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*Dramatic Publishing*

# THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

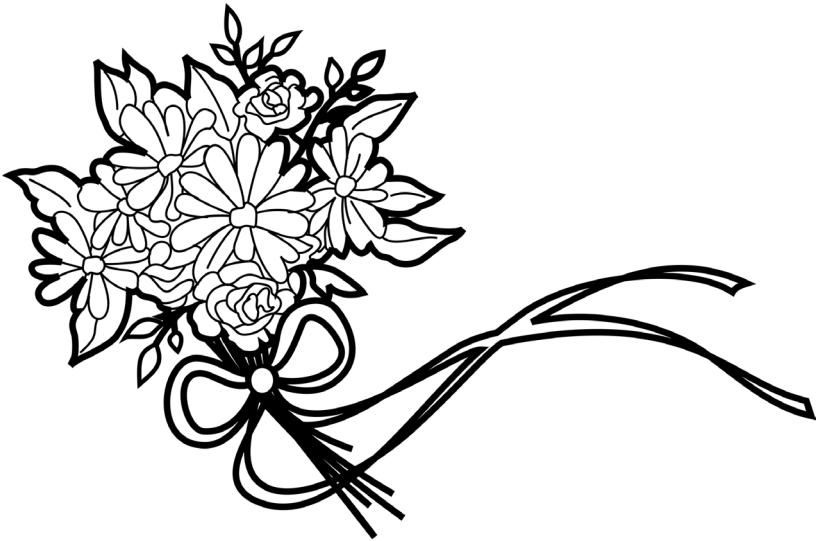
[*LA FOLLE JOURNÉE OU LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO*]

Comedy adapted into a one-act play by

I.E. Clark

Based on the play by

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais



# THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

[*La Folle Journée ou Le Mariage de Figaro*]

**Comedy. Adapted by I.E. Clark. Based on the play by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais.** Cast: 8m., 9w., flexible. Although *The Marriage of Figaro* is a sequel to *The Barber of Seville*, each play is independent of the other. In *The Barber of Seville*, Figaro helps Count Almaviva win Rosina from the ugly, miserly Bartolo. In *The Marriage of Figaro*, we see the same group several years later. Figaro is about to marry Suzanna, another servant in the count's household. But the count has tired of Rosina, and he has his eyes on Suzanna. As part of the plot, the mystery of Figaro's birth is unraveled. Secret late-night rendezvous in the garden help to pair off all the lovers for a joyous and hilarious ending. What chance did a servant in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe have against a powerful nobleman? This satirical comedy provides an answer. Figaro, perhaps the most famous rogue in all of literature, says that he steals because he was born a poor man. Since he is a servant instead of a nobleman, he contends, he has to use more intelligence and ability merely to stay alive than rulers use to govern their provinces. King Louis XVI of France was afraid that such talk on the stage would inflame the embers of rebellion which were smoldering all around him, and he tried to suppress *The Marriage of Figaro*. It took Beaumarchais six years to overcome the king's opposition, and the play finally reached the Paris stage in 1784. Only five years later, French peasants stormed the Bastille. As Louis laid his head on the guillotine, he had every right to say, "I told you so." However, while rebels are remembered for their opposition to monarchy, Beaumarchais (whose real name was Pierre-Augustin Caron) became famous as the author of two of the world's funniest comedies, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Like many famous play scripts, these were later made into operas by Rossini and Mozart. This one-act play can be impressively staged by university, community or high-school groups, and it is superb for contests and festivals. This is not a musical; Mozart's opera was adapted from this play. *Costumes and staging may be elaborate or fairly simple. A director's script is available containing drawings of costumes and set, details on all technical aspects of staging and discussion of characterization, plot and theme. It also suggests the complete blocking and full stage directions for all movement and business. Approximate running time: 35 to 40 minutes. Code: ML7.*

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The Marriage of Figaro

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## THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

This one-act version of *The Marriage of Figaro* was first presented at the Schulenburg High School Theatre Festival March 28 and 29, 1968, and at the San Antonio World's Fair on April 25, 1968, under the direction of Mrs. Callie Schaefer, with the following cast:

