
I want the corsaire to be taken by my hand.
At the same moment, call with a great shout
All the good citizens to help their master.
Strike, pierce, kill, toss out the window,
Whoever dares to resist my valor.
(to Irene)
Goddess of my heart, it's too full to stop you.
Go to this party that the conqueror is preparing,
I am planning a rare dish for him,
And I hope this evening, happier than this morning,
To prepare the spit that that we're cooking for the villain.

IRENE: I'm running, you see me at it, but let your tenderness
Not be shocked, if with some caress,
I deign to encourage his bold desires;
They are not, Lord, infidelities.
I think only of you when I tell him I love him.
Drinking with him, I drink with yourself.
By accepting his heart, I am giving you mine.
A little misfortune is often needed for a great good.

(Irene leaves.)

BARON: (to his vassals.)
Let's get going, my friends, let's hurry to go to
The supper where Venus and Mars must await me.
Time is precious; I am running some risk
Of being a bit past master, and of arriving too late.
Do item by item what I prescribe.
Beware misunderstanding me, and let yourself lead.
Advance, feeling your way through this underground passage:
They will soon be the road to glory.

+++++

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

Scene II

(The stage represents a pretty dining room. Irene and Abdullah are seated at a table without servants.)

IRENE(singing, cup in hand)
Ah, what pleasure
To drink with her corsaire!
Each cup that I swallow increases my desire.
Pour, pour, my beautiful lover:
Ah! How tenderly you pour
All the flames of love into my cup.

ABDULLAH: Yes, yes, a toast to you,
Love, drink, laugh.
Yes, yes, a toast to you.
This vino from the Campagna
Resembles you,
Enchanting the whole earth,
Christians
And Muslims.
Beautiful, scintillating eyes,
By this foaming wine.
Yes, yes, a toast to you.

THE TWO TOGETHER:
Yes, yes, a toast to you,
Love, drink, laugh.
Yes, yes, a toast to you, etc.
(They dance together, cup in hand, singing)
Yes, yes, a toast to you, etc.

(The Baron, armed, and his followers enter the room from all sides.)

THE BARON OF OTRANTO An Opera Buffa

BARON: Corsaire, you must dance another dance.

ABDULLAH: (looking for a sword)
Let's see! Let's see!

BARON: Your master, and vengeance.
It is just, soldiers, to enchain him in his turn,
So to the end of his term, and all taken place in a day.

ABDULLAH: Levantines, come!

BARON: Corsaire, your Levantines
Are all put in chains, and they are going to the galleys.
Friend, laziness ruined you, as it did me.
I am returning the lesson that I received from you.
And I give it to you again with thanks.
I am returning your vessel to you; go and leave with diligence.
Leave me the beauty that saved us all,
And embark my privy councillors with you.
(he sings)
I swear—I swear to obey
My beautiful Irene forever.
Fortunate people, whose sovereign she is,
Repeat with me, all happy to serve her.

CHORUS: I swear—I swear to obey
My beautiful Irene forever.

CURTAIN