

# **THE BARTERED BRIDE**

*Music by*  
Bedřich Smetana

*English Version by*  
Donald Pippin  
(1993)

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

<b>Marenka</b>	a village girl
<b>Kruschina</b>	a villager, father of Marenka
<b>Ludmila</b>	Kruschina's wife, Marenka's mother
<b>Tobias Micha</b>	a landowner
<b>Hata</b>	his wife
<b>Vasek</b>	their son
<b>Jenik</b>	Son of Micha by a former marriage
<b>Kezal</b>	a marriage broker
<b>Circus Director</b>	manager of a traveling circus
<b>Esmeralda</b>	a dancer
<b>Indian</b>	a performer

Villagers, clowns, dancers

# **The Bartered Bride**

*Smetana*

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## **ACT ONE**

Spring has done it again, bursting out with reckless, irrepressible, intoxicating abandon. Magic is in the air. It's holiday time in Bohemia, time to celebrate, time for song and dance. Yet the very two people that we would expect to be leading the revels are not even joining in. Though they have not known each other for long, Marenka and Jenek are obviously made for each other, but a heavy cloud hangs over their future. Their dreams are in grave jeopardy. Who's to blame? The parents, of course. Marenka's father was, to say the least, short-sighted.

Years ago, faced with a financial crisis, he was forced to borrow a substantial sum of money. With a six year old daughter who gives every indication of blossoming into a beauty, why look further for collateral? In short, he signed a contract promising her to the son of the prosperous farmer who came to his rescue. Now a dozen or so years later, the time for repayment has come due, unfortunately at the very time that Marenka, now indeed a beautiful young lady, has displayed a perverse streak of independence by finding on her own the man she wants to marry.

It should be said that even in this rural bastion of traditional family values, the days are happily past when a father had absolute, dictatorial control over his daughter's destiny and could simply have the girl locked up and starved into submission. Still, even in the relatively enlightened era when this opera took place, the vast majority would feel that only the most hardhearted, the most pigheaded, the most ungrateful of daughters would presume to pit her own unripened judgment against his maturity and wisdom, much less defy his express wishes. Ah, you say, but what about the mother? Let's not bring in irrelevancies.

All told, farmer Micha seems to be holding all of the trump cards. Nonetheless, in order to clench the deal, leaving nothing to chance, he has taken the wise and prudent step of enlisting the services of Kezel, the highly capable marriage broker, in fact the best in the entire world. He says so himself.

Furthermore, who is this Jenek anyway, the man that Marenka is so wild about? Does she or anybody else know anything about him? A newcomer in town, is he a drifter, a vagrant, or worse? Has he even got a family? And why the great mystery about his past? Sounds like he has something to hide. One hates to think that Marenka is throwing herself away on a conniving opportunist.

So who is it to be, Jenik or the son of Tobias Micha? Either way, frankly, I don't like the look of it. Yet what can you do but sit back and see what happens?

*Scene: A village, on a spring feast day.*

CHORUS of country folk

Come along, the mood is merry;  
See the budding peach and cherry.  
Love that hovers in the air  
Beckons to the young and fair.

Season full of hope and rapture,  
Youth and beauty in their glory,  
Days of bliss beyond recapture!  
Time unfolds a darker story.

Trials, troubles  
Hurdles lie ahead.  
Love begins to flicker;  
Bored wives boss and bicker;  
Husbands turn to liquor.  
Watch out!

Now's the time, sweet lads and lasses!  
Live your life before it passes.  
Breathe the magic in the air,  
Summoning the young and fair.

Now's the time, sweet lads and lasses,  
Green and tender, young and fair.  
Live your life before it passes,  
Breathe the magic in the air.

JENIK                      Darling, we're together —  
Why so sad and silent?

MARENKA                Our love's on the line.  
Mother broke the news.  
This very day, I'm to meet the man  
Forced on me by my father.  
He won't even listen!

JENIK                      Courage! With our weapons, faith and trust,  
We are bound to win.  
Stay on course and don't be afraid;  
Steadfast hearts cannot be swayed.

CHORUS                    No more weeping, no lamenting!  
Though your father seems unbending,  
Love will find a happy ending.

Come along, the mood is merry;  
See the budding peach and cherry.  
Love that hovers in the air  
Beckons to the young and fair.

Now's the time, sweet lads and lasses,  
Green and tender, young and fair.  
Live your life before it passes;  
Breathe the magic in the air.

Now for dancing, now for singing!  
As the song and dance continue,  
Show us, give it all that's in you.  
Show us! Let's see what you can do.  
Everyone, you and you,  
Show us what you can do.  
Everyone, you and you, you and you.

*(Chorus exits)*

MARENKA                    This hardly is the day I want to dance,  
With so much at stake.

JENIK                        Brace yourself. Who is this foolish fellow  
That wants to buy you?

MARENKA                    Son of a local farmer.  
They together are coming to the house  
To make a bid for my hand,  
And drive a bargain.

JENIK                        And us? Haven't they been told?

MARENKA                    They refuse to hear.  
The farmer has a hold on my father,  
Money borrowed years ago,  
And it's me he's offered up as repayment.  
Things like happiness  
Hardly seem to matter.

JENIK                        Would that I were richer!

MARENKA                    Oh, let's not even speak of money!  
But there's something else,  
Hard for me to put into words.  
Something secretive ...  
At times, my love, you seem a little distant.  
A cloud of sadness comes over you.  
Oh, is there someone you cannot forget —  
A girl who sighs and waits for you back home?

JENIK                        No one! No one!

MARENKA

You are all to me that matters,  
Earth and water, light and air;  
If the golden goblet shatters,  
Tender trust becomes despair.

You arrive, a total stranger,  
From a land of darker skies;  
Yet I fear no threat of danger  
When I gaze into your eyes.  
Never mind who you are or from where.

Yet I long to hear your story,  
Eager to relive and share!  
I long to hear, relive and share.  
Be it hardship, grief or glory,  
Half your burdens I would bear.

Why did you leave your home  
For travel to parts unknown?  
You've barely said a word about  
The story of your life.

JENIK

Unhappy memories  
Far better not to dwell on.  
I was born to blessings in abundance,  
But my dearly beloved mother died.  
Soon thereafter, my father married a second wife,  
Who hated me and turned my father's heart against me.

I was unjustly cast from the house,  
To wander, toil and struggle for my daily bread.  
In the graveyard lay my mother;  
A rough and winding road was I to tread.

JENIK

Cloudless days of childhood happiness were over;  
Only a barren, lonely desert lay ahead.  
Days of childhood games were over;  
Painful years of barren, lonely desert lay ahead.

