

Leoš Janáček

# THE MAKROPULOS CASE

An opera based on the play of the same name by Karel Čapek

German translation and adaption by Max Brod

English translation by Norman Tucker

UE 14535

Libretto

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## CHARACTERS

Emilia Marty, an opera singer	Soprano
Albert Gregor	Tenor
Vitek, a lawyer's clerk	Tenor
Christa, Vitek's daughter	Mezzosoprano
Jaroslav Prus	Bariton
Janek, Prus' son	Tenor
Doctor Kolenaty, a lawyer	Bass-Bariton
Stage Carpenter	Bass
Charwoman	Alto
Hauk-Sendorf, an ex-diplomat	Tenor
Chambermaid	Alto
Male chorus	

The action takes place in Prague early in the present century.

Names of all characters have the accent on the first syllable. Vitek is pronounced Víték, Prus has a short u (as in look), Janek has a short a (as in fanatic).



## ACT I

The clerk's room at Dr. Kolenaty's. In the background a door leading out, on the left into the office. Along the back wall a high filing cabinet with numerous pigeon holes arranged alphabetically. Left, the clerk's table; centre, a double writing table; right, a few chairs for waiting clients. On the walls various tariffs, notices, a calendar, a telephone. Everywhere documents, law books, etc.

VITEK

Oh dear, my goodness! Just on one o'clock. Where can the boss be? Gregor versus Prus. G-G-R. That's it! (climbs up the ladder) Gregor versus - There now! That is the last of you. Oh dear, my goodness! (rummages in the file) Eighteen hundred and seventeen, eighteen twenty two, thirty, eighteen forty seven, only a few years now to it's hundredth anniversary. Gregor versus Prus. Pity! Nothing lasts for ever. Vanitas ... ashes and dust! (sits reflectively on the top rung of the ladder) But of course! It's the gentry! What d'you expect from a baron! A hundred years of law-suits! Plutocrats! Citizens! Mark my words. You are far too tolerant (Gregor stands in the doorway unobserved and listens for a moment.) of the ancient gentry men who owe their privileges to kings and tyrants.

GREGOR

Bravo citizen Marat!

VITEK

No no! That wasn't Marat. (climbs down the ladder) That was Danton. Speech of October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1792. Please excuse me, sir, if I correct you.

GREGOR

Where's our friend the lawyer?

VITEK

He's not returned yet, sir.

GREGOR

And the verdict? Is there hope still? Have I lost?

VITEK

I couldn't tell you. You see the boss has been in court all morning.

GREGOR (throws himself into an armchair)

Please telephone him at once.

VITEK

Right away. (speaking into the phone) Hullo. Doctor Kolenaty. Has he left? I'm much obliged. (hangs up the receiver) He's left.

GREGOR  
And the verdict?

VITEK  
I couldn't tell you. When you think back on it, it's thirty years, thirty years we've kept this action going. Then hey presto, you take it to the High Court! Fancy killing off such a fine law-suit.

GREGOR  
Nonsense Vitek. I want to end it and win it.

VITEK  
Yes, or lose it.

GREGOR  
Well, if I should lose, then ...

VITEK  
Then you'd shoot yourself. That's just the way that your father talked.

GREGOR  
But he did shoot himself.

VITEK  
That was because he went bankrupt.

GREGOR  
Stop for goodness sake!

CHRISTA (enters)  
Daddy, she really is wonderful. Daddy, she is so wonderful.

GREGOR  
Who?

VITEK  
Who?

CHRISTA  
You must know Marty.

GREGOR  
Who is she?

CHRISTA  
Emilia Marty! Emilia Marty.

VITEK  
My daughter's on the stage you know.

CHRISTA  
O father, father, I'm going to leave the stage. There is no greater singer in all the world. I'm going to leave the stage. I will never go back. I've no talent, none at all. Father, this Marty! She is really, she is really lovely!

GREGOR

And what may be her age?

CHRISTA

Nobody knows it, nobody's found it out.

VITEK

Well, is she thirty?

CHRISTA

May be. And lovely.

GREGOR

I shall be at the theatre to-night. I'll look at you there, not at Marty!

CHRISTA

Then you will be stupid! Where will your eyes be?

VITEK

Oh dear. Oh dear! What a chatterbox.

CHRISTA

Not to be seeing Marty! If he hasn't seen Marty, he shouldn't talk!

(Dr. Kolenaty enters.)

KOLENATY

Come this way please, if you don't mind.

(Marty appears in the doorway.)

CHRISTA

Good heavens, it's her. It is Marty. Father look.

(Vitek goes out on tiptoes. Christa follows.)

KOLENATY

What can I do for you?

MARTY

Doctor Kolenaty? I've seen that girl somewhere else before. I want advice about something.

KOLENATY

With pleasure. Please sit down.

MARTY

It's a matter concerning the Gregor case.

GREGOR

What's that, Madam?

MARTY

Introduce me.

KOLENATY

Yes, of course, Miss Marty, my client, Mister Gregor.

MARTY

Really? Really? Then he might just as well stay! (Kolenaty sits opposite her.)  
And so you're the solicitor representing this man Gregor here, over the legacy of old man Prus?

KOLENATY

You mean Baron Josef Ferdinand Prus, deceased in the year 1817.

MARTY

So he's dead then?

KOLENATY

Dead? It's almost a hundred years ago.

MARTY

Poor fellow. No one ever told me.

KOLENATY

Indeed, indeed! Is there anything else that I can do for you? (stands up)

MARTY

Oh ... don't let me keep you. (stands up)

KOLENATY

Pray forgive me! I supposed you'd a reason for calling on me.

MARTY

Yes. This. "Verdict to-day in the case Gregor versus Prus." Quite a coincidence.

KOLENATY

I wouldn't say so, all the papers have it.

MARTY

Briefly, could I trouble you to tell me something about the case.

KOLENATY

Where shall I begin?

MARTY

From the beginning.

KOLENATY (settles down in his armchair and speaks rapidly)

Well then, about the year 1810 the Prus estates belonged to the half-witted Baron Josef Ferdinand Prus.

MARTY

Pepi! What, old Pepi half-witted?

KOLENATY

Well, eccentric perhaps!

MARTY

No, unhappy ...

KOLENATY

You can't possibly know that.

MARTY

And nor can you!

KOLENATY

God knows best. Anyway, Josef Ferdinand Prus, who died without issue and intestate in 1817 ...

MARTY

What did he die of?

KOLENATY

Some kind of fever I believe. The property was taken over by his cousin Baron Emmerich Prus. It consists of several estates of which the largest and the richest was Loukov. And Loukov was claimed by one Ferdinand Gregor, great-grandfather of my client in the very same year 1817.

MARTY

One moment, why, Ferdi must have been still quite a boy then.

KOLENATY

Yes, precisely. Student at the Academy in Vienna. His claim to the Loukov estate was based on these facts: Firstly the deceased, a year before he died, had gone to see the director of the Academy, gone in person. And clearly stated that he was handing over the whole estate of Loukov to be held in trust for the afore mentioned Gregor. Who, if and when he came of age should get full ownership. Item pro secundo: During the lifetime of the deceased, the aforementioned Gregor used to receive the revenues from the estate together with the title: owner and proprietor.

MARTY

So ev'rything was all in order then.