FIGARO ..... John Berwick  
SUZANNA ..... Candi Clark  
BARTOLO ..... Donnie Heinrich  
MARCELINA ..... Barbara Staha  
CHERUBIN ..... Gary McKee  
COUNT ALMAVIVA ..... Gerald Hafer  
BASILIO ..... Andy Bosl  
ROSINA ..... Jan Pratkan  
\*ANTONIO ..... Hugh Cox  
FANCHETTE ..... Diane Rainosek  
DOBLEMANO ..... Earl Galipp  
\*DON GUZMAN ..... Ronnie Holz  
\*USHER ..... Connie Sustr  
\*PEOPLE ..... Alice Hepner, Patricia Hepner,  
Delphia Hamilton, Darlene Graf,  
Linda Winkler

*Scene: The villa of Count Almaviva in Spain, 18th century*



\*The cast may be shortened to 10 characters by making the following changes:

- † Omit the characters of Don Guzman, Antonio, Usher, and People
- † Let Doblemano read Don Guzman's lines
- † Omit Antonio's lines in the Court scene, pages 10-15
- † Let Doblemano read Antonio's lines in the final scene, pages 21-22 (correct the grammar to conform to Doblemano's other lines)
- † Omit the Usher's lines. Doblemano can give one cry of "Silence!"
- † The "people of the court" may be Basilio, Fanchette, and Cherubin



A DIRECTOR'S PRODUCTION SCRIPT (prompt book) is available for this play. An invaluable handbook for the experienced as well as the inexperienced director, the Production Script contains copious illustrations of costumes and scenery, plus detailed discussions of characterization, specific stage directions to reflect the blocking of the original production, and suggestions for handling all technical aspects of staging the play. Order the Production Script from the publisher.



## NOTES ON THE PLAY

Figaro, perhaps the most famous rogue in all of literature, says that he steals because he was born a poor man. Since he is a servant instead of a nobleman, he contends, he has to use more intelligence and ability merely to stay alive than rulers use to govern their provinces.

King Louis XVI of France was afraid that such talk on the stage would inflame the embers of rebellion which were smoldering all around him, and he tried to suppress *The Marriage of Figaro*.

It took Beaumarchais six years to overcome the king's opposition, and the play finally reached the Paris stage in 1784. Only five years later French peasants stormed the Bastille. As Louis lay his head on the guillotine, he had every right to say, "I told you so."

Beaumarchais was not satisfied with stirring up rebellion in his own country; he had an "out-of-town tryout" in America, where he played an important role in promoting the American Revolution.

However, while rebels like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington and Robespierre are remembered for their opposition to monarchy, Beaumarchais (whose real name was Pierre Augustin Caron) became famous as the author of two of the world's funniest comedies, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Like many famous play-scripts, these were later made into operas, by Rossini and Mozart.

Although *The Marriage of Figaro* is a sequel to *The Barber of Seville*, each play is independent of the other. In *The Barber of Seville*, Figaro helps Count Almaviva win Rosina from the ugly, miserly Bartolo. In *The Marriage of Figaro* we see the same group several years later. Figaro is about to marry Suzanna, another servant in the Count's household. But the Count has tired of Rosina, and he has his eyes on Suzanna. What chance did a servant in 18th century Europe have against a powerful nobleman? This satirical comedy provides an answer.

Costumes and staging may be elaborate or fairly simple. The Director's Production Script has many helpful suggestions. See the preceding page for information about the Production Script.

# The Marriage of Figaro

Adapted by I. E. CLARK

[*The curtain opens on an almost bare room. The only important piece of furniture is a large high-backed chair. FIGARO is measuring the floor. SUZANNA is trying on a garland of orange blossoms before a mirror. The mirror may be on the wall, or she may hold a hand mirror.*]

FIGARO. [*Muttering under his breath*] Nineteen feet by twenty-six.

SUZANNA. What do you think, Figaro... [*Trying the garland at various angles*] does it look better this way—or this way?

FIGARO. Either way, dream girl. The virginal wreath on the head of his beloved on her wedding morning—there is no more beautiful sight for a bridegroom.

SUZANNA. What are you measuring, dear?

FIGARO. His Lordship is giving us an elegant bed—I'm wondering where it will fit best.

SUZANNA. In this room?

FIGARO. Yes. He's letting us have it.

SUZANNA. I don't want *this* room!

FIGARO. Why?

SUZANNA. I just don't.