MARENKA

Cast aside and forced to suffer!  
How rough the road you had to tread!  
Lonesome and long, now it is over;  
Brighter journeys lie ahead.

JENIK

But to hell with my misfortunes!  
For these miseries,  
One kiss is ample compensation.

Turning toward tomorrow,  
Sorrows all will be forgot  
When we are wedded.  
After winter, springtime follows.  
Like a pair of loving swallows,  
High and homeward-headed,  
Light and feather-weighted,

Lucky and elated,  
We shall nest in peace.  
Turning toward tomorrow,  
Married! Sorrows all will be forgot.

MARENKA                   Hush! Watch out!  
Here they come, with the broker.  
The play begins.

JENIK                        Then I'd better not remain ...  
Parting, parting, parting  
Means new pain.  
Think of me until we meet again.

*(They exit)*

*(Kezal, Kruschina, and Ludmila enter)*

KEZAL                        Sir, no argument holds water;  
You signed away your daughter,  
You signed away your daughter  
And today it's time for payment.

On cue, with due respect,  
I come here to collect.  
My purpose I'll pursue  
Until you daughter says, "I do."  
Until you daughter says, "I do."

KEZAL                        Never shifty, never shady,  
Ever in demand;  
And in the service of a lady  
I am ready always  
To lend a hand,  
For with my powers to persuade  
I am the master of my trade.

I've no doubt your grateful daughter  
Will adore the husband who bought her.  
Can she raise the least objection  
To a match of such perfection,  
Such perfection?

As a model marriage-broker  
Of solid record,  
Not merely mediocre,  
I will see that she is suited.

As soon as you agree  
To quite a modest fee,  
My purpose I'll pursue  
Until your daughter says, "I do."  
Until your daughter says, "I do."

Go for the best!  
None but the best do I assist.

No underdogs are on my list.

KRUSCHINA

*(to Ludmila, his wife)*  
You look a little worried;  
I say let's go ahead.

LUDMILA

But why the rush to strike a deal?  
Yes, why so hurried?  
Our daughter's an adult;  
With her at least we should consult.  
For she may harbor reservations;  
Some discomfort she may feel.

KEZAL

Reservations? Reservations? Reservations?  
But it's not for her to say,  
Not for her to say.  
By God, a daughter's duty is to nod  
And obey.

LUDMILA

She might wish a brief inspection  
Of the man she's going to marry.

KEZAL

Look him over? An inspection? An audition?  
Why is that necessary?  
No, a man of his position  
Doesn't need to take a test;  
He is QED the best.  
My word!  
She will not remain unfeeling  
When she learns with whom we're dealing.  
His family! His property! His repute!

Plus a farm he's got a fortune  
Worth a ton of loot,  
In solid gold to boot.  
No more talk, it's time for action,  
First talk, then action!  
For total satisfaction  
We must bring the two together.

By giving me the lead  
Success is guaranteed.  
My purpose I'll pursue  
Until your daughter says "I do."

LUDMILA

When people learn,  
There is bound to be some talk.  
When people learn, they're bound to talk.

KRUSCHINA

(How I'd like to tell him  
Go take a walk.  
I yearn to say go take a walk.)

KEZAL

But remember I've a temper  
When I see somebody balk.

KRUSCHINA           Micha! Never very close, we once were acquainted.  
 By his first wife he had a son,  
 And then another by his second,  
 But neither one nor t'other would I recognize.

KEZAL                   He remembers  
 That agreement you made when you borrowed some money:  
 Your daughter's hand in marriage was the mortgage.

LUDMILA               Do say at least  
 Which of the two sons has the claim on her?

KEZAL                   Glad you ask it.  
 But there is only one that counts: Vasek.  
 Micha's first son took off on his own,  
 And if still alive,  
 He has left no traces.

KRUSCHINA             Well, then, tell us about young Vasek.  
 What has he got that makes him Mister Right?

KEZAL                   A man of substance  
 And solid merit!  
 A farm of fifty fertile acres he'll inherit.

                          Serene and sunny,  
 He's lots of money,  
 And charm to spare;

                          Sweet as candy, mild as bread and water,  
 Made in heaven for your lovely daughter,  
 He's the answer to a mother's prayer.

                          A prize example,  
 A peerless model.  
 He doesn't gamble, stay up late, or hit the bottle.

                          His form, perfection;  
 His clear complexion  
 Beyond compare.

                          Man of vigor, strong and sturdy,  
 Over twenty, under thirty;

                          Disposition sweet and pleasant,  
 Not a yokel, not a peasant;  
 Seldom rough and never rowdy,  
 Says Hello instead of Howdy.

                          Not a loner, not a hermit —  
 Ask a neighbor to confirm it.  
 Keeps the closet neat and tidy,  
 Mass on Sunday, fish on Friday.

Gentle as a lamb or kitten;  
Warmer than a woollen mitten.

Knows and does his duty;  
Never morose or moody,  
He's a father's pride and joy;

KEZAL Firm and resolute,  
Bountiful to boot,  
But deep inside, a starry-eyed  
And simple boy.

KRUSCHINA and LUDMILA  
We're impressed by your approval,  
So sincere and on the level.  
Clearly he's the very one  
We would hope to call a son.

KEZAL Here's Marenka, looking nervous;  
Her discomfort ought to serve us.

KRUSCHINA and LUDMILA  
Here's Marenka  
Looking ill-at-ease and nervous.

*(Marenka enters)*

MARENKA Pardon, father. Pardon, mother.  
Have I kept you waiting?

KEZAL It is you that we were just congratulating!  
Little one, it's time you learn  
Of our affection and concern.  
Coming to the point, without ado,  
We've the man for you!

MARENKA A man I do not even know?

KEZAL Any childish qualm you will soon outgrow.

LUDMILA *(quietly to Marenka)*  
If you do not wish to have him,  
You can just say no.

MARENKA What if I refuse?  
What if I say no?  
I'm the person who must choose,  
And you can tell him so.

LUDMILA You can still refuse,  
You can just say no.  
You're the person who must choose,  
And we shall tell him so.

KRUSCHINA and KEZAL

Do you dare refuse?  
Do you dare say no?  
It's your father who must choose,  
Because we tell you so.

KEZAL

So onward! Go to it!  
Why the hesitation?  
A simple yes will do it,  
And then a honeymoon and wild celebration.

MARENKA

You seem to know what I should do,  
But I may take another view.  
I'm not so impatient, sir, as you.  
Perhaps I have a reason  
Not hard to guess,  
A plain and simple reason why  
I cannot say yes.