KOLENATY

Not so fast please. Against this the cousin raised the objection that there was no written statement or will to prove the endowment, that, in point of fact, the deceased while on his death-bed made a verbal arrangement in favour of some other person.

MARTY

That is quite untrue.

KOLENATY

This is where the crux is!

MARTY

That is quite impossible.

KOLENATY

This is where the crux is! (climbs up the ladder, takes out the Gregor file, sits down on the last rung and rapidly turns over papers) Just let me read you this: "While dying, in a high fever, he several times declared that the estate of Loukov should belong to one Gregor Mach." Please to note Mach is a surname! (closes and returns file)

MARTY

All of this is utter nonsense, utter nonsense! Pepi must have been meaning Gregor, Ferdinand Gregor!

KOLENATY

Litterascripta valet. What's written is written. No one called Gregor Mach came forward. He remained a person unknown and untraced, this Gregor Mach.

MARTY

Wait a bit. Wait a bit. Y'see he was his son. Ferdi of course was his son! Ferdi of course was Pepi's son.

KOLENATY

Who? Whose son? His son?

GREGOR

His son?

KOLENATY

And who was the boy's mother?

MARTY

Mother? I remember now. Ellian MacGregor, she was a singer at the opera.

GREGOR

What d'you say her name was?

MARTY

It's a Scottish name, MacGregor.

GREGOR

There you are, doctor! MacGregor. Not Gregor Mach. Can't you see?

KOLENATY

But then why wasn't her son also called MacGregor?

MARTY

Out of regard for his mother. Ferdi, you see, never knew his mother.

KOLENATY

I see. Have you any proof of this?

MARTY

I don't know. Proceed.

KOLENATY

To proceed. Ever since then this case has continued thro' several generations. Pruses, Gregors, on and on, assisted by the doctor Kolenatys. And thanks to the present one this Gregor will lose the case once for all, and as it so happens, this very day. (Kolenaty scribbles excitedly on the document.) That's the whole story. Have you any more questions?

MARTY

Yes. Just what do you require if you 're to win the case.

KOLENATY

One thing, a valid will.

MARTY

And can't you find one anywhere?

KOLENATY

Nowhere: there isn't one.

MARTY

That is awkward.

KOLENATY

Very awkward. (stands up) Have you any more questions?

MARTY

Who owns the house where old man Pepi lived?

KOLENATY

My client's opponent Jaroslav Prus.

MARTY (mysteriously)

Now listen to me. In Pepi's house there used to be a cupboard like that. Every drawer had the number of a year marked on it.

GREGOR

Go on.

KOLENATY

Filing cabinet.

MARTY

One of the drawers was marked with the year eighteen hundred and six. Well now, that was the year that Pepi got to know Ellian MacGregor. And in that drawer he kept the love letters sent to him by Ellian.

KOLENATY (sits)

How d'you know this?

MARTY

Never mind about that. There are letters from his agents, in fact, piles of old documents. Couldn't you go and look through them?

KOLENATY

Certainly. Of course, if the owner permits.

MARTY

And suppose he doesn't?

KOLENATY

That's that then!

MARTY

You must get that drawer, no matter how you do it.

KOLENATY

Yes, of course, we'll go at midnight with false keys and rope ladders. Can't you see us, can't you see us! Miss Marty you have the strangest ideas about lawyers.

MARTY (anxiously)

But you simply must get hold of it. There are those letters there and you will find among them a yellow envelope in it Pepi's last will and testament duly signed and sealed.

KOLENATY

In heaven's name, how d'you know that? Please.

GREGOR (jumps up)

Can you be certain?

KOLENATY

What's in it, what's it like?

MARTY

In it Pepi leaves the whole estate of Loukov to his illegitimate son, Ferdi.

KOLENATY

Literally?

MARTY

Yes.

KOLENATY

And is the envelope sealed?

MARTY

Yes.

KOLENATY

With Josef Prus' own seal?

MARTY

Yes.

KOLENATY

I'm much obliged. You must think we are just children!

MARTY

So you don't believe me?

GREGOR

Yes, I do.

KOLENATY

Stuff and nonsense!

MARTY

So you don't believe me?

GREGOR

Yes, I do.

KOLENATY

Stuff and nonsense! Stuff and nonsense.

GREGOR

You sit there and you dare to tell me ...

KOLENATY

Stuff and nonsense. Come to your senses, man! There's an envelope duly closed and sealed. How could anyone know what's inside?

GREGOR

I believe her.

KOLENATY

Childish nonsense! Miss Marty, you have a genius for making up fairy tales.

GREGOR

I believe her. Let me tell you, doctor. I believe her, ev'ry syllable. So you'll please go at once to Pepi's house.

KOLENATY

You know I couldn't do that.

GREGOR

Or I shall get another lawyer, the first one I find in the directory.

KOLENATY

As you please.

GREGOR (goes to the telephone and looks through the directory. Kolenaty goes up to him)

Doctor Abrahams.

KOLENATY

Surely not that man.

GREGOR (at the telephone)

This is Gregor!

KOLENATY (drags the receiver away from him)

Wait a moment! We are friends aren't we? I'll go ...

GREGOR

To Pepi's house?

KOLENATY

Devil take you. (hurries off)

GREGOR

Gone at last!

MARTY

Good for you, Gregor!

GREGOR

Gone at last!

MARTY

Is he really then so stupid?

GREGOR

Practical. Not used to reckoning with miracles! I've always looked for miracles and then you appeared. You must permit me to thank you for it.

MARTY

Pray don't mention it.

GREGOR

Strange but I'm quite certain that he will find the will there! Strange this wonderful faith that you give me. Is it because you're so wondrously lovely, lovely?

MARTY

How old are you?

GREGOR

Thirty four. Ever since I was a child I determined I would get those milliony. I was crazy for them, I simply couldn't help it and this very night if you'd not appeared, I would have shot myself.

MARTY

In debt?

GREGOR

Yes. I won't try to hide the fact ... that my future was desperate. And then quite suddenly you appeared. God knows where from, famous wonderful, breathing mystery. Why d'you laugh at me?

MARTY

No. It's nothing.

GREGOR

Speak to me I beg you, tell me! Tell me ev'rything.

MARTY (shakes her head.)

GREGOR

Can't you tell me?

MARTY

Will not.

GREGOR

You knew about those letters? You knew about the old man's will. Where from? Since when? Who told you all about it? Who could know about it? Understand that, that I must know what's behind it.

MARTY

A miracle.

GREGOR

Yes, a miracle. But ev'ry miracle must be interpreted. Otherwise we cannot bear it. Why did you come here? What is your reason for helping me? Why specially me? What can possibly concern you?

MARTY

That is my affair.

GREGOR

Mine also. O Miss Marty tell me, if it's to you I owe my future, my fortune, even my life, what can I offer you?

MARTY

What d'you mean by that?

GREGOR

What can I offer you?

MARTY

I see. (bursting with indignation) Well upon my word! This little fellow's off'ring me money!

GREGOR (taken aback)

Forgive me!

MARTY

He'd give it all away, this little fellow. (goes to the window and looks out)

GREGOR

Am I a child to be talked to like this?

MARTY

Well.

GREGOR

It's quite intolerable, you really make me feel a little fellow!

