

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Italian libretto

by

GIOACHINO FORZANO

English version

by

EDOARDO PETRI

PERSONAGGI

GIANNI SCHICCHI		50 anni	
LAURETTA		21 anni	
I PARENTI DI BUOSO DONATI	}	ZITA detta LA VECCHIA, cugina di Buoso	60 anni
		RINUCCIO, nipote di Zita	24 anni
		GHERARDO, nipote di Buoso	40 anni
		NELLA, sua moglie	34 anni
		GHERARDINO, loro figlio	7 anni
		BETTO DI SIGNA, cognato di Buoso, povero e malvestito,	età indefinibile
		SIMONE, cugino di Buoso	70 anni
		MARCO, suo figlio	45 anni
	LA CIESCA, moglie di Marco	38 anni	
MAESTRO SPINELLOCCIO, medico			
SER AMANTIO DI NICOLAO, notaro			
PINELLINO, calzolaio			
GUCCIO, tintore			

CHARACTERS

	Years		
GIANNI SCHICCHI	50		
LAURETTA	21		
THE RELATIVES OF BUOSO DONATI	}	ZITA, called "The Old Woman," a cousin to Buoso	60
		RINUCCIO, Zita's nephew	24
		GHERARDO, Buoso's nephew	40
		NELLA, his wife	34
		GHERARDINO, their son	7
		BETTO of Signa, a cousin to Buoso, - poor and shabbily clothed, age unguessable.	
		SIMONE, a cousin to Buoso	70
		MARCO, his son	45
	LA CIESCA, Marco's wife	38	
MASTER SPINELLOCCIO, physician			
AMANTIO DI NICOLAO, notary			
PINELLINO, shoemaker			
GUCCIO, a dyer			

LA CAMERA DA LETTO DI BUOSO DONATI

L'azione si svolge nel 1299 in Firenze.

A sinistra di faccia al pubblico la porta d'ingresso; oltre un pianerottolo e la scala; quindi una finestra a vetri fino a terra per cui si accede al terrazzo con la ringhiera di legno che gira esternamente la facciata della casa. Nel fondo a sinistra un finestrone da cui si scorge la torre di Arnolfo. Sulla parete di destra una scaletta di legno conduce ad un ballatoio su cui trovansi uno stipo e una porta. Sotto la scala un'altra porticina. A destra nel fondo il letto. Sedie, cassapanche, stipi sparsi qua e là, un tavolo; sopra il tavolo oggetti d'argento.

BUOSO DONATI'S BEDROOM

The action takes place in 1299, in Florence.

The bed-chamber of Buoso Donati. At left, facing the audience, main entrance; beyond, the landing and staircase; then, a large French window giving access to the terrace which surrounds the front of the house. The terrace has a wooden bannister. On rear left, a very large window through which Arnolfo's tower can plainly be seen. Along right-hand wall, a narrow wooden staircase leads up to a small balcony. A chest of drawers and a door in the gallery. Under the stairs, another small door. To the right, and in the rear, the bed. Chairs, chests, coffers are scattered here and there. A table bearing silverware.

ACT ONE

At the four corners of the bed, four tall candlesticks with four lighted candles.

In front of the bed, a three-branch candelabrum—unlighted. There is sunshine and the glow of candles. It is nine o'clock in the morning.

Through the half open bed-curtains can be seen a red silk drapery covering a body.

Buoso's relatives, kneeling, with their faces buried in their hands, bend down close to the ground. Gherardino, seated on the floor, to the left and near the wall, turns his back to the other relatives, intent at playing with marbles. The relatives form a semi-circle; on the left side of the bed, first of all can be seen the old woman, then Rinuccio, Gherardo and Nella; Betto of Signa remains somewhat isolated in the center because his poverty and his shabby appearance make the other relatives look upon him with contempt. To the right, Ciesca, Marco and Simone are facing the old woman.

From this group rises the customary mumbling sound of prayers. This mumbling is interrupted by sobs, plainly forced and fabricated by a drawing of the breath through the throat. Each time that Betto of Signa takes a chance at a sob, the other relatives raise their faces from between their hands and frown upon Betto. During the mumbled prayers the following exclamations are heard:

THE OLD WOMAN: My poor, poor Buoso!

SIMONE: Poor, poor, poor dear cousin!

RINUCCIO: Poor, poor dear Uncle!

MARCO AND CIESCA: Oh! Buoso!

GHERARDO AND NELLA:
Buoso!

BETTO: My good brother-in-law!...

(He is interrupted by Gherardino letting a chair drop to the floor with a crash, and the relatives, with the excuse of quieting Gherardino throw a formidable "hush" in Betto's face.)

GHERARDO: For days and days I'll shed bitter tears.

(To Gherardino who is pulling at this coat tails, saying something):
Hush!

NELLA: Days, you said? Months!...

(As above):

Hush!

(Gherardino goes to the old woman.)

CIESCA: Months! Why, for years and years!

THE OLD WOMAN: I know I'll weep all my life!

(She pushes Gherardino away, annoyed. She turns to Nella and Gherardo):

Don't bother! Can't you send that child away?