FIGARO. But it's the most convenient room in the castle—in between My Lord's suite and My Lady's suite. Suppose her Ladyship wants something in the night—she rings—ay presto! a couple of steps and you are in her room. And if his Lordship wants something, he jingles and—hippety-hop! like a flash I'm there!

SUZANNA. Very convenient. But what if he jingles some nice morning and sends you off on a long errand...a couple of steps and—ay, presto!—he's at my door. Then hippety-hop! like a flash he's...

FIGARO. What do you mean?

SUZANNA. My love, open your eyes! Señor the Count Alnaviva, having pursued all the rural belles, is now ready to return to the castle—but not to his wife. It's *your* wife he has his eye on. His faithful puppydog Basilio, my noble singing teacher, instructs me as part of each day's lesson on the convenience of this room.

FIGARO. Basilio!

SUZANNA. The Count is **thinking** of an ancient custom called *droit du seigneur*...

FIGARO. But his Lordship abolished that disgraceful privilege when he wed My Lady Rosina! Otherwise, I would never have planned to marry you within his domain.

SUZANNA. Well, if he abolished it, he wishes he hadn't. And it's with your fiancée that he intends to revive it—today.

FIGARO. My head's spinning!

[*Bell rings off R*]

SUZANNA. There—the Señorita is awake.

FIGARO. Give me a little kiss!

SUZANNA. Kiss my lover today? How scandalous! What would my husband say about it tomorrow? [*FIGARO tries to kiss her.*] Figaro!

FIGARO. You don't know how much I love you.

SUZANNA. [*Throwing him a kiss as she exits*] There's your kiss back, sir.

FIGARO. What a charming girl! But my esteemed master...! [*Sees Bartolo entering, followed by Marcelina*] Hey! Hey! Here is the fat doctor. Good morning, dear Doctor Bartolo. Señorita Marcelina! [*To Bartolo*] You came all the way from Seville just to be at my wedding.

BARTOLO. No, sir, not at all.

FIGARO. That would have been very generous of you...

BARTOLO. Yes, certainly—and most ridiculous.

FIGARO. ...since I had the misfortune to upset your marriage.

BARTOLO. Have you anything else to tell me?

FIGARO. I've made you angry. [*To Marcelina*] Good-

bye, Marcelina—still eager to haul me into court, I suppose!  
*[Starts walking out]*

BARTOLO. What's that?

FIGARO. She'll tell you all about it. And about everything else she can remember. *[Exit]*

BARTOLO. That scoundrel never changes! He should have been skinned alive long ago.

MARCELINA. Always the doctor...so formal and starchy, a person might die and rot waiting for you—just as a certain lady once married another man in spite of all your precautions.

BARTOLO. You nasty-minded old maid! Why was I summoned to the castle? Has Count Almaviva had an accident?

MARCELINA. No, Doctor.

BARTOLO. Perhaps Rosina, his deceitful countess, is ill, I hope!

MARCELINA. Not sick; just droopy.

BARTOLO. Why?

MARCELINA. Her husband neglects her.

BARTOLO. Ah! The worthy husband gets revenge for me.

MARCELINA. It's hard to figure the Count—he flirts with every female in sight, but flies into a jealous rage if Rosina so much as breathes when there's another man around. Today he's marrying our Suzanna to Figaro—and all the while trying to steal her affections for himself...

BARTOLO. Which shouldn't be difficult.

MARCELINA. Basilio says no.

BARTOLO. Is that thief in this house? It's a pirate's den! What's his job?

MARCELINA. Making trouble. The worst thing is, he's always chasing me.

BARTOLO. I'd get rid of him in a hurry.

MARCELINA. How?

BARTOLO. By marrying him!

MARCELINA. Ha! Why didn't you get rid of me that way? No, not you! I'll bet you've even forgotten our poor

little Emmanuel. Where's our son? What became of him? Hunh? Answer me that!

BARTOLO. Did I have to come all the way from Seville to listen to this babbling?

MARCELINA. Well, since you refused to marry me, at least help me marry someone else.

BARTOLO. Delighted! But what mortal, abandoned by heaven and women, would it be?

MARCELINA. That handsome, gay, lovable Figaro.

BARTOLO. That worthless rascal!

MARCELINA. Never angry, always in a good humor, lively, generous...

BARTOLO. And his Suzanna?

MARCELINA. That sneaky little flirt...if you'll help me...