MARTY (turns from the window)

What is your name?

GREGOR

Eh?

MARTY

What do they call you?

GREGOR

Gregor.

MARTY

What?

GREGOR

MacGregor.

MARTY

Christian name, stupid!

GREGOR

Albert.

MARTY

I suppose your mama calls you Bertie, eh?

GREGOR

No. That is, mother's been dead for some time now.

MARTY

Bah! Bah! All of them go the same way.

GREGOR

Now tell me about Ellian MacGregor.

MARTY

At last! About time you thought of asking.

GREGOR

Can you tell me anything? Who was she?

MARTY

A world-famous singer.

GREGOR

And was she beautiful?

MARTY

Yes.

GREGOR

Was she in love with my great grandfather?

MARTY

Yes. Perhaps. But in her own way.

GREGOR

And when did she die?

MARTY

I don't know. That's enough, Gregor. Some other time please.

GREGOR (goes nearer to her)

Emilia!

MARTY

I am not Emilia to you.

GREGOR

What am I to you then? Please don't humiliate me so! Please don't torment me so! Just suppose that I owed you nothing, nothing at all. Suppose you were just a lovely woman and you had dazzled someone. Listen then, one thing I'd like to tell you. I never saw you before. (pleadingly) No, no, please don't laugh at me.

MARTY

I am not laughing but you're crazy.

GREGOR

I am crazy. Never before have I been so crazy. When you speak it excites me, like a summons to battle. Have you ever seen flowing blood? It drives men mad, so they can't account for their actions. And you at the first glance I knew for certain - And you at the first glance I knew for certain, in you there's something terrible. You have lived so deeply. Tell me.

MARTY

Stop this nonsense.

GREGOR

Why is it no one's ever killed you yet?

MARTY

Stop this nonsense!

GREGOR

I've so much to say to you. I've so much to say to you. You treated me so harshly. That sends a man off his balance. I feel a hot wind searing, scorching. What is it? Men sense it and turn at bay, just like wild beasts. You arouse something, something terrible. Were you never told that? (goes nearer to her) Emilia, you surely know that you are lovely!

MARTY (wearily)

Look! Lovely! (A light shines.)

GREGOR

This is horrible. You're lovely!

MARTY (in the light she appears old)

Leave me! Please go, Gregor.

GREGOR

Terribly lovely!

MARTY

D'you know, Gregor, there's something you could give me? (The light goes out)

GREGOR (lifts his head)

What?

MARTY

You yourself offered me. D'you know what I'd like?

GREGOR

You can have anything.

MARTY

Listen, Gregor, d'you know Greek?

GREGOR

No!

MARTY

Well then, this can be no use to you. Give me the Greek document.

GREGOR

Which one?

MARTY

The one that Ferdi had, you know, your great grandfather. Can I have it?

GREGOR

I've never heard of it.

MARTY

Nonsense, surely you know! In heav'n's name, Gregor. Surely you must know.

GREGOR

I don't. I don't.

MARTY (stands up abruptly)

Liar! You must know! Idiot! I must get it back. D'you hear me? Find it.

GREGOR

Tell me where it is.

MARTY

Look for it. Bring it here. I came here to get it. I came here to get it.

GREGOR

Emilia!

MARTY

Is it with Prus? Get it from him. Call me a taxi.

KOLENATY (enters quickly followed by Prus)

Found it. We've found it. (kneels before Emilia) Please forgive me! A thousand apologies! I'm just a silly old fool.

MARTY

Then it was there?

KOLENATY

You know ev'rything! It was there.

GREGOR

What was?

KOLENATY

The will was there, the letters too. And something else too. A document in Greek.

PRUS (offering Gregor his hand)

Congratulations. They've found the missing will. (to Kolenaty) Introduce me! Introduce me!

KOLENATY (gets up)

Our case is established. Gregor wins it.

MARTY

Where are the letters? The letters.

KOLENATY

Which ones?

MARTY

Those from Ellian.

PRUS

They're with me still, but Mister Gregor need have no fear.

KOLENATY

Miss Marty. Mister Prus, our arch enemy.

MARTY (vehemently)

Gregor's giving them to me.

PRUS

But there's just one little thing that is missing still.

MARTY

What can be missing?

PRUS

We shall need some proof that this son Ferdinand was really the son of Baron Prus.

MARTY

Some proof in writing.

PRUS

Nothing less.

MARTY

All right, Doctor ... I'll send you something in the morning.

KOLENATY

Really? D'you carry these things around with you?

MARTY

Does that surprise you, why?

KOLENATY

Gregor, get me a number, two 0 double seven one.

GREGOR (at the telephone)

That's Doctor Abrahams, why?

KOLENATY

It seems you need him.

## ACT II

The stage of a large theatre, empty, in some disorder from the previous night's performance. A few properties, rolled up scenery, lighting equipment. The whole bare and forlorn backstage appearance. In the foreground, a stage throne on a platform.

CHARWOMAN

Did you ever see such flowers?

STAGE CARPENTER

Never did.

CHARWOMAN

Never in my life have I heard anything like it. Shouting, stamping! It's a wonder that the roof didn't collapse. Really mad they were. Nothing would stop them. Fifty curtains, yes, at least fifty ... all for Marty.

STAGE CARPENTER

What would you say, what would you say? Women like her have plenty of money.

CHARWOMAN

Good gracious! I should say so! I should say so!

STAGE CARPENTER

Funny thing but when she starts to sing I go shiv'ry all over.

CHARWOMAN

You can take my word for it. I cried like a watercart.

PRUS (enters)

Is Miss Marty here?

CHARWOMAN

She'll be with the manager, sir. But she's bound to come this way; she's left some things in her dressing-room.

PRUS

Good. I'll wait. (steps to the side)

CHARWOMAN

That's the fifth one. Just like a blooming doctor's surgery.

STAGE CARPENTER

What I'd like to know is this: Does a woman of her sort have any men friends?

CHARWOMAN

Oh yes, oh yes, oh I should say so indeed.

STAGE CARPENTER

Coo lumme! She's not quite my line of business. (goes slowly off)

CHARWOMAN

Well then, why get so excited? She's certainly not your type, she's certainly not your type. (The charwoman goes off the other side.)

CHRISTA (enters)

Janek, come on. No-one here will see us.

JANEK (follows her)

No-one who will throw me out here?

CHRISTA

Oh dear, Janek. I'm so unhappy.

JANEK (tries to kiss her)

Why?

CHRISTA

No, no kissing! No more of that. I've other things to think about.

JANEK

Oh but Christa!

CHRISTA

I say ... isn't Marty wonderful? ... D'you think I'll make a singer? I must give up all my life to it, understand? And only think of the theatre. Oh Janek, (sits on the throne) it's so dreadful. All I do is think of you all day long, all day long! (Janek tries to kiss her.) Oh dear, what a wretch you are!

JANEK

Oh if you only knew, Christa, I spend all my time thinking of you alone.

CHRISTA

That's all right, you're not a singer. I've got to think of my voice now. I must study hard, and I'm not supposed to talk much. So darling, this is my decision. Janek! Ev'rything is over now, over between us! We shall see each other only once a day.

JANEK

But ...

CHRISTA

In between whiles, we must be like perfect strangers the whole day long. Come here, silly ... Plenty of room for you too. D'you think there is anyone she is in love with?