(Gherardo gets up, takes the boy by the hand, and dragging him along, takes him away through the small door at left.)

ALL: Oh! Buoso, Buoso,
From Paradise
See how we mourn for you in your demise!

NELLA *(Betto bending to his left whispers a few words into Nella's ear):*

Impossible!... Truly?

BETTO: 'Tis rumored in Signa.

RINUCCIO *(bending towards Nella, in a lamenting tone):*

What's rumored in Signa?

NELLA: They're saying that....

(She whispers into his ear.)

RINUCCIO *(in a natural voice):*

No...o...o...!

BETTO: 'Tis rumored in Signa!

CIESCA *(bending towards Betto, in a lamenting tone):*

What's rumored in Signa?

BETTO: They're saying that....

(He whispers into her ear.)

CIESCA *(in her natural voice):*

No...o...o...!

Marco, you know

What's rumored in Signa?

They're saying that....

(She whispers into his ear.)

MARCO: What-a-at?....

BETTO: 'Tis rumored in Signa.

THE OLD WOMAN *(in a lamenting tone):*

Can't we all know now

Whatever may be

That's rumored in Signa?

BETTO: There are many rumors...
Half words here and there...
 For instance, somewhere
 Someone did declare:
 "If old man Buoso now gives up his ghost
 The convent and the monks will get the most"....
 Another said:.... "I know that in his will
 He has left to the monks even his mill"....!

SIMONE (*in the middle of this narrative has also gotten up to listen
 with the others*):

Indeed?... And who said it?
 BETTO: 'Tis rumored in Signa.

SIMONE: 'Tis rumored in Signa?....

ALL: 'Tis rumored in Signa!

(*A pause. Though still kneeling, the relatives now keep their
 bodies erect.*)

GHERARDO: Oh! Simone!

CIESCA: Simone!

THE OLD WOMAN: Speak! You are the oldest here....

MARCO: You who have been town sheriff all this year!....

THE OLD WOMAN: What's your opinion?

SIMONE (*thinks a while, then with an air of gravity*):

If Buoso's will was filed in the town hall
 There is no hope for us, at all!
 But if by mere good luck
 The will is in this room
 The flower of our hopes again might bloom!

ALL: If Buoso's will is hidden in this room
 The flower of our hopes again might bloom!

(*Instinctively, they all jump to their feet. Simone and Nella move
 towards the chest of drawers up stage. The old woman, Ciesca
 and Marco rush to the coffer down front, along right hand wall.
 Gherardo, who returns without the boy, joins Simone and Nella.
 Rinuccio goes towards the chest on top of the stairs.*)

RINUCCIO: Oh Laretta, Laretta, my sweetheart
 Let's hope from now on we'll never part!

(*A feverish search for the will. Rustling of parchments being
 thrown in haste and confusion. Betto, chased away by everybody,
 wanders about the room, when, suddenly, his glance falls upon
 the silver tray bearing on top a silver seal and silver scissors.
 Cautiously, he stretches his hand towards the tray. But from up
 stage at this moment comes a false alarm from Simone who thinks
 he has found the will.*)

SIMONE: Ah!....

(All turn around. Betto has an innocent look upon his face. Simone, scanning a parchment more closely):

No!.... I'm wrong!

(The search starts again. Betto grabs the seal and scissors; he rubs them hard on the cloth of his sleeve after first breathing hard upon them several times. He examines them critically and puts them in his pocket. He is now slowly pulling the tray towards himself; but an exclamation from the Old Woman makes all turn around.)

THE OLD WOMAN: Ah!....

(She scans a parchment more closely):

No. I'm wrong!

(The search starts again. Betto grabs the tray and puts it under his coat, holding it tight in place with his arm.)

RINUCCIO: We're saved!

(Reading from a roll of parchment):

"The last will of Buoso Donati."

(All rush towards him with outstretched hands to grab the will, but Rinuccio, holding the parchment tightly in his left hand, raises his right to stop the avalanche of relatives who, burning with impatience, cannot keep still.)

Aunt, 'tis I who found the will!....

As a recompense, tell me....

Ah, tell me if Uncle Buoso—poor Uncle!

Has made me legatee;

If we find all of us suddenly rich,

On this joyous occasion

Would you consent that I should marry

Lauretta, Schicchi's fair daughter?

That thought would make me happier on this day

And I could make her mine the first of May!

ALL *(except the Old Woman)*:

All right!

All right!

There's time to talk it over!

Come, come, show us the will!

What do you fear?

We're all on pins and needles waiting here!

RINUCCIO: Aunt!

THE OLD WOMAN: If in that will there be no hitch

I leave you free to wed even a witch!

RINUCCIO

Uncle Buoso who cared so much for me
No doubt has left me there enough for three!

(to Gherardino who comes back):

Run, run to Gianni Schicchi
Tell him to come right over with his girl
As Rinuccio's poor head is in a whirl!

(Giving him two coins):

These pennies will be handy
For you to buy some candy!

(Gherardino rushes out.)