KEZAL

Foolish girl! You object?  
Have you lost all respect?  
But tush! My resolve is unshaken.  
Petty hurdles I ignore  
In the middle of a tug of war.

MARENKA

I'll never weaken;  
My heart has been taken.

KRUSCHINA and LUDMILA

She'll never weaken;  
Her heart has been taken.

KEZAL

With support and with some backing  
I can send the fellow packing.

MARENKA

I have made my vow to heaven.

KEZAL

Vows unwritten, merely spoken,  
Born at six and dead at seven.

MARENKA

Mine is one that stays unbroken.

KEZAL

From a list of men so meager  
You were hasty, over-eager.

MARENKA

As I told you before,  
He's the man I adore.

KEZAL

Childish notions we ignore  
When a bidder offers more.  
Notice, by the way,  
I've some cards to play.  
You wait! You wait!  
I rely on cash and cunning  
And can bargain with the best;

I'll send the rascal running,  
Make him fade into the west.

MARENKA and LUDMILA

You deal in cash and cunning  
And can bargain with the best  
Yet we shall send you running  
Fading off into the (far, far) west.

MARENKA

I'm already engaged.  
I've made a sacred promise  
I intend to keep.

KRUSCHINA

This without even asking me!  
Does a father have no rights?  
What if Micha chooses to sue?  
My pledge I cannot go back on.

LUDMILA

No doubt a promise made  
After a round or two.

KEZAL

Nonetheless!  
Here is the contract,  
Duly drawn up by the parties,  
With your signature.

MARENKA

What is that to me?  
I was only six.  
Listen closely:  
I'm the one that shall decide  
If and when to be a bride.

*(She exits)*

KEZAL

What is the world coming to?

KRUSCHINA

You could have been more diplomatic.  
And where's the bride groom?  
You have overlooked a great  
Opportunity.  
To win her over, we should start  
By introducing him.

KEZAL

Later, later! Rather risky to rush it.  
He's ill-at-ease and bashful,  
And allergic it would seem to petticoats.

KRUSCHINA

That could indeed slow down a courtship.

KEZAL

Here's my advice:  
Meet accidentally;  
You might begin by bumping into Micha,  
Maybe at the village inn.  
Here it will be bedlam,  
Hordes of people dancing.  
That other fellow I can handle.

Cash will bring him round.

*(They go their separate ways)*

CHORUS

To your feet, you sturdy folk!  
A perky beat begins the polka.  
After labors, time for leisure;  
Come, good neighbors, cut the measure.

Merry makers here outnumber  
Those who choose to snooze and slumber.  
Who can sit and twiddle thumbs  
To the fiddle and the drums?  
Who can merely twiddle thumbs  
To the fiddle and the drums?

After labors,  
Come, good neighbors!  
You that toil and till the land,  
Take your partner by the hand.

Hearts enkindle, spirits rally;  
Song and sunlight fill the valley.  
Body heat and beat combine,  
Sending shivers down the spine.  
Hearts enkindle, spirits rally;  
Song and sunlight fill the valley.

**End of Act I**

## **ACT II**

Marenka, the sought-after bride, and Kezel, the unstoppable marriage broker, definitely at cross purposes, each decide to take matters into their own hands.

Marenka, dangerously vulnerable to the power of parental pressure, hoping to lop it off at the roots, turns her charm on young Vasek, the shy suitor so eloquently promoted by the marriage broker. Taking advantage of their never having actually met, her plan is to scare him away from the monstrous, malevolent Marenka and the grizzly fate that would follow marriage, and to steer him toward a sweeter solution.

Kezel, whose commission depends upon getting her married to this same shy suitor, turns his own particular brand of charm on Marenka's beloved Jenik, our hero. Or villain. At this point hard to say which.

Hoping to dissuade him, carrying the art of salesmanship to lyric heights, Kezel points out the more enduring value of gold over love, the more tangible satisfaction bestowed by income and property, as personified by a rich and available widow, and caps it off with a simple straight-forward offer to buy him

off. Will he actually succeed in getting this professedly ardent lover to sign the infamous agreement that barter's off his own bride? How low can a man sink?

Before we get too worked up about it, I think we'd better join the boys in the barroom.

*Scene: The village inn.*

CHORUS                   A man has many friends,  
                              But beer's about the best.  
                              Beer's about the best.  
                              A swallow is followed  
                              By vigor and zest.

                              The barley that ferments and mellows  
                              Turns all into jolly good fellows.

                              If down and out or bitter,  
                              Have another beer,  
                              Have another beer.  
                              Here bigger is better  
                              To trigger a cheer.  
                              The bigger the better  
                              To trigger a cheer.

                              We say to each man and his brother,  
                              Drink up and then order another.

JENIK                    Good fellows! I differ.  
                              You've all got it wrong.  
                              In time, you will sing a softer, sweeter song,  
                              And turn to love  
                              For inspiration richer  
                              Than ever found in foaming pitcher.

CHORUS                   Ah! Spoke like a bloke who has seen the true light.  
                              *(pointing to Kezal)*  
                              Stay out of the way of that man on your right.

KEZAL                    Ah! But what if you are poor?  
                              Is love to be the cure?  
                              Will it help you win the fight?  
                              Go for property and money —  
                              These will serve you in the end.  
                              Poverty is not so funny.  
                              Gold, not love, will prove the better friend.  
                              Go for property and money —  
                              Gold, not love, will serve you in the end  
                              And prove the better friend  
                              After all, after all.

CHORUS                   A man has many friends,  
                              But beer is still the best  
                              Beer is still the best.

A swallow is followed  
By vigor and zest.  
The barley that ferments and mellows  
Turns all into jolly good fellows.

If down and out or bitter,  
Have another beer,  
Have another beer.  
Here bigger is better  
To trigger a cheer.  
The bigger the better  
To trigger a cheer.

We say to each man and his brother,  
Drink up and then order another.

KEZAL                    Go for gold, my friend.  
Go for gold and you cannot go wrong.

JENIK                    But love inspires a sweeter song.  
Ah, but love inspires a sweeter song.

*Dance: Furiant*

VASEK (*entering*)    See – see - see here, my son,  
My - my- my mother said,  
Now – now - now twenty one,  
High – high - high time you wed.

She- she - she said I'll not  
Be – be - be satisfied  
Till - till you have got  
Yourself a bride.

You – you've grown up so fast,  
Spr- spr- spread out your wing  
And - and do at last  
The manly thing.

High time you leave the nest,  
And go- go settle down  
Or you'll be, you'll be at best  
The village clown.