JANEK (sits by her on the throne)

Who?

CHRISTA

Why, Marty. Who d'you think I meant. All the men rave about Marty. One look and they lose their heads.

JANEK

Don't talk such nonsense!

CHRISTA

Truly! Truly! I don't know why it is she frightens me.

JANEK (steals a kiss)

Kristinka!

CHRISTA

Oh Janek!

PRUS (coming forward a little)

I'm not looking.

JANEK (jumps up)

Christa! (Janek hurries Christa off into the wings.)

PRUS

No need to run away! (comes nearer)

MARTY (behind the scenes)

What another? And another? (speaking into the wings) No more to-day, gentlemen. (sees Prus) What, still another?

PRUS

No, of course not, Miss Marty. Quite other business.

MARTY (sits on the throne, looks at Janek)

Is that your son?

PRUS

It is. Come here, Janek.

MARTY

Come closer, Janek, let me see you. Were you here last night?

JANEK

Yes, ma'am.

MARTY

Did you like my performance?

JANEK

Yes, ma'am.

MARTY

Don't you ever say anything but just yes?

JANEK

Yes, ma'am.

MARTY

Your son's a booby.

PRUS

I am ashamed of you.

(Gregor enters with a bouquet, followed by Vitek.)

MARTY

Ah, Gregor!

GREGOR

This is for you.

MARTY

Give it me. (takes the bouquet) Look at this. (removes a small box from it) You can take it back! How can you afford presents for ladies? (gives him back the box, smells the flowers then throws them on the ground) What did it cost, you great fool? You've been borrowing again. Moneylenders, eh? (rummages in her handbag and takes out a handful of money) Here! I'd like to shake some sense into you.

GREGOR (flaring up)

Money!

PRUS (to Gregor, laughing)

For God's sake stop this fooling.

GREGOR

You behave in the strangest way. (snatches the money from her and gives it to Vitek) Put that down to Miss Marty's account.

MARTY (to Vitek)

No, his account.

VITEK

Very good, ma'am.

MARTY (to Vitek)

Were you here last night? Did you like my performance?

VITEK

My goodness! Oh yes! Finer than Strada!

MARTY (violently)

So, you heard la Strada? She'd no voice at all. Thin and shrill as a whistle, nearly always out of tune too!

VITEK

Oh excuse me. She's been dead at least a hundred years now.

MARTY

Of course, I should know that!

CHRISTA

Janek, let's get out of here.

GREGOR

Shall I collect some more people so you can be rude to them as well.

MARTY

No, don't bother!

CHRISTA

Janek, let's get out of here!

MARTY

They'll come anyway. (she looks at Janek and Christa who are holding hands, bursts into laughter) Ha, ha, ha, look at those two, what a pair! Have they been in paradise yet?

VITEK

What d'you mean please?

MARTY

Have they been to bed yet?

VITEK

Good heavens, Christa, surely there's no truth in it.

CHRISTA

Father, how can you ...

MARTY

That's enough, girl, if you haven't then you will. And really I assure you it's not worth it.

PRUS

Then what do you think's worth it?

MARTY (coldly)

Nothing! Nothing at all!

HAUK (enters with a bouquet)

Miss Marty, Miss Marty, may I ... (falls on his knees sobbing) O ... Miss Marty, (kneels down in front of the throne) may I ... Oh, if you only knew. (sobbing) Oh ... You are so like ... you're so like her! It's her voice, her eyes, her head. Oh, she's the image of her! Th'image of her! (sobbing) Oh, oh, oh, oh.

MARTY

Who's this old buffer?

HAUK (standing up)  
I'm a little mad you see.

PRUS  
Soft'ning of the brain.

HAUK  
Yes, yes, (laughs) Hauk, poor mad Hauk.

MARTY  
Oh! Oh!

HAUK  
You see we were lovers, she and I, it must be fifty years ago, eighteen hundred and sixty five.

MARTY  
That's right.

HAUK  
She was a gipsy woman, "chula negra" so they called her. You see, that was when I lived in Spain. How the people raved about her! Vaya Gitana! How the people raved about her! Vaya Gitana! Oh I was so happy there. Oh so happy there. Ever since then I've lived in a sort of daze, do you understand? Since then my life seems like a never ending dream. But what's it to you, she died so long ago.

MARTY  
Died? What nonsense! Maxi! (bends down) Kiss me!

HAUK  
Eugenia! (begins to cry)

MARTY  
Kiss me!

HAUK  
What's that?

MARTY  
Besa me, besa, besa me!

HAUK  
Jesús mil veces.

MARTY  
Animal, un besito!

HAUK (kisses her)  
Eugenia, moza negra querida carisima!

MARTY  
Chite, tonto! Quita! Fuera!

HAUK

Es ella, es ella, Gitana endiablada! Ella es ella, Gitana endiablada! (bows low to Prus and the rest and turns to go) Au revoir, Eugenia! (sobbing) Oh, oh! (goes; long pause)

MARTY (harshly)

And the next! Is that the lot?

VITEK

No, please! Would you oblige me by signing this photograph? For my daughter Kristinka.

MARTY

How absurd.

CHRISTA

Janek, come! Come!

MARTY

Why are you two quarrelling?

JANEK

It was just ... (he looks fixedly at Marty)

MARTY (signs)

But I'll do it for Kristinka.

VITEK (bows)

A thousand thanks, ma'am! (goes off with Christa)

MARTY

Good day to you! Now leave me, all of you leave me! No more to-day, gentlemen.

PRUS (bows)

Your most unwilling servant!

MARTY (to Prus)

Not you! So it seems this Janek has lost his tongue! He'd better go! (Janek goes; Marty to Gregor) Well and what for you?

GREGOR

Let me stay a moment!

MARTY

I've got no time for you now.

GREGOR

Let me stay a moment!

MARTY (tired)

Leave me now, Gregor, I beg you! Go, dearest. Go now! You can come back later!

GREGOR (very formally)

Very well. (Gregor bows coldly to Prus and goes.)

MARTY

Gone at last!

PRUS

Allow me to ask you this question. (Marty nods silently, they both sit down)  
Have you taken some special int'rest in the person of Mister Gregor?

MARTY

No.

PRUS

Doesn't it mean so much to you that he should win this case?

MARTY

No.

PRUS

Thank you. I won't ask you how you knew what things there were locked in the cupboards in my own house. That is evidently your secret.

MARTY

Yes. Surely.

PRUS

You knew that those particular letters were there, you knew that Pepi's will was there too, even though it's sealed up! Did you know that there is something else there?

MARTY (stands up agitated)

What's that? Did you find something else there? Tell me, please, what is it?

PRUS

I don't know. It is only an old document. What d'you know about her, about the woman you call Ellian MacGregor?

MARTY

You have got those letters.

PRUS

Maybe you know something more still about that harlot.

MARTY (starting up)

How dare you. How dare you say that? By what right do you dare say that?

PRUS

But my dear lady, what is this? What does it mean to you a woman of doubtful character . . . who lived a hundred years ago.

MARTY

That's right. Nothing at all! (sits) So she was a harlot?

PRUS

You know last night I read those letters through. Shockingly amorous type, that woman.

MARTY (sadly)

You shouldn't have done that.