(*Rinuccio hands the will to Zita; all follow Zita who moves towards the table. She looks for the scissors to cut the ribbons around the roll, but she finds neither the scissors nor the tray. She looks around, scanning the faces of the other relatives. Betto's expression is incredible! Zita tears the ribbon off with her fingers. She unrolls the parchment from which a second roll appears—the one containing the will.*)

THE OLD WOMAN (reading):

"To my dear cousins
Zita and Simone!"

SIMONE: Dear, dearest Buoso!

THE OLD WOMAN: Dear, dearest Buoso!

SIMONE: (*In an impulse of gratitude lights the three candles on the candelabrum*):

All these three candles
Will burn for thee!
Melting 'till ended
Inside the lee!
Rest thou in peace
Dear, dearest Buoso!

ALL (*whispering*):

Dear, dearest Buoso!
—I hope he has bequeathed me this house!
—The old saw-mills of Signa!
—And then his mule!
—I hope he has bequeathed....

THE OLD WOMAN: Hush! it's open!

(*Behind the old woman standing close to the table, the relatives press on top of each other as tight as they can. Marco and Betto have climbed on a chair. All their faces can plainly be seen, absorbed in the reading of the will. All mouths can be seen moving as when people read without emitting actual sounds. Suddenly, a cloud overshadows all faces.... until they take a tragic look.... till the old woman fairly drops on the stool placed in front of the desk. Simone is the first of the petrified group to move; he turns around and seeing the three candles he had lighted a few moments before, blows on them and puts them out; he drops the bed curtains completely, then he puts all the candles out. Slowly, the other relatives move towards different chairs and sit down. There they stay, like graven images, eyes wide open and staring straight ahead.*)

- SIMONE: So it was true! The convent and the priest
Will fatten on the wealth of that old beast!
- CIESCA: All the good florins made by theft and lurch
Are now to fill the coffers of the church!
- GHERARDO: Fine trick to cut us off without a thought
To let the monks and nuns feast at will!
- BETTO: I will have to restrain my constant thirst
While the monks drink to the fill!
- NELLA: They will feast in full joy, ever content
And we'll pine in distress, without a cent!
- RINUCCIO: All happiness is stolen thus from me
To fully satisfy the Holy See!
- MARCO: What cheer in the cellars of the convent!
Raise up, ye monks, your heads in prayer bent!
- THE OLD WOMAN: The fat of the whole land will be for you
While we will have to live on watery stew!
Fat squabs and juicy steaks will be your fare!
- SIMONE: Thick mutton chops!
- NELLA: And pork loin....
- MARCO: Fresh-killed hare!
- BETTO: And fat pheasants!
- ALL: Yes, pheasants and spring chickens!
- RINUCCIO: Of course, who could forget that tasty bite!
- THE OLD WOMAN: And with your cheeks so rubicund and bloated
Full of health by Donati's gold promoted
You will laugh in our faces: ah! ah! ah!
They thought they would inherit! ah! ah! ah!
Those fool Donati geese! ah! ah! ah!
- ALL (*all rise, pointing at each other. With poisoned laughter*):
Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!
See, there goes a Donati!
—See him down there?
He thought he'd be for sure his Uncle's heir!
Ah! ah! ah! ah!
Ah! ah! ah! ah!

(*Bursting with anger, with clenched fists*):

Yes, yes, we know you smile amid your prayers
At the wonderful joke on Buoso's heirs!

(Again they sit down with a thump. A pause. A few are now really weeping.)

THE OLD WOMAN: Who would ever have thought
When Buoso his last journey would be taking
We would be crying and sobbing without faking!

VOICES: Couldn't we find any scheme....
—To change that will....
To upset it....
—To alter it!....
Oh! Simone! Simone!

THE OLD WOMAN: You are the oldest here!

MARCO: You who have been town-sheriff all this year!

SIMONE *(makes a gesture as if to say: Impossible!)*

RINUCCIO: I know there's but one man
Who could advise this clan....
And who might save us....

ALL: Who?....

RINUCCIO: Gianni Schicchi!
(They all make a gesture of disappointment.)

THE OLD WOMAN: Of Gianni Schicchi
And his fair daughter
You will do well to speak no more!
No more I say!....

GHERARDINO *(rushing in out of breath, yells at the top of his voice):*
He's on his way!

ALL: Who?....

GHERARDINO: Gianni Schicchi!

THE OLD WOMAN: Who sent for him?

RINUCCIO: I sent for him
Because I hoped....

A FEW
This is not the
moment to have
Gianni Schicchi
come here and
bother us!

THE OLD WOMAN
(stopping him short)
Look here! if he
comes!
I will surely kick
him down-stairs!

GHERARDO
(to Gherardino)
You are to take
orders from no
one but your
father! There!
there!

*(He spansks Gherardino
and throws him into
the room to the right
on top of the stairs.)*

Gianni Schicchi and Lauretta

GIANNI (*stops on the threshold and looks around at the relatives*):
 (To judge from their air so grave and sad
 Buoso Donati's state can't be so bad!)

RINUCCIO
 (to Lauretta, between the
 landing and the door)

(*Gianni slowly moves towards the Old Woman, who turns her back on him. Coming further front he notices the candelabra around the bed!*)

Lauretta!