BARTOLO. It would be a good joke to marry my old housekeeper to the rogue who helped rob me of Rosina.

MARCELINA. And who never notices me.

BARTOLO. And who stole my hundred crowns!

MARCELINA. What pleasure...

BARTOLO. To punish a scoundrel?

MARCELINA. To marry him, Doctor! To marry him!  
*[They exit as they speak. SUZANNA, carrying a dress, enters just in time to hear Marcelina's last words.]*

SUZANNA. "To marry him, to marry him!" Who? My Figaro? That smarty-pants old witch! *[Throws the dress on the chair.]* Now I can't remember what I came in to get.

CHERUBIN. *[Rushes in lovesick]* Oh, Suzie, I've been waiting two hours to find you alone. Suzanna, the Count's sending me away.

SUZANNA. Cherubin, what silly thing has his Lordship's favorite page done this time?

CHERUBIN. He caught me with your cousin Fanchette. I was just rehearsing her part for your wedding. But he was furious. Suzanna, my only hope is for her Ladyship to talk him into changing his mind. Otherwise I'll never, never see you again.

SUZANNA. See me? It's my turn now, eh? Little scamp!

You are caught with Fanchette, but you sigh for my lady, and yet you come pawing me....

CHERUBIN. You're right; I don't know what's happening to me. My heart does back flips every time I see a woman. I need to say "I love you" so badly that I say it to the trees, to the clouds, to her ladyship, to you...even to Marcelina....

SUZANNA. Ha ha ha!

CHERUBIN. Why not? She's a woman...a girl...a girl...a woman—what beautiful words!

SUZANNA. He's going batty.

[*CHERUBIN chases SUZANNA around chair. Seeing the COUNT enter, he hides behind the chair in terror. SUZANNA doesn't see the Count*]

CHERUBIN. I'm really gone now!

SUZANNA. What's wrong with him? [*Seeing the COUNT, she goes to the chair to conceal Cherubin.*] Oh!

COUNT. You seem flustered, Suzie my dear! Quite understandable, I suppose, on this day of days.

SUZANNA. My Lord, what do you want? Suppose someone should find you here with me...

COUNT. I would regret very much if someone did. But you know my feelings for you. Basilio has been my messenger of love. It will take only a moment to explain my plans; now listen. [*He sits in chair*]

SUZANNA. I won't listen!

COUNT. Meet me in the garden tonight and we'll talk...

BASILIO. [*Offstage*] He's not in, señor.

COUNT. Who's that!

SUZANNA. What next!

BASILIO. I'll see if his Lordship is in here.

COUNT. Not a place to hide? Ah! Behind this chair. Get rid of him!

[*With SUZANNA blocking the Count's way long enough, CHERUBIN manages to slither around one side of the chair just as the COUNT ducks behind it from the other side. CHERUBIN hops into the chair. SUZANNA throws the dress over him and stands in front of the chair as BASILIO enters.*]

BASILIO. Have you seen his Excellency, señorita?

SUZANNA. What? Why should I have seen him? Leave me alone!

BASILIO. Don't get excited. Figaro is looking for him.

SUZANNA. So?

BASILIO. Calm down, naughty girl! Why do the messages I bring you from my master annoy you? Why even that little page gets a warmer welcome...

SUZANNA. Get out of here, you evil man!

BASILIO. Evil? Because I see what I see? Well, if Cherubin's not ogling you, he's mooning about her Ladyship. You ought to see the way he looks at her when he's serving at table. Mmm! if his Lordship knew about that, he'd make hash out of the boy!

SUZANNA. You're a low-down gossip!

BASILIO. I'm just telling you what everybody's saying.

COUNT. [*Springing from behind the chair*] Indeed!

SUZANNA. Oh heavens!

BASILIO. [*Near collapse*] Ah-h-h!

COUNT. Find that boy, Basilio, and get rid of him!

BASILIO. Ah! Why did I have to come in here?

SUZANNA. [*Groaning*] Oh, oh!

COUNT. She's fainting. Help her sit down. [*BASILIO and COUNT help Suzanna to chair.*]

SUZANNA. I don't want to sit down.

BASILIO. I was just joking about the page...

COUNT. Send him away at once! The little woman-chaser! I also caught him with the gardener's daughter.

BASILIO. With Fanchette?

COUNT. And in her room.