PRUS

They contain allusions to strange practices, intimate things. I'm no novice, Miss Marty, but I have to admit that the most accomplished rake hasn't got as much experience in certain matters as this lady.

MARTY

What you mean is ... as this harlot!

PRUS

And can you tell me the real name of this Ellian?

MARTY

Ellian MacGregor as you see from the letters.

PRUS

Not so, not so! There it's only E. M. No more.

MARTY

That obviously stands for Ellian MacGregor.

PRUS

It could stand just as well for Emilia Marty, Eugenia Montez or thousands of others.

MARTY

But it is Ellian MacGregor.

PRUS

Or rather Elina Makropulos, nationality Greek.

MARTY (raising her head)

Damn you for that.

PRUS

So then you knew it?

MARTY (furious)

In the devil's name how d'you know that?

PRUS

Very simple. Pepi's will refers to a certain Ferdinand born at Loukov on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1806, so I looked up the parish register. (takes out notebook and reads) Nomen infantis: Ferdinand Makropulos, thorus: born out of wedlock, father's name: not given. Mother: Elina Makropulos.

MARTY

Nothing else?

PRUS

That's plenty, that's plenty.

MARTY

Oh, my poor Gregor! So the Loukov estate remains yours, eh?

PRUS

Just as long as no Mister Makropulos comes along to claim it.

MARTY

And if no Mister Makropulos comes to claim it?

PRUS

Then I'll keep that envelope closed and sealed and no-one will ever get it.

MARTY

Then he'll come along, you will see.

PRUS

Where d'you keep him? In your trunk? What a shame that it isn't true. (stands up)

MARTY

So you think I'm lying. (Prus kisses her hand; turns to go) One moment! What is your price for that envelope?

PRUS (turns back)

Price indeed? (bows and goes)

(Marty sits motionless with eyes closed. Gregor enters and remains standing in silence.)

MARTY

Is that you, Gregor?

GREGOR

Why do you sit there eyes tight shut? You look like a woman who is suffering. What's the matter!

MARTY

I'm just tired. Speak softly.

GREGOR

Softly. Then I warn you. You won't like what I speak softly! Do you hear, Emilia, you won't like what I speak softly! I'm in love with you. Why are you laughing? Yes, I'm in love with you.

MARTY

I'm cold, Gregor.

GREGOR

Are you sleeping?

MARTY

It's chilly.

GREGOR

Emilia, I warn you! You treat me vilely, even so, even so that can make me happy. You horrify me, even so that can make me happy. I'd like to strangle you, when you treat me like dirt. I'd like ... Emilia, don't make me kill you! In you there's something that repels me. You're base, evil, terrible. A beast without feelings.

MARTY

Not so, Bertie!

GREGOR

Yes!

MARTY

Not so!

GREGOR

Nothing seems to move you. You are cold as steel. As if you'd risen from the grave. It's perversity loving you. And yet I love you so, I'd tear the flesh from my body.

MARTY

Tell me d'you like the name Makropulos?

GREGOR

Don't provoke me! I love you although you destroy me, Emilia!

MARTY

Then go at once, run to doctor Kolenaty's, tell him I must have that letter back. The one I sent him.

GREGOR

It's a forgery then?

MARTY

No, it's not, I swear it. Gregor I swear it. But we must have another one in the name Makropulos.

GREGOR

If I do, will you love me?

MARTY

Never, understand, never!

GREGOR (sits)

Then I'll kill you, Emilia!

MARTY

Stupid fool. See that, that scar on my throat? He was another who said he'd kill me, and if I stripped myself naked in front of you, then you could see all my other souvenirs! Why is it men feel that they must kill me?

GREGOR

Oh, I love you so! Oh, I love you so!

MARTY

Then kill yourself! If only you knew, that I am past all caring. (sadly) If only you knew.

GREGOR

Emilia!

MARTY (wrings her hands)

Unhappy, unhappy Elina!

GREGOR

Come, Emilia, we'll go away. No-one has ever loved you as much as I. D'you hear me, Emilia?

(Marty snores regularly and audibly.)

GREGOR (excitedly)

What is this? Sleeping like a drunk woman. Why d'you make me look so foolish? Emilia, it is I! There's no-one else here.

CHARWOMAN (standing a little distance away, coughs warningly and severely)

Gm, gm, gm, gm, gm.

GREGOR (starting up)

What's that? Oh it's you! She's gone to sleep. Don't wake her up! (kisses Emilia's hand and runs off)

CHARWOMAN (approaches Emilia and gazes at her silently)

Can't help feeling sorry for her. (goes off)

(Janek enters from behind the scenes, stops about ten paces from Emilia and gazes at her as if thunderstruck.)

MARTY (waking up)

Is that you, Gregor?

JANEK

No, only me, only Janek.

MARTY (sitting up)

Janek? Come here, Janek! Would you do something to help me?

JANEK

Oh yes. Oh yes.

MARTY

Something big, Janek.

JANEK

Oh yes.

MARTY

Something heroic? And what would you ask for in return, eh!

JANEK

Oh, nothing!

MARTY

Come closer! D'you know you're being very nice to me? Listen. In your father's house there's an old document, and on it this is written! "To be handed to my son Ferdinand." It's with Ellian's letters in that drawer. Compris?

JANEK

Oh yes, yes, indeed, ma'am.

MARTY

Bring it to me here.

JANEK

Will father give me it?

MARTY

Oh no. You will have to take it.

JANEK

I couldn't!

MARTY

Little boy's afraid of daddy?

JANEK

I'm not afraid, but ma'am, but ma'am ...

MARTY

Janek, on my word of honour, it's just a keepsake of no value ... I'd like so much to have it.

JANEK

I will try and get it.

PRUS (enters from the shadow)

I shouldn't trouble, Janek.

JANEK

Father, please understand!

PRUS

Be off! Get out!

(Janek goes off ashamed.)

PRUS

Y'see, Miss Marty. I thought he was prowling round the theatre for .... wher all the time ...

MARTY

And what were you prowling round the theatre for?

PRUS

Waiting for you.

MARTY (goes close up to him)

Well then give me that document.

PRUS

I haven't got it.

MARTY

Please give it to me!

PRUS

And when? And when?

MARTY

Well, to-night.

PRUS

Agreed! (goes out quickly)

### ACT III

A room in an hotel. Left - a window. Right - a door to the passage. Centre - the entrance to Emilia's bedroom which is separated by transparent hangings. - Curtain - Through the hangings are seen movements of people dressing.

(Marty enters from the bedroom in a peignoir. Behind her Prus in a dinner jacket but without a collar. Prus sits silently on the right. Emilia goes to the window, draws the blind.)

MARTY (turns from the window)

Well? D'you hear me? Give me the document.

(Prus silently draws a pocket book from his breast pocket and takes a paper out, throws it, without a word, on the table. Marty takes the envelope, carries it to the dressing-table. She sits, lights a small lamp, examines the seal on the envelope. She hesitates, then quickly tears the envelope open with a hairpin, takes out a yellow folded manuscript.)

MARTY (folds the paper, hides it in her bosom)

Good!

PRUS

You have defrauded me.

MARTY

You've had what you wanted.