Rino!

—My dear sweetheart!
 —Why pale and haggard?
 —What piercing dart!
 —Do speak, I beg you!
 —My dear sweetheart
 —What cruel dart!
 —What cruel dart!

GIANNI

Ah!
 He's dead!
 Why this air of solemn vesper? (*aside*):
 They are all better actors than a jester!

(*low, falsely*)

I comprehend your grief at such a loss!
 I feel it heart and soul!

GHERARDO: It wasn't a partial loss, it was the whole!

GIANNI (*like a person saying anything coming to his mind*):

Well!... in these matters!... Well, what can
 you do?...

In this old world, so vain,
 If you lose on one side
 You still may gain...

(*Annoyed at seeing them playing their part in front of him*):

You lose your Buoso
 And find his hoarded money!

THE OLD WOMAN (*rushing towards him like a wild beast*):
 All for the convent!

GIANNI: Oh, what a portent!

THE OLD WOMAN: It is a portent, yes it is a portent!
 That's why I tell you now;
 Go home with your fair daughter
 Go away, go away from here
 For I won't let my nephew
 Get married to a pauper!

RINUCCIO
 My aunt I am in love!

LAURETTA
 Father, father, I love him!

THE OLD WOMAN
 Well, I don't give a rap!

GIANNI
 More pride, my little dove!

GIANNI (*bursting with indignation*):

So for the greed that stills thy vile old heart!
Thy nephew from my girl wouldst tear apart!
Thou mean old wretch!

LAURETTA

RINUCCIO

(*Each stretching towards the other the arm they have free*):

Rinuccio, do not leave me!
Remember our great bliss!
When one bright night in Fiesole
I did consent to a kiss!

Lauretta, dear, remember!
You promised to be true
And that bright night, all Fiesole
Was singing, dear, of you!

(*together*):

Farewell, oh fondest hope,
Extinguished is thy ray;
We can't be joined together
Upon the first of May!

(*escapes and rushes to him*)

Papa, I want him!
Papa, I want him!
Sweetheart!

(*escapes and rushes to Lauretta*)

My aunt, I want her!
My aunt, I want her!
Sweetheart!

GIANNI

ZITA

(*pulling his daughter towards
the door*)

Miserly woman!
Mean, avaricious!
You greedy wench!

Come, come, Lauretta
Dry quick your dearest eyes,
This match would surely cost you
Far more sighs!

Come on, child, come!

(*taking back his daughter*)

More pride, my dove!
More pride, my dove!

Come, I say, we must go!

(*pulling Rinuccio to the right*)

Stop your cheap insults!
Without a dowry
I will say no!
I will say no!

Rinuccio, come
Stop all that nonsense!
I'm sure you cannot love her!
Nonsense! Nonsense!

Come, Rino, come!

(*taking back Rinuccio*)

You're not in love!
You're not in love!

Come, I say, we must go!

(*The relatives remain neutral and content themselves with a few exclamations now and then.*)

THE RELATIVES: —Who cares to listen to quarrels of lovers!
—Oh! what a pill! —Let's see about the will!

(Gianni, almost at the door, moves to drag Laurette away.)

RINUCCIO *(freeing his hand from his aunt's grasp)*:

Master Giovanni!
Will you please wait a moment?

(To the old woman):

Instead of losing your temper
Show him that testament!

(To Gianni):

Do see if you can help us!
I know you will invent
Some device, a new scheme, a trap, a plot
A way out of this mess: I know you can!

GIANNI: *(pointing to the relatives)*:

To help that crowd? No sir, I'm not the man!

LAURETTA *(kneeling in front of him)*:

Oh, my beloved Daddy
He's handsome as a King
I'm going to Porta Rossa
To buy our wedding-ring!

Yes, father, I do mean it!
And if you still say no
I swear from Ponte Vecchio
I'll throw myself below!

What shivers! What a chill!
Poor me, I want to die!

(She weeps.—A pause.)

GIANNI *(in the tone of a man who feels constrained to condescend)*:

Give me Donati's will!

(Rinuccio hands it to him. Gianni reads it as he paces up and down the room. The relatives first follow him with their eyes, then, unconsciously, start walking in his foot-steps, like chicks after a hen, with the exception of Simone who remains seated on the bench to the right and shakes his head doubtfully. Great anxiety prevails.)

GIANNI: It can't be done!

(The relatives leave Schicchi and move up stage.)

RINUCCIO AND LAURETTA :

Farewell, oh fondest hope
Extinguished is thy ray
We cannot be united
Upon the first of May!

GIANNI: It can't be done!

(At this, all the relatives drop again upon their chairs with a thud.)

RINUCCIO AND LAURETTA :

Farewell, oh fondest hope,
Extinguished is thy ray....

GIANNI *(in a thundering voice)* :

And yet!...

(All the relatives jump to their feet and rush towards Gianni.)

RINUCCIO AND LAURETTA :

Perhaps we will be wedded
Upon the first of May!

