

THE MAID of the MOUNTAINS

The Story of the Play

The story of the "Maid of the Mountains" opens in the lair, high up in the mountains, of Baldassarre, the famous brigand of whom the whole country lives in fear. The men are resentfully discussing the decision of their chief to disband, and they are endeavouring to persuade Teresa, whom they accuse of being in love with Baldassarre, to dissuade him. Baldassarre enters and commands his followers to make ready to depart. The spoils of many raids are brought out and divided amongst them, and Baldassarre, giving Teresa her share in money, tells her that she must go at once, for their hiding place is surrounded. She pleads to be allowed to stay, and then goes, sadly singing the renowned "Farewell." When leaving the mountains, Teresa is captured and, recognised as one of the famous band, is taken to the Palace of Santo. General Malona, the Governor of the State, greatly hopes to capture the brigands before the expiration of his term of office, and uses every effort to make Teresa disclose the whereabouts of their chief; but in vain. Teresa says: "There is honour among thieves," and sings the beautiful song, "Love will find a way."

Meanwhile, Baldassarre, together with some of his band, has seized the new Governor, Count Orsino, who was on his way through the mountains to the capital, and overpowered his escort. Donning the uniform of the unfortunate captives, whom they secure in their cave, the brigands proceed to Santo to rescue Teresa. Baldassarre meets and falls in love with Angela, the daughter of the retiring Governor, and becomes heedless of his danger in remaining in the town.

Beppo, one of the brigands, who has always been in love with Teresa, asks her to persuade Baldassarre to leave the capital lest they all be discovered. He again declares his love for her, and they sing the duet, "Friendship and Love." While Baldassarre is philandering with Angela, Tonio, another of the brigands, discovers his wife in Vittoria, the fiancée of General Malona, and they sing an amusing duet, "Husbands and Wives." Beppo enters with the ladies of the Court, who sympathise with him because of his hopeless love, but he cheerfully tells them that he can love them all now, as he is a "Bachelor Gay."

Again the brigands endeavour to make Baldassarre leave the town, but he refuses to leave Angela. Teresa, mad with jealousy, turns to the crowd and denounces the "new Governor" as Baldassarre, the brigand chief they have long tried to catch. He and his companions are arrested. In the last Act we see Teresa, who sadly regrets the betrayal of Baldassarre, seated on the shore of an island, gazing towards the mainland. All the fisherfolk enter with songs of welcome to await the arrival of the Governor and his friends. Teresa pleads with the General to release Baldassarre, and they sing the charming duet, "New Moon." Vittoria and Tonio, finding they are still in love with each other, become reconciled and plan how they will spend the time during his absence in the island prison, and they sing the duet, "Over there and over here." In the loneliness of his imprisonment, Baldassarre realises his regard for Angela was only a passing infatuation, and that he loves Teresa, the Maid of the Mountains. He forgives her betrayal of him, and with the assistance of Lieutenant Rugini, the Governor of the prison, they escape by boat. The Lieutenant also helps Tonio and his wife to leave the island; the other brigands have escaped previously by swimming to the mainland.