PRUS

You have defrauded me. Cold as ice. Like embracing a dead thing. (shudders)  
That's what I get for stealing documents. Fine reward that was!

MARTY

D'you regret you gave me the document?

PRUS

Yes, I should have kept it. I feel like a thief now. Ugh! Ugh!

MARTY (stands up)

D'you want to spit in my face then?

PRUS

No, in my own!

MARTY

Well please yourself then. (a knock at the door) Who's that?

CHAMBERMAID (enters in night-dress and petticoat, out of breath; Prus turns round  
If you please, madam, have you seen a Mister Prus?

PRUS

What's that?

CHAMBERMAID

Mister Prus' servant's waiting outside, says he's got to see him, says he's something for him.

PRUS

How the devil did he know? He must wait. No, stay here. (goes into the bedroom)

(Marty sits at the dressing-table.)

CHAMBERMAID

My goodness! I was that scared! There was the poor chap, all of a heap like, couldn't get a word out. Something must be wrong, madam.

MARTY

Stop, you're pulling.

CHAMBERMAID

And pale too as a sheet, the poor chap.

PRUS (enters hurriedly from the bedroom with collar and tie)

Where is he? (goes off right)

CHAMBERMAID (brushing Marty's hair)

He's a real swell gent, eh? You should have seen him, the poor chap, all of a tremble.

MARTY

Tell them to send up an omelette. (yawns) What is the time now?

CHAMBERMAID

He'd a letter he was holding or something.

MARTY

What is the time now?

CHAMBERMAID

Seven o'clock.

MARTY

Turn out the light and be quiet.

CHAMBERMAID

His lips too . . . blue and swollen, the poor chap. I thought to myself, he's poorly. And crying too, crying so hard and silently.

MARTY

You stupid girl, you're pulling my hair out. Give me the comb!

CHAMBERMAID

It's because my hands are shaking.

MARTY

Just look there, see how you've torn my hair out.

CHAMBERMAID

Something must surely be wrong.

(Prus returns from the passage with an opened letter which he handles mechanically.)

PRUS (hoarsely)

Send the girl away. (grotes for a chair and sits)

MARTY

Go, I'll ring.

(The chambermaid goes out.)

PRUS

Oh, so that's why he did it. (sobbing) Poor wretched Janek! (Marty takes the comb and does her hair.) My only son! "Father, be happy, as for me ..."  
(stands up; Marty with hairpins in her mouth) What are you doing here?

MARTY

Doing my hair.

PRUS

Perhaps you haven't understood. Janek was in love with you! Killed himself for your sake!

MARTY

Pooh, lots of people kill themselves.

PRUS

And you go on doing your hair?

MARTY

Would you like my hair untidy?

PRUS

Dead and it's your fault!

MARTY

Well, how can I help it.

PRUS

D'you hear me?

MARTY

Your fault also. So I must tear my hair out?

PRUS

Quiet, or I'll ...

(a knock at the door)

PRUS (collides with Hauk at the door)  
Idiot!

MARTY  
Buenos dias, Maxi. Why so early?

HAUK (tiptoes to her and kisses her on the neck)  
Pst, pst. Pst, pst. Get dressed quickly, Eugenia, we're going.

MARTY  
Where?

HAUK  
Hi, hi, hi. Back to Spain.

MARTY  
Are you mad?

HAUK  
I've not told my wife about it. I'm not going back to her. D'you see what I've brought with me? All Matilda's jewell'ry. Understand please, she's my wife, my poor Matilda, she's old. It's dreadful to be old!

MARTY  
Si, si, senior.

HAUK  
But you have not grown older. Did you know that madmen live to a good old age? I shall live a long time too! As long as any man can make love still, (rattles the castenets) life is worth living. Gipsy, will you come with me?

MARTY  
Yes, I'll come! (begins to pack)

(a knock at the door)

CHAMBERMAID (thrusting her head in)  
Excuse me, madam, someone wants you.

MARTY (astonished)  
Visitors at this hour? (enter Gregor, Dr. Kolenaty, Vitek, Christa, Prus, and a doctor) Allow me to inform you, gentlemen, I'm just leaving, just leaving.

HAUK  
Now they've got me.

KOLENATY  
Leaving! Really! I shouldn't do that.

HAUK  
Chi, chi, chi! (the doctor leads Hauk off) Chi, chi, chi!

KOLENATY  
Won't you change your mind, then we shall have to call in the ...

MARTY

The police! (Kolenaty offers her a chair) D'you want to question me?

KOLENATY

No, Miss Marty, just have a nice friendly chat with you! Did you sign this photograph for Mister Vittek's daughter? Is that your signature?

MARTY

Yes.

KOLENATY

Excellent! May I ask you now, did you send me yesterday this missing document? Dated eighteen hundred and seventeen. You admit that?

MARTY

Yes.

KOLENATY

But the ink in which it's written is fresh and smears still. Don't you know what that must mean? Eh?

MARTY

And how should I know?

KOLENATY

It's a forgery!

MARTY

I swear it, that was written by Ellian MacGregor!

KOLENATY

When?

MARTY

Oh, that doesn't matter.

KOLENATY

It does matter, does matter. Now when did Ellian MacGregor die?

MARTY

Get out and leave me! I won't answer another question.

GREGOR

Then we shall have to look through all your belongings.

MARTY

Stop that! Keep your hands off. (opens the drawer of the dressing-table)

GREGOR

A pistol! (jumps towards her and wrenches a revolver, pushing Christa in front of Emilia) Before you try that, look at this girl here, look at her straight in the eyes. D'you know what has happened?

MARTY

Janek!

GREGOR

And d'you know why? That poor boy is on your conscience!

MARTY

Pah! So that's why you've come here? One thing at a time, please, I must get dress'd and then finish my breakfast. (runs into the bedroom)

(They all start going through her trunk. Gregor pulls out a seal, Vitek a medallion, Kolenaty letters.)

GREGOR

The seal and th'initials E. M. as in the letters from Ellian MacGregor.

VITEK

Look a medallion.

KOLENATY

What's that?

VITEK

With the mad man's crest on it.

KOLENATY

Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, eighteen forty nine. Ellian MacGregor, Ekaterina Myskin.

VITEK

Always E. M.

KOLENATY

Here we are. "My beloved Ellian."

PRUS

You mean Elina.

KOLENATY

Plain enough Ellian MacGregor, Vienna. Vitek, run and fetch my gown.

VITEK

Yes, at once, sir! (goes out)

(Christa bursts out crying.)

KOLENATY

Stop this silly childish waiting.

PRUS

Let me see that document! This document is genuine, written by a Greek woman, Elina Makropulos.

KOLENATY

Oh but you know it was written by ...

PRUS

Not a doubt, by Elina Makropulos.

KOLENATY

This is crazy!

(Vitek returns with the lawyer's gown.)

PRUS

It's the self-same handwriting as in those letters.

KOLENATY (to Vitek who goes into the bedroom)

Vitek, call her in now!

(Vitek brings in Emilia, elaborately dressed, with a bottle and a glass in her hand, from which she drinks.)

VITEK

She's been drinking whisky.

MARTY (enters tipsy, leans against the wall)

Let me be. This is my medicine.

KOLENATY (folds his gown around him)

She's drunk. Let me have the bottle!