GIANNI *(stops in the center of stage a frown upon his face, as if in hot pursuit of an idea. He makes quiet gestures, looking straight ahead. All the relatives crowd around him, Simone included. As Gianni towers above them, the relatives keep their faces upturned to him, like chicks awaiting their food. Slowly, Gianni's face becomes severe, he smiles and looks down at the crowd around him....He stands tall, dominating, imposing.)*

ALL *(almost in a whisper)* :

Do tell us!

GIANNI *(in a child-like voice)* :

Laurettina!
Go out, my darling daughter
And bring the little birdie bread and water!

(As Rinuccio moves to follow her, Gianni stops him) :

Alone.—

(Lauretta goes out onto the terrace on the left. Gianni follows her with his eyes, and, as soon as the girl has disappeared, he turns to the group of relatives crowding around him) :

Who knows outside
That he gave up his ghost?

ALL: No one!

GIANNI: Good! Again I say
No one is to be told!

ALL: No one will know a thing.

GIANNI (*seized by a doubt*):
And the servants?

THE OLD WOMAN (*in a meaning tone*):
Since he became unconscious
No one has entered here!

GIANNI (*to Marco and Gherardo, his mind now at ease and fully made up*):

You two will bring the dead man with those candles.

(*Pointing to the stairs*):

In yonder room o'erlooking Buoso's shed!

(*to Ciesca and Nella*):

And you will make the bed!

THE WOMEN: But...

GIANNI: Hush! Do what I say!

(*Marco and Gherardo disappear under the bed-curtains and come out again carrying a long red bundle which they bring to the right to the room under the stairs. Simone, Betto and Rinuccio carry the candelabra away. Ciesca and Nella re-arrange the bed. There is a knock at the door.*)

GIANNI (*very much put out, in a stifled voice*):
What's that?... Who might it be?

THE OLD WOMAN (*in a whisper*):
'Tis Master Spinelloccio
The physician!...

GIANNI: Don't let him get in here!
Give him some excuse....
Tell him Buoso's now taking a quiet rest....

(*Betto goes to the window, and by closing the shutter makes the room almost dark. All crowd around the door and hold it barely ajar.*)

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO (*with a foreign accent*):
May I come in?

ALL: Good morning,
Good Master Spinelloccio!
He's better!

—Better!

—Better!

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO: Did he get full relief?...

ALL: You bet he did! You bet!....

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO: What wondrous height
Has now reached Science's light!
Well, let's see him, let's see him!

(*He moves to enter.*)

ALL (*stopping him*):
No! he's sleeping!

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO (*insisting*):
But I...

GIANNI (*half hidden behind the bed-curtains and imitating Buoso's quavering voice*):

No! no! no! Master Spinelloccio!

(*At the sound of the dead man's voice, all the relatives start with fright, but they soon realize it is Gianni imitating Buoso's voice. However, in his fright, Betto has let the silver tray fall to the floor.*)

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO: Oh! Master Buoso!

GIANNI: Doctor,
I feel so tired and sleepy...
Couldn't you return to see me some time to-night?
Yes, as late as you can....

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO: So, Master Buoso....
You feel better?

GIANNI: I feel like a new man!
'Till to-night!

MASTER SPINELLOCCIO: 'Till to-night
(*To the relatives*):

Even his voice now seems clearer and high!

It is a fact, my patients never die!
Praise I am not begging here
All credit must be given
To our school which has no peer!

Until to-night!

ALL: 'Till to-night, Doctor!
'Till to-night!

(Exit Spinelloccio. The window is thrown open again; the relatives turn towards Gianni.)

GIANNI: Was it well imitated?

ALL: To perfection!

GIANNI: Then the battle is won!
Understand ye?

ALL: No! No!

GIANNI: You are thick-headed!
One rushes to the notary:

(Very fast, almost breathless):

"Master notary, quick!
Come to Buoso Donati's
He is as white as wax and very still!
He wants to make his will!
And bring along with you parchment and seal!
Come, my good sir, for Buoso is near death!

(in a natural tone):

He yields to this appeal.

(picturesquely):

Here, in this room, darkness prevails
Buoso's face is just visible
There, amongst the white veils!
A white cap
On Buoso's head
His chin and mouth
Covers the spread!
Between the cap and the white spread, a nose
Which is not Buoso's nose, but mine instead....
Because it's me that lies in Buoso's bed!

Gianni Schicchi with Buoso's form and voice!
I will impersonate Buoso Donati!
And make a will according to your choice!
O friends, this quaint and bright and great invention
A pure offspring of my imagination
Never had any equal in this world!

ALL *(as if choked by emotion and unable to express their feelings):*

—Schicchi!!!!

(they kiss his hands):

—Schicchi!!!!

—Schicchi!!!!

(they kiss his hands):

—Schicchi!!!!

—Schicchi!!!!

—Schicchi!!!!

—Schicchi!!!!

—Schicchi!!!!

THE OLD WOMAN (*to Rinuccio*):

You run and fetch the notary!

(*Exit Rinuccio in haste.*)

THE RELATIVES (*kissing and embracing each other with great effusion*):

—Dearest Gherardo!

—Oh Marco!

—Oh Ciesca!