Otherwise, no surprise  
If fine local folk  
Start calling you just a joke,  
Start to call you just a joke.

*(Marenka enters)*

MARENKA                So you must be Marenka's fiancé people talk about.

VASEK                    Indeed – indeed I am, but - but how did you know it?

MARENKA                That certain air of polish,

Dash and elegance.  
 Yet the village girls are worried;  
 They fear for your life.

VASEK                    Did you, did you say my life?

MARENKA                Oh, that hussy! She's in love with another  
 And will stop at nothing.

VASEK                    In l- l- love with another?  
 She's m- m- mine!

MARENKA                Ha ha ha ha!  
 I'm told you've not even met?

VASEK                    No - n- not as yet.  
 But but she knows  
 We're getting getting m- m - married.

MARENKA                What's that to her?  
 She's set a trap for you —  
 Oh, the heartless little shrew!  
 And she's concocted  
 A plot to have you murdered.

VASEK                    Me- m- m- m- murdered!  
 If mother only knew!  
 But she has made her made her mind up.  
 I've got to marry that Marenka.

MARENKA                Marry! Go ahead!  
 But why to her?  
*(coquettishly)*  
 Someone else might be more willing.  
 Take a look around.

VASEK                    But where?

MARENKA                There's someone fair, not far away,  
 With warm and tender eyes.  
 While hoping, praying night and day,  
 For you alone she sighs.  
 For you alone she pines and sighs.

VASEK                    Do you mean, you mean for me?  
 Can this be true?  
 Fair, not far away ...  
 I like the sound --  
 How I wish it were you!  
 But that Marenka will get even.

MARENKA                No! She'll gladly settle for her freedom back again.

VASEK                    What will mother say  
 If I disobey?

MARENKA                    Tell her with relief and pride  
You've found a better bride.

VASEK                        How pretty is she?

MARENKA                    Pretty as Marenka.

VASEK                        Is she nice and friendly?

MARENKA                    Nicer far and just as friendly as Marenka.

                                  This person fair, not far away  
                                  With warm and tender eyes.  
                                  While hoping, praying night and day,  
                                  For you alone she sighs.  
                                  For you alone she pines and sighs.

VASEK                        How could it happen?  
Do you mean it? Do do you really mean it:  
Someone out there?  
Wanting me and praying?  
What a surprise!  
O what a wonderful surprise!  
Could it really happen?  
Could it really, really happen?  
A real surprise!  
You're sure I'm the one?  
Are you sure??

MARENKA                    And unless you offer hope,  
                                  Either it's knife or rope.  
                                  Can you be deaf and blind,  
                                  So callous and so unkind,  
                                  By seeming cold as ice  
                                  To a pearl beyond a price  
                                  Who fades away  
                                  While you delay?

VASEK                        Wh- wh- why do you weep?

MARENKA                    For a love that lies so deep.

VASEK                        *(retreating)*  
I'd help if I could,  
But don't think I should.

MARENKA                    Ah! Heartless, cruel coward!  
                                  To leave a love-stricken maid,  
                                  Alone and betrayed,  
                                  By bitter grief devoured!

VASEK                        Still I can't imagine who  
                                  You could be referring to.  
                                  Mercy me, what to do

When I've not got a clue!

No, but I wish it were you!  
Yes, if it were you,  
My, my dream comes true.

MARENKA So it's me you want to wed!

VASEK Yes, yes, you're the one.

MARENKA Why delay? Let's go ahead.

VASEK Oh, what joy! What fun!

MARENKA Each day we'll greet with new delight,  
And never fuss or fight.  
Each day we'll greet with new delight,  
And never, never, never fuss or fight.

So, it's true that I'm the one.

VASEK Yes, yes, none but you!

MARENKA Sooner settled, sooner done.

VASEK Too good to be true!

MARENKA Listen well to what I tell you.  
Then repeat it:  
You must take a solemn oath to this effect:  
Marenka I renounce and my engagement I reject,  
On my honor!

VASEK B- b- but th- that  
Is too much to expect!

MARENKA You turn your back when I plead?  
Such a love is cold indeed,  
Just a shallow passing phase.  
Marry Marenka, and good luck  
In the dark, silent days.  
*(starts to leave)*

VASEK Stop! I've changed my mind!

MARENKA *(echoed by Vasek)*  
Here I vow upon my life  
Not to take her for my wife.  
I renounce her as of now.  
No matter what,  
No matter how,  
I'll never break  
My solemn vow.  
I'll never break my solemn vow.

VASEK                    I'll keep my solemn vow.

TOGETHER                Here's someone fair, not far away  
With warm and tender eyes.

MARENKA                While hoping, praying night and day,  
For you alone she sighs.  
For you alone she pines and sighs.

VASEK                    With her my future lies.  
While hoping, praying night and day  
For me alone she sighs,  
Can it be for me she pines and sighs?

*(They exit)*

*(Jenik enters briskly, followed by Kezal)*

KEZAL                    Stay, my son, a word or two!  
May I have the pleasure?

JENIK                    I have better things to do;  
I am not at leisure.

KEZAL                    Do you not know who I am?

JENIK                    Nor, sir, do I give a damn.  
Yet I know you well by sight.

KEZAL                    Though you appear fairly bright,  
And a delight to behold,  
Your future hopes are chancy.  
There's a lady, so I'm told,  
Who's caught your fancy.  
What have you got to offer?

JENIK                    Such concern on my account!  
God smiles upon the lover.  
We people so in love  
Rely on powers above.

KEZAL                    Rubbish! Hear some good advice:  
You're not in paradise.  
Here at hand, understand,  
Only money will suffice,  
As you'll find to your sorrow,  
Not today but tomorrow,  
When you have to beg or borrow.

                                  Where, my friend, are you from?  
Speaking man to man, sir,  
Give an honest answer.

JENIK                    From afar I have come,  
Miles away,  
Past Moravia's borders —

There I've called my home.

KEZAL

It is there you should return.  
Local girls, you will learn,  
On the whole,  
Look for cash, not soul.

JENIK

There are some that you omit,  
Blessed with beauty, charm and wit.  
I know one that stands alone,  
A blessed angel,  
And soon to become my own.

KEZAL

When the love is new  
Men will bill and coo,  
Blind with devotion.

Till the eyes are clear,  
Every wife is sheer  
Beauty in motion.

By a law unwritten,  
Foolish men are smitten  
With a purring kitten's  
Velvet paws.

Horror all the greater  
When the tiger later  
Bares its sharpened claws.

Till the wheel is spun  
And the prize is won,  
Love is play and fun,  
Pleasure and delight.