MARTY

No! Hands off! (claps the bottle to her bosom) Or I'll tell you nothing! (to Kolenaty) You look like the undertaker.

KOLENATY

What's your name, madam?

MARTY

Name? Elina Makropulos.

KOLENATY

Where were you born?

MARTY

In Crete.

KOLENATY

And your age, ma'am?

MARTY

How old do you think?

CHRISTA

Over forty.

MARTY (puts her tongue out at her)

Hussy!

KOLENATY

The date of birth?

MARTY

Fifteen hundred and sixty five.

KOLENATY

What! Stop this silly fooling!

MARTY

That makes me three hundred and forty two.

KOLENATY

Who was your father?

MARTY

Hieronymus Makropulos, private physician to Emperor Rudolph the Second.

KOLENATY

No more, I've had quite enough, quite enough!

PRUS

Will you tell us your real name?

MARTY

Elina Makropulos.

PRUS

Are you related to that Elina Makropulos, who was the mistress of Josef Prus?

MARTY

She and I are one!

PRUS

How so?

MARTY

Yes, I was the mistress of Pepi Prus. And the child that we had - that was Gregor.

GREGOR

And Ellian MacGregor?

MARTY

She and I are one.

GREGOR

Are you mad?

MARTY

I am your great-great-great-great-great-great-grandmother. Ferdi, he was my son.

GREGOR

Which Ferdi?

MARTY

Why of course, Ferdinand Gregor. But in the register I'd no option but to give his real name.

KOLENATY

Oh dear! Oh dear!

MARTY

Ferdinand Makropulos.

KOLENATY

And when were you born?

MARTY

○ Cristos Soter, God give me patience! Fifteen hundred and sixty five. I was also Ekaterina Myskina and Elsa Müller. How could you live for three hundred years and never change your name? Three hundred years?

PRUS

And how on earth did you know the will was in that envelope?

MARTY

Before he sealed it Pepi showed it me, asked me to tell that young fool of a Ferdi that the will was inside it.

PRUS

And why didn't you tell him so?

MARTY

They can go to the devil, chi-chi-chi-chi for all my children!

KOLENATY

That is vulgar talk!

MARTY

Vulgar talk, vulgar talk, for a long time past now I've not been a lady. Nobody drinking? Mother of God, my mouth's so dry. My head bums!

PRUS

You wrote these letters then yourself?

MARTY

I did. Yes, I used to tell Pepi ev'rything. Then you see I loved him. Yes. I really loved him. That was why I lent him the Makropulos paper.

PRUS

What was that?

KOLENATY

What was that?

GREGOR

What was that you lent him?

VITEK

What was that?

MARTY

The Makropulos paper. He begged so hard for it. (to Prus) The parchment you've just returned me, the one address'd to his son, Ferdinand. Pepi thought of trying it, promised that he'd return it. And then he went and put it with that will of

his! Thinking that he'd make me come back and ... and ... and I came back at last. I had to get that paper, that gives a man three hundred years of life and youth!

GREGOR

Just for that you came here?

MARTY

Ha ha ha, ha ha ha. I don't care a damn now you're mine. Ha ha ha, ha ha ha. I don't care a damn now you're mine. Who knows how many thousand offspring I have got roaming round the world, how many thousands roaming round the world? (pressing the manuscript to her heart) At last you're mine, now at last, at last you're mine. It was written by my father for the Emperor Rudolph.

VITEK

Emperor Rudolph.

MARTY

Oh children, children! What a bad old man! And as he got older he kept searching for the secret of eternal life, the elixir vitae. One day my father paid him a visit and wrote him out this paper, this charm, three hundred years of life, and of youth. But the Emperor Rudolph took fright and he said: Let your daughter try it. First, let your daughter try it. I was the girl he meant, I was the girl he meant. Then I was only just sixteen, so my father made me try it. For a week or longer I lay ill with a fever and then I got better.

VITEK

And the Emperor?

MARTY

No. How could he really know that I would live to three hundred? That I would live to three hundred? He said my father was a charlatan, had him put in prison. And I escaped with all his papers abroad somewhere. I've forgotten where.

PRUS

Did you ever show anyone the Makropulos document?

MARTY

Only to Pepi as he wanted it so badly. But now that I'm growing old ...

KOLENATY

How old are you now?

MARTY

I had to get it.

KOLENATY

How old are you now?

MARTY

Don't fuss me! (shrilly) Three hundred and forty two. Because I'm at the ends of things. Feel my hands, Gregor, how cold they are. Feel them they're colder than ice!

KOLENATY

Tell me why you forged the handwriting of Eilian MacGregor?

MARTY

Pater hemon!

KOLENATY

Don't lie! You are Emilia Marty.

MARTY

Pater hemon!

KOLENATY

That medallion belonging to Eugenia Montez, you stole it!

MARTY

Pater hemon, hos eis en uranois!

KOLENATY

Yes, now we've got her, now we've got her, now we've got her, now we've got her, now we've got her. What's your real name?

MARTY (falling)

Elina Makropulos.

KOLENATY (lets her fall to the ground)

Damn it, she's not lying!

PRUS

It's true!

GREGOR

It's true!

VITEK

It's true!

KOLENATY (takes off his gown)

Fetch the doctor!

(They take Marty into the bedroom. The doctor goes into the bedroom. Marty re-enters like a ghost or shadow, the doctor supports her. All get up. A pale green light overflows the stage and auditorium.)

MARTY

Now I am sure that death laid his hand on me. Why was I afraid of it?

GREGOR, VITEK, PRUS, KOLENATY

Oh, Miss Marty, we have used you harshly!

CHRISTA

I am so dreadfully sorry!

MARTY

You are all here now and it's as if you were not here. You're mere shadows and dead things!

CHORUS

Mere shadows and dead things!

MARTY

Dying or living, it's all one, it's the same thing.

CHORUS

Dying or living, it's all one, it's the same thing!

MARTY (wrings her hands)

It's a great mistake to live so long! Oh, if you could only know how easy life is for you! You are so close to life! You see in life some meaning! Life has for you some value! Fools, how happy you all are ...

CHORUS

We're happy! Fools, how happy we all are!

MARTY

And it's due to the paltry chance that you will all die soon.

CHORUS

We're happy! Fools, how happy we all are!

MARTY

You believe in mankind, love, virtue, progress. There's nothing more that you can want.

CHORUS

Nothing more we can want.

MARTY

But in me life has come to a standstill. O, Jesu Christe, and there's nothing more! How dreadful this loneliness! In the end it's the same, Christina, singing and silence. There's no joy in goodness, there is no joy in evil. Joyless the earth, joyless the heav'ns. When you know that, then your soul dies within you.

GREGOR

Why did you come then, for that, for that piece of paper?

VITEK, KOLENATY, PRUS

Why did you come then, for that piece of paper?

MARTY

Here it is in writing. Ego Hieronymos Makropulos, iatros kaisaros Rodolfu." I don't want it now! Well, take it someone. Nobody wants it? You here, Christina? I robbed you of your lover, you're beautiful. You take it. You'll be famous and you'll sing like Emilia Marty! Take it, girl, take it, girl!

GREGOR, VITEK, PRUS, KOLENATY

Stop her!

(Christa takes the document and holds it over the flame until it is all burnt.)