—Oh Nella

—Zita! Zita!

—Simone!

GIANNI:

How much they love each other!

• ALL:

Oh! happiest of our born days
The joke is on the convent!
We couldn't be more content!
How beautiful is love among relations!

SIMONE:

Now Gianni, let us settle
The question of division:
All cash in hand will go....

ALL:

In equal shares!

(*Gianni keeps on nodding assent.*)

SIMONE:

To me the farmlands
Of Fucecchio.

THE OLD WOMAN:

For me those of Figline.

BETTO:

For me the farm of Prato.

GHERARDO:

For us the lands of Empoli.

MARCO:

For us all those of Quintole.

THE OLD WOMAN:

That would leave undivided:
The mule, this ancient palace
And the saw mills of Signa!

MARCO:

The best of the whole lot!

(*A pause. The relatives begin to eye each other askance.*)

SIMONE (*simulating ignorance*):

Oh! I see now! I see now!
Being the oldest here
And having been town-sheriff for a year
You say they'll be for me! Thank you! Thank you!

THE OLD WOMAN: No, no, no, wait a moment!
If you are old, so much worse for you!

MARCO AND OTHERS:
With his modesty he gives us a thrill!
He'd claim the fattest share in the new will!

GIANNI	ALL	are all for me
(<i>aside</i>)	The palace, the mule, the saw mills of Signa	are all for us
How lasting is love	The mule, the saw mills of Signa, the palace	are all for us
among relatives.	The mule, the palace, the saw mills of Signa	are all for us
(<i>he laughs</i>)	Of Signa the saw mills, the mule, the palace	are all for me
	The mule, the saw mills of Signa, the palace	are all for me
	The palace....	
	of Signa....	
	the mule....	
	the saw mills....	

(*The slow and mournful pealing of a bell announces that someone is dead. All stop shouting and exclaim*):

How did they know?

(*With stifled voices*):

How did they learn he'd given up his ghost?

(*Gherardo rushes out of the room and rushes down-stairs.*)

GIANNI: The game is lost!

LAURETTA (*peeping in from left*):

Papa, what do you think
Of the bird. He now refuses to eat!

GIANNI (*nervously*):
Well, give him now a drink!

(*Lauretta goes out again.*)

GHERARDO (*comes again panting and out of breath. He cannot speak, but motions "no" with his head.*)

...A stroke has just brought down
The moorish major-domo
Of the mayor of the town!

ALL (*gaily*):

Requiescat in pace!

SIMONE (*with an air of authority*):

As to the house, the mule and the saw mills
I move to leave that matter
To the high sense of fairness of Gianni Schicchi!

ALL: We leave it all to Schicchi.

GIANNI: Just as you say!
Give me the clothes! I must get ready quick!

*(The old woman and Nella take from the wardrobe and the chest,
on the other side of the bed, a nightcap, a lace handkerchief and
a night-gown.)*

THE OLD WOMAN: Here is the night cap for you!
(aside to Schicchi):

If you leave me the mule
The palace and the mills
Of Signa,
You will get thirty florins!

SCHICCHI: You'll get them!

(The old woman moves towards the wardrobe rubbing her hands.)

SIMONE (*drawing near Gianni with an air of nonchalance*):

If you leave me this house
The mule and the saw mills
Of Signa,
You'll get a hundred florins!

BETTO (*to Schicchi, afraid of being noticed*):

Gianni, if you leave me
This palace with the mule and all the saw mills
I'll fill with gold your pocket 'till it spills!

(Meanwhile, Nella is talking aside to Gherardo.)

GIANNI: You'll get them!
(Ciesca is now talking aside to Marco.)

NELLA (*moving away from Gherardo who follows her with his eyes
while she speaks to Schicchi*):

Here is a bit of old lace!
If you leave us the mule
We'll make you as rich and fat as the old miller!
All the saw mills of Signa and this villa

GIANNI: You'll get them!

*(Nella returns near Gherardo and whispers something in his ear.
All are rubbing their hands gleefully.)*

CIESCA: And here is the night-gown!
If you leave us the mule
The saw mills of Signa and this villa
For you there is a thousand florins!

GIANNI: Good! You'll have them.

(Ciesca goes near to Marco, whispers in his ear and they rub their hands gleefully, as do all the others.)

(Gianni puts on the night-gown. Then, mirror in hand, he arranges the night-cap and chin band, his face changing expression as if to find the right adjustment. Simone is at the window watching for the notary. Gherardo clears up the table for the notary to write on. Marco and Bétto pull the bed-curtains and put the room in order.)

ZITA—NELLA—CIESCA

(first look at Gianni comically, then):

NELLA	CIESCA	THE OLD WOMAN
Undress, dear little tot	Undress, dear little mite	'Tis wondrous! Portentous!
For it is now bed-time	For it is now bed-time	One must fall in this trap!
Don't think it is a crime	If this game comes out right	For who could tell that
To change and wash a lot	You'll get a gingerbread?	Buoso
All birds do change their	An egg becomes a chick	Is not this other chap?
plumage	For flowers become fruit	You hate a fellow's will,
The foxes shed their fur,	Monks eat and grow fat	A long white gown with
The spider spins his web,	But monks will grow poor	frill
The dog seeks a new layer	While Ciesca rich for sure!	A face hard like a mill
And snakes cast their skin		A nose just like a bill
		A voice so weak and still..