Sad to say, but soon  
Past the honeymoon,  
There's a change of tune  
And of appetite.

Love is bound to lose —  
Take it from me.  
Wiser men would choose  
Income and property.

Poor, deluded lover,  
Pause and think it over:  
You could live on clover,  
Not a blank.

Men astute and clever  
Turn their talents ever  
Toward a better balance  
In the bank.

KEZAL                    Summing up, weighing and contrasting,  
Oh, my friend!  
Gold I say, gold is longer lasting  
In the end.  
Go for gold!

JENIK (*with irony*)    With advice you are unstinting,  
Your concern I understand.

KEZAL                    I am merely hinting  
I can deal you a better hand.

*(echoed by Jenik)*  
Looking around,  
For you I have found  
One second to none.

Here's a wife  
To last for life,  
Who offers more than passing fun.

This willing spouse  
Is blessed with a house  
And money to burn.

Yours to own,  
Her land alone  
Will guarantee a fine return.

She's got a garden,  
Goats and a gander,  
Cows, for example,  
Cream thick and ample;  
Orchards, such as  
Pears and peaches,  
Each as much as  
Seven acres;  
Hogs and horses,  
Coach and carriage —  
Yours {mine}, of course  
Assuming marriage.  
All to call your own, to have and hold.  
{All my own to have and hold.}

For such a bride men go to battle,  
Swords are drawn and sabers rattle  
As in the splendid days of old  
When the men did deeds both big and bold.  
To (a life of) sheer delight can you say no?

JENIK                    So kindly meant, I'm grateful, though  
To your blueprint I must say no.  
To your kind proposal I say no!  
Yes! To your kind proposal I say no!

KEZAL Drop romantic foolishness.  
I will make it worth your trouble.  
Grow up!  
Love is adolescent.  
Call it off, for one hundred of the best.

JENIK A measly hundred!  
For two broken hearts you would pay so little?  
No, no, my friend. Just count me out.

KEZAL Two hundred crowns I meant to say.

JENIK Money's not the issue.

KEZAL All right, three hundred.  
That's my final offer.  
All of that for one tiny signature!  
You'd better reconsider.  
Certain friends of mine are strong and husky,  
Only too glad  
To bloody up a chap like you.  
Careful, or you'll wind up  
Losing both bride and money.

JENIK So? So?  
Who's the stranger who offers to buy me out?

KEZAL (*indicating himself*)  
Who else?

JENIK What! Shopping for yourself?  
Sir, I'll not sell to you  
For all the money in the world.

KEZAL Don't be silly! I'm already married;  
One wife is quite enough.  
But maybe you should know  
I am acting on behalf  
Of the son of Tobias Micha.  
We put the agreement into writing;  
You are paid in full, ready cash!  
Then off and away!

JENIK All right. Might as well.  
Money I could use.  
Three hundred smackers and the deal is settled.  
But on one condition:  
Marenka is to be married to no one else  
But a son of Tobias Micha.  
Otherwise the whole agreement's null and void.

KEZAL Yes, of course, of course, no question!  
Nothing wrong with that.  
This agreement gives the bride to none but Micha's son.

JENIK                    On this vital point I must insist:  
 Micha's son it is,  
 Only he, and nobody else —  
 Stated clearly in the contract.

KEZAL                    I can think of no objection.  
 In fact, that's just where we started.

JENIK                    One final matter ...

KEZAL                    Yes?

JENIK                    This also you must add:  
 That after my former bride  
 And Micha's son have taken holy vows,  
 Now husband and wife,  
 Micha must cancel and forget  
 The sum of money owed him by Marenka's father.  
 He'll write it off as paid in full.

KEZAL                    That will be agreeable.  
*(Kezal leaves)*

JENIK                    *(alone)*  
 Foolish man  
 To believe for a minute!  
 But my net is drawn,  
 And you are in it.

Forward unconquered!  
 We are soon to reach our destination.  
 Driven to barter  
 By the pain of loss and separation.  
 The former martyr  
 Finds jubilation!

JENIK                    In tears and laughter  
 We shall be one;  
 Another chapter  
 Has just begun.

Bursting with flowers,  
 Spring smiles again.  
 Heaven is ours  
 Through sun and rain.

Winter is gone;  
 Warm light begins to shine  
 Welcome the dawn  
 Proclaiming you are mine.

Dark clouds dispersed, the sun will shine  
 Because you're mine.

*(Kezal returns, accompanied by Kruschina, Ludmila and chorus of villagers)*

KEZAL                   Gather round for a public reading,  
A bid we thought you ought to hear.  
You can play a part in this proceeding  
If you'll kindly lend an ear.

CHORUS                   Heaven knows where this man is leading.

KEZAL                   Disinterested,  
You are requested  
To confirm that terms are drawn airtight.

CHORUS                   We come together,  
Deciding whether  
All is clearly down in black and white.

KEZAL                   Plainly and concisely stated:  
"My former bride now I'm renouncing."

CHORUS                   His engagement terminated!  
And his bride he's now renouncing?

JENIK                   *(takes the paper and reads)*  
"She goes to no one other than  
The son of that fine, upstanding man,  
Tobias Micha."

KEZAL                   To one alone, the son of Micha.

JENIK                   "If his love is deep and strong,  
And if both are satisfied,  
To each other they belong,  
Now and ever side by side."

KEZAL                   These conditions  
We set down as stipulated.

CHORUS                   Though defeated,  
He appears elated.

KRUSCHINA  
*(to Jenik)*               So unselfish! So high-minded!  
It's enough to bring a tear.  
Name another half so nice,  
Willing so to sacrifice.

KEZAL  
*(to Kruschina)*       Sir, you can drop the gratitude  
Until his motives are reviewed.  
Modest offers I have made  
That may have swayed him:  
Cash in hand, three hundred will be paid him.  
For this amount (that you provide)  
He offers up his bride.

CHORUS                   How degrading! How disgusting!  
Has he not a jot of pride?

KRUSCHINA            Going for the gold, indeed!  
                               Oh, this modern generation;  
                               Goaded on by naked greed!

KEZAL                    Punctum satis, punctum satis ...  
                               Latin gives the legal touch we need.  
                               Now the signatures —  
                               One and then the other,  
                               And we're all done!

JENIK                    Glad to sign it: Jenik Horak.

KRUSCHINA            My contempt can I control?  
                               This riff raff would sell his soul.

CHORUS                Has this man no pride?  
                               Out for gold,  
                               Out for gold,  
                               He has sold out for gold.