MARTY

Pater hemon! (breaks down; the document is completely burnt)

( END OF THE OPERA )

## THE DIARY OF ONE WHO DISAPPEARED

10.

One day I met a Gypsy girl, lithe as a deer was she,  
Black hair lay on her shoulders, her eyes were deep as the sea.  
With searching eyes she looked at me  
Then swift as a bird flew,  
But left me yearning after her  
For all that day, all that day through.

11.

That black-eyed Gypsy has haunted me all the day.  
Why does she not leave me, why does she not leave me?  
Leave me and go her way –  
Why won't she leave me and go her way?  
If she would let me be  
She would end this worry,  
Then to the church with my prayers I would hurry.

12.

Through the twilight glow-worms dance across the meadows  
But the dusk falls and across the fields a footstep goes.  
Do not wait, I will not yield to this temptation –  
That would bring mother's heart endless tribulation.  
Now the moon sets through the world thick gloom creating,  
By the corner of the stable, someone's waiting.  
There are two bright eyes glittering through the shade.  
Oh, my Saviour, Oh my blessed Saviour,  
Hear my prayer and grant me thine aid.

13.

Already swallows are twittering overhead,  
But I've lain all the night sleepless upon my bed.  
Now in the sky there's a light, it's the flush of dawn,  
And I've lain all the night as on a bed of thorn.  
And I've lain all the night as on a bed of thorn.

14.

Weary work is ploughing, without sleep to ease me,  
For when I fell asleep, still in dreams she'd tease me,  
Still in dreams she'd tease me.

15.

Hey, there my tawny oxen, careful how you pull the plough,  
Don't look towards the elders, follow the furrow now,  
Where the ground is hard, the plough springs back and lurches,  
Still can I see that bright kerchief through the branches.  
Who's there waiting for me? Oh that she would turn to stone!

My poor head is throbbing, and like a fire has grown.  
Who's there waiting for me? Oh that she were turned to stone!

16.

I've got a loose axle, that means the axle-pin's gone,  
Now oxen wait for me, wait for me, I'll make another one.  
Over there I'll cut one from that fine elder tree.  
Who can escape his fate? For what must be, must be.

17.

Don't look, my oxen, so sad at my change of heart,  
No need to fear that because of this we must part.  
Black-haired Zefka's waiting there by the elder tree,  
where like glowing coals of fire her black eyes watch me.  
If I should go near her, think not that she'd harm me.  
I'll show you, I'll be safe. Her eyes will not charm me.

18.

*Alto:*

Welcome, my handsome one, I am here to greet you.  
Why this stroke of fortune? What kind twist of fate has let me meet you?  
Once more welcome, Jan.  
Won't you then come near me?  
Standing there pale and still,  
Is it that you fear me?

*Tenor:*

I've no cause to fear you, why should such fear begin?  
I've come here to whittle wood for my axle-pin.  
Wood for my axle-pin.

*Alto:*

Leave it, my handsome Jan. Do not be so headstrong.  
Leave your work, sit and hear, I'll sing a Gypsy song.

*Off-stage voices:*

Folding then her hands, sang so sad a strain  
Softly sang so sad a strain  
Softly sang so sad a strain  
That the mournful song filled his heart with pain.

19.

*Alto:*

God all-powerful, God eternal, why create the Gypsy race?  
Endless wandering, never resting, hunted on from place to place.  
Why are you silent, Jan? Is it the lark you hear?

*Voices:*

That her mournful song filled his heart with pain.

*Alto:*

Come and sit beside me, surely you have no fear.  
God all-powerful, God redeemer, ere I perish in the wilderness,  
Grant me knowledge of desiring, grant me knowledge of desiring.

*Voices:*

That her mournful song filled his heart with pain.

*Alto:*

Why are you so silent? Won't you then come near me?  
Being so close to me seems to make you fear me.  
Come and sit beside me – do not think I tease you.  
Is it then my colour? Does my skin displease you?  
But not all my body has endured the sunlight,  
Won't you look more closely, here my skin is snow-white.

*Voices:*

Then from her breast her bright kerchief she slowly turned,  
And all his hot young blood rushed to his face and burned.

20.

*Tenor:*

From the ripening cornfield, oh what sweet odours creep?

*Alto:*

Will you let me show you how Gypsy people sleep?  
Shall I show you the way the Gypsies sleep?

*Tenor:*

She brushed some twigs away, threw some pebbles after,  
'Behold my bed' she said, then she shook with laughter.

*Alto:*

Earth is my pillow and heaven my covering,  
I warm my fingers in my lap when they're shivering.

*Tenor:*

In her tattered skirt, there on the ground she lies,  
And for my virtue's sake tears spring to my sad eyes.  
Tears spring to my sad eyes.

21.

Forest's shady height,  
Water cold and bright,  
Eyes as black as night,

Bare knees snowy white,  
These four things, till death relieve me,  
Will, I swear it, never leave me.

22.

Intermezzo (piano solo)

23.

See how high the sun is! Is it noon then?  
Oh what I have lost now, Oh what I have lost now,  
Who can give back again? Who can give back again?

24.

Now my tawny oxen, why do you stare at me?  
If you should betray me, sadly you'll fare with me.  
Just give my secrets up and I'll punish you.  
Just dare betray me, my beating will finish you.  
But now before me by far the worst ordeal lies –  
How can I go back home? How face my mother's eyes?

25.

What has come over me? What is it I have done?  
Must I now learn to love Gypsies who call me son?  
Father a Gypsy lout? Mother a Gypsy slut?  
Better that a finger from my own hand were cut.  
There's a lark above me, offering me gladness,  
But my heart is heavy, who can ease my sadness?

26.

Who can escape his fate, for what must be, must be.  
Every night I hurry to that same elder tree.  
Ask me where I'm off to! Ask me where I'm going!  
Gathering strawberries – under the foliage searching for mysteries.

27.

Nothing matters now until evening shadows fall,  
Soon I'll be with Zefka, I hear her call.  
Gladly I'd wring the neck of every cock that crows;  
Then there'd be no one to tell us it's time we rose.  
Oh that night were endless without a dawn,  
Then from each other's arms we would never be torn.

28.

See that thieving magpie suddenly fly away!  
Did it steal the skirt my sister washed on Monday?  
If she should ever know it was no magpie's beak,  
She would disown me, no more to me she'd speak.  
Oh my Lord God, what a change has come over me.

In my desperation, what strange fancies stir me.  
And prayers confuse my mind – these I can't unravel.  
All is like a stream that's sluggish, clogged with gravel.

29.

Now she bears my child, see how bright, bright, bright her eyes are!  
As her skirt flies up, see how white, white, white her thighs are!

30.

Father, how wrong you were not to respect my pride,  
Choosing the girl that you wanted to be my bride.  
He who has sinned must be punished, so life taught me.  
So too must I accept what my fate has brought me.

31.

Then farewell, dearest land, then fare thee well from my heart,  
All that's left for me now is to say we must part.  
Fare thee well, father dear, and to you, mother dear,  
Fare thee well, sister sweet, you with your eyes so clear,  
See my hands raised to you, please forgive everything.  
There can be no return from the life I'm beginning.  
No escape can there be, fate's bidding must be done.  
Zefka waits for me there, in her arms is my son.

*Translation by Bernard Keffe*

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