...Gianni express
Changes dress
Changes face
Nose and mug
Changes voice
Will and choice
To aid us in this pass!

GIANNI: I'll fix you up all right
And happy you will be!

THE WOMEN: O Gianni Schicchi, our saviour you are!
Does he look the part?

THE MEN: Great!

ALL: To bed, it's late!

(They push Gianni towards the bed, but he stops them with a solemn gesture.)

GIANNI: First, you must heed my warning!
 My dear friends, do be careful!
 And keep in mind this law!
 "Whoever substitutes
 Himself in place of others
 To falsify a will
 Will lose, with his accomplices,
 One hand, and all will have to leave the State."
 So do keep well in mind! In case we are found out
 Do you see there our Florence?

(pointing to Arnolfo's tower which is plainly visible through the open window):

Florence, farewell, farewell, city of charm!
 I wave good-bye with this poor, handless arm!
 My fate is now to beg from farm to farm!

ALL: Florence, farewell, farewell, city of charm!
 I wave good-bye with this poor, handless arm!
 My fate is now to beg from farm to farm!

(A knock is heard at the door. Gianni jumps into the bed, the relatives close the shutters so as to darken the room and place a candle on the table at which the notary is to sit to write out the will. They throw all sorts of things in a heap on the bed and then open the door.)

RINUCCIO: Here is the notary and here the witnesses!

Masters Amantio, Pinellino, Guccio

THE THREE *(sadly)*:

Master Buoso, good day!

GIANNI: Oh! are you here?
 Thank you, Master Amantio!
 O Pinellino, the shoemaker, thank you!
 Thank you, Guccio, the dyer, you are too good
 To come and act as witnesses for me!

PINELLINO *(very much moved, aside)*:

Poor Master Buoso!...
 I have served him for years
 And the state he appears
 To be in, makes me cry!

GIANNI: It was my firm intention to write out
 My own will with my hand
 Paralysis forbids me!... understand....
 Therefore I want a notary.
Solempne et leale....

(*In the meantime the notary has taken from his box parchments, seals, etc., disposing them all on the table.*)

MASTER AMANTIO: Thank you, good Master Buoso!
Are you sure it's paralysis that ails you?

(*Gianni raises his trembling hands from under the covers. A movement of general pity. Several are heard to mutter: "Poor Buoso."*)

Oh! that will do! both witnesses have seen!
"Testes viderunt!"
Let's begin! Do you want these folks to hear?

GIANNI: Yes, yes, they can stay here!

MASTER AMANTIO: Then I'll commence!

In Dei nomini, anno D. N. J. C., al eius salutifera incarnatione millesimo, duecentesimo monagesimo nono, die prima septembris indictione undecima, ego notaro Amantio di Nicolao, civis Florentiae, per voluntatem Buosi Donati scribe hunc testamentum....

GIANNI (*with intention and emphasizing each word*):

*Annollans, revocans
Et irritans aliud testamentum!*

THE RELATIVES: Wonderful foresight!
—Wonderful foresight!

MASTER AMANTIO: First of all, do tell me: about your funeral
(I hope as late as possible)
Must it be grand? Expensive? Impressive?

GIANNI: I haven't that kind of pride!
Two florins you may spend at the outside!

THE RELATIVES: Oh! what modesty!
Oh! what modesty!
Wonderful man! What soul!
—Generous heart!
He's good and smart!

GIANNI: I leave to the monastery
And the order of Santa Reparata....

(*The relatives, somewhat worried, slowly get up*):

Say...five liras!....

THE RELATIVES (*now easy in their minds*):
Splendid! Splendid!
—Tis fair
To keep in mind our duty towards the poor!

- MASTER AMANTIO: Methinks it's a small sum!
- GIANNI: Who leaves a lot of money
For poverty's relief
Will make the people say
"He must have been a thief!"
- THE RELATIVES: What principles!
—What mind!
—What great wisdom!
- MASTER AMANTIO: Wonderful keenness!
- GIANNI: All bonds and cash in hand
I leave in equal shares to my relations!
- THE RELATIVES: Oh! Thank you, uncle!
—Thank you! Thank you, dear cousin!
- GIANNI: To Simone the farm lands of Fucecchio.
- SIMONE: Thank you!
- GIANNI: And to Zita my corn fields of Figline!
- THE OLD WOMAN: Thank you!
- GIANNI: To Betto, Prato's meadows.
- BETTO: Thank you! Thank you!
- GIANNI: To Nella and to Gherardo, Empoli's lands!
- NELLA AND GHERARDO:
Thank you! Thank you!
- GIANNI: To Ciesca and to Marco all in Quintole.
- CIESCA AND MARCO: Thank you!
- ALL (*with clenched teeth*):
Now we get to the mule,
To the house and to the saw mills.
- GIANNI: I leave my own young mule,
For which I paid three hundred florins
And which is the best mule of Tuscany....
To my devoted friend.... Gianni Schicchi.
- THE RELATIVES (*all jumping up at once*):
What's that? What's that? —What's that?