CHORUS                Pride and honor cast aside,  
                               Common decency defied!  
                               Boo the bum who barter's off his bride!  
                               Out for gold!  
                               Boo the bum who barter's off his bride.  
                               He has sold out for gold.  
                               Sheer greed, shocking to behold.  
                               The bounder! Bounder!

## End of Act II

## ACT III

I warned you from the start. Remember? I hope you weren't taken in by that exquisite love duet. I have to admit, he sounded sincere. But this same apparently high-minded young man, *so* full of lofty sentiments, this master of the mellifluous phrase, this molder of melody, has finally shown his true colors. He has succumbed to bribery, selling off his bride to the son of Tobias Micha, and for the paltry sum of three hundred crowns to boot. You saw it happen.

Who can blame the now twice-bartered bride for disbelief, disillusion, despair, disgust, rage -- in that order.

Meanwhile, the rush of events has been too much for young Vasek, unaccustomed to a leading role in life's turbulent drama. First, finding himself engaged to a girl he has never even met, then discovering that his new fiancée plans to murder him as soon as they are married, then falling in love with the pretty girl who has tipped him off and who then vanished as quickly and mysteriously as she came. All of this dwarfed by the overriding question: what to tell mother? Who would not collapse under the strain? But Vasek's day is far

from over. The Pocket Circus has come to town, featuring a gypsy tight-rope walker , , ,

Oh, yes. During the course of this act you will finally meet Tobias Micha and his wife Hata, the parents who are so determined to see their son wed to Marenka. If you think you saw them earlier, put it down to the power of illusion . . .

*Scene: The village.*

VASEK *(alone)*  
W- w- would that it w- were over!  
These problems of a l- lover!

Oh, d- d- d- d- dear! You heard her  
T- t- t- talk about m- murder,  
No sooner am I m- married  
Th- than right away b- buried.

One thing, and then an- n- nother!  
Wh-what to t- t- tell mother?

No wonder I st- stutter,  
W- weak as melted b- b- butter.

W- would that it w- were over!  
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!  
Th- th- these problems of a lover!

*(The circus director and members of circus troupe enter, followed by villagers.)*

DIRECTOR *(spoken)*  
Attention, ladies and gentlemen! Announcing a sensational performance brought here to your own town from triumphs in Paris, London, Moscow, Kansas City. Featuring the gorgeous, glamorous Esmeralda, star of the tight rope. *(Fanfare)* Appearing with her, today only, a real authentic North American Indian, captured on the island of Manhattan, 50,000 miles away, when rescued from the clutches of a grizzly bear. *(Fanfare)* We bring you also the bear *(Fanfare)* — miraculously tamed and trained to execute faultlessly the dance that has taken Paris by storm — the celebrated can-can.

DIRECTOR *(sung)*  
Step up, ladies and gentlemen;  
Take in the spectacle.  
Come, be one of the lucky few.  
Here is a sample  
For free!  
Just for you!

*Dance of the Comedians*

VASEK This – this I call exciting!

The pretty, pretty, pretty gypsy girl  
I could, I could die watching.

ESMERALDA Sweetie, are you coming to the show?

VASEK Wouldn't miss it,  
If, if you are going to dance on the tightrope.

INDIAN *(rushing in)* Oh, director! Urgent crisis!  
Hope for the best and brace yourself!  
Billy has hit the bottle again;  
After topping his record,  
He is sprawling on the barroom floor.

So now we're stuck.  
Who in heavens name can play the bear?

DIRECTOR Damn it! Damn it!  
He's our star attraction.  
What is a show without the bear?  
Angry customers will run us out of town,  
God only knows whether we make it alive.  
We must come up with a substitute,  
Some local talent.  
What can we lose?

INDIAN Not so simple.  
I've already started looking.  
Totally unsuccessful!  
No one seems to be the type.  
One too small, the other too big, and so it goes.  
After all, the fur has to fit.  
Each and every minute counts;  
Show time in half an hour.

DIRECTOR Do some thinking, Esmeralda.

VASEK Es- m- m- meralda is her name.  
I like her more and more.  
What I wouldn't wouldn't give to kiss her!  
I'd be the envy of the t- t- t- town.

ESMERALDA You're a nice young man!  
Just the sort I could go for.

VASEK You could, you could fall in love with me?

INDIAN *(to Director)*  
Hallelujah! Under our nose we find the bear!  
Yes, the skin will fit him like his own.

DIRECTOR Right you are! Go spread the word,  
The show goes on!  
First, I may have to do some talking.

*(to Vasek)*

Ah! Young stranger!  
What do you think of Esmeralda?  
You're a very lucky man.  
Join our little troupe, and Esmeralda's yours.  
She'll show you how to dance —  
The rest will be simple.

VASEK                    Teach me how to, how to dance?  
                              Oh, no! I can – can – can - can- can't.

ESMERALDA            Trust love then to teach you  
                              All you need to know.

VASEK                    Love could make it easy.

DIRECTOR              Kindly take a moment to consider, friend:  
                              For excitement and for glitter,  
                              Choose the road to fame and stardom,  
                              And pleasure round the clock.  
                              Go traveling —  
                              Wild applause and standing ovations!  
                              Yes, we actors are accepted  
                              In the highest social circles.  
                              Malum molorem —  
                              There I go again, talking Latin.  
                              In the words of Socrates,  
                              "All the world is a stage."  
                              But we actors get to play both clown and king,  
                              And the end we are told in advance.

ESMERALDA            Come and join the troupe.  
                              Give it a go!  
                              And later on, love and kisses on the side.

DIRECTOR              What are you afraid of?  
                              Step into the water.  
                              Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

ESMERALDA            Must I beg you on hands and knees?  
                              Be a darling!  
                              For today. For me.  
                              Remember, I'm yours.

VASEK                    But what will I be doing?

ESMERALDA            Dancing!

VASEK                    Me a dancer? But - but how?

ESMERALDA            That I will show you.  
                              Closely, you and I together ...

VASEK                    But my – my – my - mother ...

ESMERALDA            She will never know.

ESMERALDA and DIRECTOR

Come, the role is simple:  
You will be the bear,  
Powerful but nimble,  
Pawing at the air.

Like a scary picture from a story book,  
Make the public laugh or shudder with a look.

Burly yet entrancing,  
Hear the thunder of applause  
As your dancing  
Draws a round of hurrahs and hurrahs,  
Of hurrahs and hurrahs.  
Come! Be the bear and save the show —  
Is it yes or no?  
Is it yes or no?

*(They go off, beckoning for Vasek to follow.)*

VASEK                    *(alone)*  
Strange, if not miraculous!  
Suddenly for me  
All the young, pretty girls are going crazy!

