

BIANCA E FERNANDO

Bellini

The adventurer Filippo has usurped the dominion of Carlo, Duke of Agrigento, and has proscribed the duke's son, Fernando, giving out false word that the duke is dead. Carlo's presumed heir is therefore his daughter Bianca, a widow with a baby son. She, believing Filippo's protestations of devotion to her and her family, has made him regent of the dukedom and is preparing to marry him so as to provide the people of Agrigento with a male ruler and defender.

As the opera opens, "Adolfo" (Fernando in disguise) arrives from Britain, is presented to Filippo, and tells of having seen Fernando die in combat in Scotland. He places himself at Filippo's service. Deceived, Filippo orders him to murder the imprisoned duke - thus unintentionally informing Fernando that his father is alive. Fernando believes that Bianca is Filippo's accomplice, but she convinces him of her innocence and of her mistaken belief in Filippo's good intentions. Brother and sister agree that she will dress as a soldier to accompany him on a mission to rescue their father. She and Fernando find the dungeon cell in which Carlo has been all but buried alive. As the brother and sister are reunited with their father, the people of Agrigento rebel successfully against Filippo. Carlo is acclaimed as the legitimate ruler.