- THE NOTARY: *Mulan relinquat eius amico devoto Joanni Schicchi.*
- ALL: But....
- SIMONE: What use do you suppose
Could be that mule
To Gianni Schicchi?....
- GIANNI: Do please keep quiet, Simone!
I know what things likes best our Gianni Schicchi!
I leave my house in Florence to my dear
Most affectionate and devoted friend,
Gianni Schicchi!

THE RELATIVES

(in an outburst of rage)

- That is too much!
—Not on your life!
—To Gianni Schicchi!
—That cursed rascal!
—We all rebel!
—We all rebel!
—Rather we would....
—We....all....re.... Ah!....
—Ah! Ah! Ah!

GIANNI

Florence, farewell!
.
.
.
Farewell, city of charm....
.
.
.
I wave good-bye
*(At the sound of Gianni's thin,
little voice, all relatives calm
down, fuming.)*

- THE NOTARY: Don't you disturb
The final will
Of Master Buoso!
- GIANNI: Master Amantio, I leave to whom I choose!
That is my will and such it must remain.
If they yell.... I will sing the old refrain!....

GUCCIO AND PINELLINO:
What a wonderful man!

GIANNI *(continuing his dictation)*:
And the saw mills of Signa....

THE RELATIVES: Yes, the saw mills of Signa?

GIANNI: And the saw mills of Signa (farewell, Florence)
Go to my dear.... (farewell, city of charm)
And most devoted friend.... Gianni Schicchi!
(I wave good-bye with this poor, handleless arm!)

And that is all!

(The witnesses and the notary seem rather surprised.)

Zita, from your own purse
 You'll give one hundred florins to the notary
 And twenty to the witnesses!

AMANTIO, PINELLINO, GUCCIO (*no longer surprised*):

O Master Buoso! Thank you!

(*They move towards the bed.*)

GIANNI (*stopping them with a wave of his trembling hand*):

Kind friends! No farewells!

Please be going!

Let's be brave!....

AMANTIO, GUCCIO, PINELLINO (*very much upset move towards the door*):

What a wonderful man!... It's a real pity!

What a loss!... What a loss!

(*To the relatives*):

Take heart, good people!

(*exeunt.*)

(*As soon as the notary and his witnesses have gone out, the relatives at first remain quiet a moment listening to the vanishing footsteps of the three men. Then, all, with the exception of Rinuccio, who has rushed out to join Lauretta on the terrace.*)

THE RELATIVES (*with hissing voices at first, then with ferocious yells*):

Robber! Robber! Vile scoundrel!

Traitor! Traitor! Cheap counsel!

Imposter! Robber! Robber!

(*They all rush in a mass towards Gianni, who, standing on the bed, defends himself as best he can. They tear his night-gown to shreds.*)

GIANNI: You miserly lot! Without a good dowry

I won't consent!

I won't consent!

There is a dowry now!

There is a dowry now!

(*Grabbing Buoso's stick hanging from a bed post, he wields it around with wonderful effect*):

Get out, ye swine!

This house is mine!

This house is mine!

ALL: —Let's rummage!— Yes, let's pillage!

—Let's grab all we can!

—The fine silverware!
 —Silk, velvets and linen!
 —Let's rummage! Come, let's pillage!
 —Let's grab all we can!
 Ah! ah! ah!

(The relatives run around here and there pursued by Gianni. They steal all that comes under their hands. Gherardo and Nella go up stairs and come back laden with loot. Gianni does all he can to prevent the relatives from carrying away too much. All, as they have their arms full crowd around the door and rush downstairs. Gianni runs after them. The stage remains empty.)

RINUCCIO *(way up stage, opens the large window. Florence appears, bathed in glorious sunshine. The two lovers remain on the terrace)*:

Lauretta, my dear Lauretta!
 This house will be our own!
 Behold our radiant Florence!
 Fiesole is beautiful!

LAURETTA: You promised love eternal!
 RINUCCIO: I begged a kiss!
 LAURETTA: Yes, my first kiss!
 RINUCCIO: All white and trembling
 You turned your face....

(together):

And Florence in the valley,
 Looked like a Paradise!

(They embrace and remain up-stage clasped in each other's arms.)

GIANNI *(returns, laden with bundles which he throws on the floor)*:
 That pack of thieves have fled!

(Suddenly he stops. Seeing the two lovers, he is sorry for having been noisy, but the young people do not seem to mind. Gianni's face is smiling. Very much moved, he comes to the footlights, cap in hand, and pointing to the lovers.)

(Taking leave of the audience, without singing)

Tell me, Ladies and Gentlemen,
 Whether you could imagine
 A better use for Buoso's hoarded money!
 For my trick, those good men
 Have sent my soul to Hades.... well, amen!
 But, giving Dante credit for this plot
 If a good time has been to-night your lot
 I hope to learn your verdict is....

(Makes motion of applause):

....not guilty!

(He bows gracefully to the audience.)

CURTAIN