*(Enter Hata, Micha, Kezal)*

HATA                    Heavens, we have hunted high and low!  
Finally we find you.  
Come, my son,  
We've picked you a beautiful bride,  
And you must get acquainted.

VASEK                    No, no, I don't want to.

HATA                    How can you think of refusing?  
After the trouble and pains we have gone to!  
Look at your father;  
Once married, you will be glad and grateful.

KEZAL                    Ecstatic! None of these doubts and trepidations  
When you have signed the agreement.

VASEK                    Who, who is that girl  
You want me to wed?

MICHA                    Dear Marenka Kruschina,  
What a lucky lad you are!

VASEK                    No, no! Out of the question!

HATA, KEZAL and MICHA

What! Sudden, like a thunderbolt!  
Rupture, riot and revolt!

Can I believe what I am hearing?  
Why? Why this nasty jolt?  
You must have lost your mind.  
What phantom are you fearing?

VASEK                    She means to wait, to wait till we are wed,  
Then have me bumped off.  
She wants to see me dead.

HATA, KEZAL and MICHA  
A goblin from a closet  
Leaps out with a warning.  
Speak up! Who was it?

VASEK                    She's a girl that I would would like instead.

HATA, KEZAL and MICHA  
Some nosy busy-body!

VASEK                    Oh, no! She, she only wanted me to know.

HATA, KEZAL and MICHA  
What more did she have to say?

VASEK                    What she said then I'll not forget:  
She fell in love when our eyes met.

HATA                    You know her name?

VASEK                    Well, not yet.

*(He runs off)*

HATA, KEZAL and MICHA  
For this I wasn't ready!  
More than a little shady.  
Who is this alleged lady?  
His story takes the cup.  
This elusive leading lady  
Is someone he made up.

KEZAL                    This stuff I do not buy;  
He's feeding us a lie.

MARENKA                *(bursting in, with Kruschina and Ludmila)*  
No, no, no, no, no!  
It's wicked slander!  
How can you stoop so low  
To stain his honor so?  
You'll never persuade me  
That my beloved has betrayed me.

KRUSCHINA              Mised and mortified!

KEZAL                    Like countless men, he lied.

KRUSCHINA            Each person has a price.

KEZAL                 Here's proof that we are right  
Set down in black and white:  
For a mere three hundred  
He tosses away his bride.

MARENKA             *(weeping)*  
How I trusted and believed in him!  
Oh, God! What have I done?  
Was love a dream that lured me on?  
I can still hear him sigh,  
"My love, I'm yours alone!"

KRUSCHINA            Go forward, say goodbye,  
Forget that shifty lout,  
And thank your lucky star  
That you have found him out.

KEZAL                 Accept another man,  
Someone better, by far.

LUDMILA              My dear, be philosophic:  
Men are the way they are.

MARENKA             Though traded off for money,  
I'll marry no one else.  
In grief eternal I shall brood  
In lonely solitude,  
In lonely solitude.

MICHA, KRUSCHINA and KEZAL  
The sorrow will subside,  
Though now you suffer  
From wounded pride.

*(Vasek enters)*

KEZAL                 Hey, Vasek! Come over here!  
Enough of this foolishness!  
We are close to success.

VASEK                 Why pester, pester me for nothing?  
*(seeing Marenka)*  
There she is, the girl I spoke of!

OTHERS                *(None would call him overbright.)*

VASEK                 The one you tried to make, to make a joke of.

OTHERS                *(Yet for once could he be right?)*

VASEK                 We ... this morning met ... and she  
Said ... that she could go ... for me,  
That she could, she could go for me.

OTHERS                   Fool, she is Marenka,  
The bride we had in mind.  
Delightful to find you  
Already so inclined.

KEZAL                    No more procrastinating!  
There's nothing gained by waiting  
Go get the pen and ink.

MARENKA                Wait a little longer.  
Give me time to think.

OTHERS                   Think it over, Marenka, take a while.  
In time, blighted hopes will fade away.  
Later on, you'll even smile  
At heartaches of today.

                              Comfort and happiness are here at hand.  
Turn away from castles built on sand.

MARENKA                Oh, where am I to turn?  
Where, oh where?

*(All exit except Marenka)*

Rage and despair!  
Alone at last  
To dwell upon my grief.  
Hard as I try to deny it,  
My very eyes confirm it.  
If only we could have a talk ...  
Yet what would be the purpose?  
Does love come down to a heartless game?  
Disillusioned,  
Oh, where to hide my shame?

My love was born of fire and air,  
Warm sunlight after showers,  
A joy almost too great to bear,  
A pathway strewn with flowers.

The springtime buds that blossomed forth  
Lie withered now and faded;  
A blast of winter from the north  
My sheltered heart invaded.

No! He's the person I revere!  
No, no, no, no, no!  
How could I believe him insincere?  
A dream while I was sleeping!  
And now awake, I'm misty-eyed  
From weeping.  
Still misty-eyed from weeping.

MARENKA            Oh, lovely spring!  
                          So bright, so fair!  
                          Sweet memory that feeds despair!  
                          In cold November, say goodbye  
                          To green and tender leaves that die.  
                          Oh, lovely spring  
                          That was so fair!

*(Jenik enters)*

JENIK                My dearest heart, my love, my own!  
                          I've found a neat solution!  
                          I grant my venture may have sewn  
                          The seeds of some confusion.

MARENKA           Stand back! Drop the romantic role.  
                          I'm sick and tired of it!  
                          My trusting heart you stole,  
                          And now you sell it off for profit.  
                          Speak! Did it happen? Is it true?  
                          Say yes or no. One word will do.

JENIK                Not so simple as you might suppose.

MARENKA           You brought the deal to a close.  
                          You knew what you were doing?

JENIK                You said it! Eager! Willing! Knowing!

MARENKA           And of remorse ... no tiny trace!  
                          No hint, no indication!

JENIK                Love, now that we are face to face,  
                          A word of explanation!

MARENKA           To mention love at such a time!  
                          A joke! I plan to marry Vasek.

JENIK                Ha ha ha ha! Now who is joking?  
                          Ha ha ha ha! I am laughing — ha, ha, ha, ha!  
                          But you know full well  
                          That would be a major crime!

MARENKA           Ha! Who are you to laugh at him?

JENIK                Give me a chance to tell you.  
                          And meanwhile, do not look so grim.

MARENKA           When someone tries to sell you! ...

JENIK                My love, allow me to reply  
                          And kindly stand corrected.  
                          How could I look you in the eye  
                          If guilty as suspected?