SUZANNA. Where My Lord had important business, no doubt.

COUNT. A very clever remark. As a matter of fact, I was looking for my drunkard of a gardener, Antonio. [*Pantomiming*] I knock, and finally the door opens. Fanchette looks sheepish, and I become suspicious. I look around the room. Behind the door there's a curtain which forms a kind

of clothes closet. Slowly, very slowly, I lift the curtain [*he lifts the dress on the chair to illustrate his actions*] —and what do you suppose I find? [*He sees Cherubin huddled in the chair.*] Ai!

BASILIO. Ha! ha!

COUNT. Not again! [*To Suzanna*] Admirably done, señorita. But I won't permit Figaro, a man I esteem and love, to be the victim of such a deception. I'll see him married to Marcelina instead!

SUZANNA. He came in merely to ask me to get her Ladyship to save him from your anger. When he heard you coming, he hid.

COUNT. That's a sorry explanation. I sat in that chair when I came in....

CHERUBIN. Alas, Señor, by then I was shivering behind it.

COUNT. Another lie! I was just behind it myself.

CHERUBIN. Pardon, sir, but that's when I buried myself in it....

COUNT. That little snake! He heard everything we said!

CHERUBIN. On the contrary, Señorío, I tried my best not to hear anything;

COUNT. Bah! [*He threatens to strike CHERUBIN, who runs out. To Suzanna*] You'll never marry Figaro, I promise you! [*To Basilio*] Find Marcelina! [*He storms out followed by Basilio.*]

COUNTESS. [*Entering. She apparently has heard the last few words*] What has happened, Suzanna? Was he trying to make love to you?

SUZANNA. I have never kept secrets from you, Señoría Rosina.

COUNTESS. And my husband ended by telling you—

SUZANNA. That if I don't meet him in the garden tonight, he will help Marcelina marry Figaro.

COUNTESS. I'm no longer the Rosina he wooed so energetically in Seville. I'm the poor Countess Almaviva, the sad, forsaken wife he no longer loves.



SUZANNA. Then why is he so jealous?

COUNTESS. Like all husbands, my dear—only for pride. Ah, I have loved him too completely. But I won't let him hurt you—you shall marry Figaro. [*She considers the problem. She reaches a decision.*] The Count shall have his rendezvous in the garden tonight.

SUZANNA. But Señoría, I'm certainly not going to meet him....

COUNTESS. Instead of you—suppose I were to go myself?

SUZANNA. You, Señora?

COUNTESS. I'm tempted to try it...in the darkness...in your clothes and a mask...it would punish the Count's jealousy and prove his infidelity...I'll do it! Tell him that you'll be in the garden. But tell no one else—not even Figaro. Let's go to the terrace and make our plans.

SUZANNA. My Lady, it's a charming scheme. My marriage is certain now! [*They exit*]

COUNT. [*Entering*] Where is that scoundrel Figaro. I told him to meet me here. [*He turns sharply upon hearing something.*] Who's that?

FIGARO. [*Entering*] Me.

COUNT. It takes the servants longer to dress than their masters.

FIGARO. Because they have no servants to help them.

COUNT. I'm told that little puppy, Cherubin, has been a bit too friendly with my wife. Do you think she would play tricks on me?

FIGARO. You know better than I do, sir.

COUNT. I try to give her everything she could want.

FIGARO. You give her everything she wants except your fidelity. Are we grateful for luxuries from one who deprives us of necessities?

COUNT. Why can't you ever give a straight answer! A detestable reputation!

FIGARO. What if I were better than my reputation? How many noblemen could say as much?

COUNT. A hundred times I've seen you headed for a fortune, but you never get there. With your brains you could advance rapidly in public office....

FIGARO. Brains an aid to advancement! Your Lordship is joking. Mediocrity and flattery—those qualities will take a man anywhere.

COUNT. If you would let me teach you a little politics...

FIGARO. I know politics: promise everybody everything; pretend to know big secrets; make unimportant matters seem tremendously important; employ spies and pension traitors; intercept letters; and try to hide your feeble abilities by exaggerating your accomplishments. If that's not all there is to politics, I'll be hanged.

COUNT. You are defining intrigue...oh, well. I suppose you hope to win your case against Marcelina?

FIGARO. Do you call it a crime for me to refuse an old maid when Your Excellency permits himself to keep us away from the young ones?

COUNT. In court a magistrate forgets his own desires and considers only what the law tells him.

FIGARO. Easy on the strong, hard on the weak!

COUNT. Do you think I'm joking?

FIGARO. Ah! Who knows, Señor? Was that all Your Excellency wanted?

COUNT. What? No. We'll have Marcelina's hearing in this room. Arrange it.

FIGARO. [*Looking around*] Not much more is needed. The big armchair for you, a stool for the judge, a bench for the lawyers, the floor for the gentry, and the rabble behind. I'll get the bench. [*Exit*]

COUNT. The scoundrel embarrassed me. In conversation he surrounds you and smothers you. I'll never let him marry her....

[*Enter SUZANNA, out of breath. She runs into the Count.*]

SUZANNA. Señorío—I'm sorry, sir!

COUNT. What's your hurry, señorita?

SUZANNA. My mistress has the vapours. I was running to borrow your smelling-salts. I'll bring them right back.

COUNT. [*Giving her a bottle*] You'd better keep them. You may need them soon yourself.

SUZANNA. Do you think women of my class have the vapours?

COUNT. I thought perhaps a bride very much in love—about to lose her groom...

SUZANNA. But when I pay Marcelina with the dowry that you promised me...

COUNT. I promised?

SUZANNA. [*Lowering her eyes*] Sir, I thought you intended...

COUNT. Yes, if you really were interested in my intentions...

SUZANNA. [*Eyes still lower*] Is it not my duty to obey Your Excellency?

COUNT. Why, then, cruel girl, haven't you said so before?

SUZANNA. Is it ever too late for the truth?

COUNT. Will you meet me in the garden at dusk?

SUZANNA. Don't I walk there every evening?

COUNT. Why did you treat me so coldly this morning?

SUZANNA. This morning?—with the page behind the chair?

COUNT. She's right—I had forgotten. But why were you so obstinate when Basilio gave you my messages?

SUZANNA. Who wants a Basilio?

COUNT. Right again. However, there's a certain Figaro whom I fear you may have told everything.

SUZANNA. Why certainly I tell him everything—except what he ought not to know.

COUNT. What a charming creature! But, if you go back on your word—let's understand each other, my love: no rendezvous, no dowry, no marriage.

SUZANNA. But also—no marriage...no *droit du seigneur*, Señor.

COUNT. Where does she get her cleverness! Oh, I can't wait! But your mistress needs the smelling-salts.

SUZANNA. [*Laughing and returning the bottle*] Didn't I need some excuse to talk to you?

COUNT. Delicious creature!

SUZANNA. Someone's coming. [*Runs out*]

COUNT. [*Watching her go*] Tonight—grff!

[*DON GUZMAN and his clerk, DOBLEMANO, enter, followed by FIGARO carrying a bench.*]

COUNT. Wearing your robe, Don Guzman? This is only a case involving a couple of servants. Street clothes would have sufficed. [*To Figaro*] Let the people enter.

[*MARCELINA, BARTOLO, ANTONIO, and the PEOPLE OF THE COURT and the USHER enter.*]

DOBLEMANO. [*Reading from a legal document*] Barbara-Marcelina-Nicola-Adelina de Verte-Allure, spinster, versus Figaro—baptismal name omitted.

FIGARO. Anonymous.

GUZMAN. *Anonymous?* Which patron saint is that?

FIGARO. Mine.

DOBLEMANO. Versus Anonymous Figaro. Rank?

FIGARO. Gentleman.

COUNT. A gentleman? You!

FIGARO. If Heaven had willed, I would have been the son of a prince. [*PEOPLE react*]

COUNT. Continue.

USHER. Silence in the Court!

DOBLEMANO. [*To Bartolo*] Step forward, Doctor, and read the promise of marriage. [*PEOPLE react*]

GUZMAN. Silence then, please! [*Babbling continues*]

DOBLEMANO. Silence, gentlemen! [*Babbling continues*]

USHER. Silence! [*Babbling ceases*]

BARTOLO. [*Reads*] "I the undersigned hereby acknowledge having received from the said Marcelina de Verte-Allure the sum of two thousand piastres which sum I will repay on demand and I will marry her proforma," etc., etc. Signed Figaro.

FIGARO. Your Honor, there was malice, error, or negligence in the reading, for the paper does not say, "which sum