MARENKA                   And why should I believe a lie  
 Though polished and perfected?  
 What double talk can justify  
 The cash that you've collected?

*(Kezal enters)*

KEZAL                        Jenik! Aha! Itching to collect the money!  
 Be patient, stick around.  
 After our witnesses arrive  
 You can put it in your pocket.

MARENKA                   Ha! Not even blushing!

KEZAL                        *(to Marenka)* You're in luck!  
 Micha's son is yours as soon as we have signed.

JENIK                         I can speak for her!  
 Him, no one else, she will marry,  
 As I've clearly stipulated.  
 Do we understand?

KEZAL                        Said like a pro!  
 A born marriage broker!

MARENKA                   I speak for myself!  
 No, no! Not for the world!  
 Am I clear enough?  
 I'd die before I would marry him.

JENIK                         *(to Kezal)*  
 Want to wager she will change her mind?  
 Twenty to one, she'll marry Micha's son.

MARENKA                   You oaf! Not yet satisfied with a mere three hundred?  
 No! Money's all that matters.  
 I see you as you are — Insufferable!

JENIK                         Be lenient, be patient!  
 You'll later understand  
 And welcome the role of bartered bride.  
 When love and trust go hand in hand,  
 The door will open wide.

                                  He loves you sincerely — marry Micha's son!  
 Have mercy and surrender;  
 No longer shun the heart of one  
 So tough and yet so tender.

                                  Be lenient, be patient!  
 You'll later understand  
 And welcome the role of bartered bride.

MARENKA                   (He played on my feelings,  
 Oh, but how could I have been so blind?)

KEZAL (For modesty and wisdom, he's  
At least a second Socrates,  
Restoring faith in humankind.)  
Come! Come! Come!

Both families are meeting here;  
No time is left to ponder.

MARENKA No matter, I no longer care,  
So why not knuckle under?

JENIK These parents of the happy pair  
Will find that I'm no bounder.

KEZAL With love no longer in our way,  
Get ready for the signing.

MARENKA Beset by panic and dismay,  
I see no silver lining.

JENIK With witnesses in full array,  
We're ready for the signing.

MARENKA Worn down, mystified,  
I bow my head in dismay.

JENIK With time on our side,  
We're well along on the way.

KEZAL Both families are here today  
With faces bright and shining;  
With love no longer in the way,  
Get ready for the signing.

*(he leaves)*

JENIK *(to Marenka)*  
Oh, say that Micha's son will do.

MARENKA Go! Take your money, too!

*(Kruschina, Ludmila, Micha, Hata, Kezal and chorus of villagers enter)*

CHORUS Sooner or later, do make up your mind.  
Do, do make up your mind.  
Better to bear it and be resigned,  
And be resigned  
After the document's safely signed.

MARENKA (One bride for sale! He's made a deal.  
Love is no more the question.  
My anger I shall conceal  
By taking his suggestion.)  
On with the plan!  
Bring forth the man.

CHORUS                   It's on with the wedding!  
The tearful bride has seen the light;  
The wedding day is looming bright.

JENIK                     *(emerging)*  
Come, celebrate the groom and bride!  
Together may they walk forever  
Side by side!

HATA and MICHA       Our Jenik! Gone so many years!

JENIK                     Yes, father. After long delay,  
Alive and well, your son reappears.  
Cast out to wander and to roam,  
Grown up a little, I come home.

KEZAL                    (By rumor and report misled,  
I counted on his being dead.  
Can he be Micha's elder son?  
My plots and plans have come undone.)

JENIK                     What relief! What a thrill!  
My parents know me still,  
Back from the dead.  
*(indicating Hata and Kezal)*  
And how it fills an aching void  
To see these two so overjoyed.

HATA                     He's much alive and that's a fact;  
He's back with his old tricks intact.

JENIK                     Your hatred is all too plain.  
You'd gladly send me off again.  
Soon I shall go, but not alone.  
For Micha's son the reward is sweet:  
Marenka I can claim my own.

HATA                     There's no reward for low deceit!

JENIK                     Deceit? No, all's fair in love.  
Yet I had best be wary.  
*(to Marenka)* It's up to you --  
My brother or myself?  
Name the one you prefer.  
Which of us will you marry?

MARENKA                Ah! That has been long decided!  
I'm yours alone, and you are mine!

KEZAL                    (A sneaky dog! A slimy snake!  
This marriage seemed a shoo-in.  
Unless she does a double-take,  
I'll see my name in ruin,  
My reputation run amuck;

I put it down to lousy luck.  
The pair of them I'd like to do in.)

MICHA                    You blasted windbag!  
On your hot air may you choke.

HATA                     This wonder-worker, full of smoke,  
Has in fact become the local joke.

KEZAL                    (A sneaky dog! A slimy snake!  
Unless she does a double-take  
My pull and clout are both at stake,  
What was a shoo-in  
Now turned to ruin,  
My reputation run amuck.  
I put it down to lousy luck.)

JENIK and MARENKA  
                              In such a hurry to have it signed,  
                              The broker faces going broke.

LUDMILA and KRUSCHINA  
                              Although not so inclined,  
                              He's pulled a master stroke.

JENIK and MARENKA  
                              The broker is about to find  
                              His profits up in smoke.

QUARTET                Though hardly what he had in mind,  
                              The broker's pulled a master stroke.  
                              Though far, I fear, from what he had in mind,  
                              The broker's pulled a master stroke.

FIRST BOY                (*running in*)  
Run for your life! The bear is loose!

SECOND BOY             The bear! The bear! He's headed this way!

VASEK                    (*entering in bearskin*)  
Don't, don't be afraid.  
I'm not a bear,  
I'm only only Vasek.

HATA                     You booby! You will be my death!  
This is the limit!  
Go and take it off, stupid!  
Running wild in a bearskin!

KRUSCHINA              (*to Micha*)  
Though no doubt a doting father,  
You are not blinded:  
Vasek needs more time to ripen.  
Here's Jenik in the meantime ...  
Come, come! Embrace him!

He is of your blood.  
You are his father.

LUDMILA            I pray to God on your behalf  
                          For a reconciliation.  
                          Oh, why not kill the fatted calf  
                          And call for celebration?  
                          And call for celebration?

MICHA                No prod is needed, no further pressing:  
                          I give you both my blessing.

TUTTI                 Rights and wrongs at war no longer,  
                          Love emerges all the stronger.  
                          Wedding bells benignly pealing  
                          Usher in a time of healing.  
                          You that come from far and wide,  
                          Share it with the bartered bride!

**End of the Opera**

