EDUARDO DE FILIPPO

FILUMENA

A new English version by Tanya Ronder

BLOOMSBURY
Eduardo de Filippo was born in Naples in 1900 into a theatrical family and was connected with the stage, as a performer and writer, from his early years. His plays, which have been performed in many countries throughout the world, include *Napoli Milionaria* (1945; National Theatre, London, 1991), *Too Many Ghosts* (1946), *Filumena Marturano* (1946; Lyric Theatre, London, 1977), *Grand Magic* (1948; Royal National Theatre, 1995), *Inner Voices* (1948; National Theatre, 1983), *Saturday Sunday Monday* (1959; National Theatre at the Old Vic, 1973), *The Local Authority* (1960). He also wrote poetry, libretti, review sketches and adaptations, as well as running his own theatre company, and directing for TV, cinema and radio. He died in 1984.

Timberlake Wertenbaker’s plays include *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (Royal Court main stage); *Our Country’s Good* (Royal Court main stage), which in 1988 won the Laurence Olivier Play of the Year Award; *The Love of the Nightingale* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Three Birds Alighting on a Field* (Royal Court main stage), which won the Writers’ Guild and Drama Circle Best West End Play Awards in 1991 and the Susan Smith Blackburn Award in 1992; *The Break of Day* (Royal Court main stage and Out of Joint tour, 1995) and *After Darwin* (Hampstead Theatre, 1998). Her translations and adaptations include Marivaux’s *False Admissions* and *Successful Strategies*, for Shared Experience; Ariane Mnouchkine’s *Méphisto* and Sophocles’ *The Theban Plays*, for the RSC; Euripides’ *Hecuba*, for ACT in San Francisco; Maurice Maeterlinck’s *Pelléas and Mélisande*, for BBC Radio; and Pirendello’s *The Way You Want Me*. 
also available

De Filippo: Four Plays
The Local Authority
Grand Magic
Filumena Marturano
Napoli Milionara

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Filumena
This new translation of *Filumena* was first performed at the Piccadilly Theatre, London, on 30 September 1998. The cast was as follows:

**Filumena**  
Judi Dench

**Domenico**  
Michael Pennington

**Alfredo**  
Michael Byrne

**Rosalia**  
Yvonne Bonnamy

**Diana**  
Sally Knyvette

**Lucia**  
Nicola Ratcliffe

**Umberto**  
Laurence Mitchell

**Riccardo**  
John Gordon-Sinclair

**Michele**  
Jason Watkins

**Nocella**  
Simon Scott

**Teresina**  
Louise Breslin

**First and Second Waiter**  
Christopher Bianchi

*Directed by* Peter Hall  
*Designed by* John Gunter  
*Lighting by* Martin Hazlewood  
*Sound by* Matt McKenzie

**Personaggi**

**Filumena Marturano**  
*a rich confectioner*

**Domenico Soriano**  
*Domenico’s Leporello*

**Alfredo Amoroso**  
*Domenico’s Leporello*

**Rosalia Solimene**  
*Filumena’s confidente*

**Diana**  
*Domenico’s young flame*

**Lucia**  
*a housemaid*

**Umberto**  
*a student*

**Riccardo**  
*a shopkeeper*

**Michele**  
*a plumber*

**Nocella**  
*a plumber*

**Teresina**  
*a dressmaker*

**First Waiter**

**Second Waiter**
Act One

The Soriano house.

A spacious dining-room in definite 1900-style (Umberto I), luxuriously furnished, but with a kind of mediocre taste. Some pictures and gewgaws, which clearly once formed part of Domenico Soriano’s father’s house, are placed on the walls and the furniture, and jar with the rest of the decor. Downstage left, a door leads to the main bedroom. Upstage left, there is a large French window leading on to the terrace filled with plants and flowers and shaded with a brightly striped awning. The entrance is upstage right and still to the right, the room extends into darkness and just shows, through a doorway half closed by a heavy silk cloth, the ‘study’ belonging to the master of the house. Even in furnishing his own study, Domenico Soriano has preferred a 1900-style. Also 1900 is a large glass-covered case which protects and shows off a large quantity of cups in various metals, of different shapes and sizes. These are ‘first prizes’ won by his racehorses. Two crossed banners on the back wall over a writing-desk are proof of victory at the races of Montevergine. No books, no newspapers, no writing-paper. That corner which Domenico Soriano calls his study is neat and clean but lifeless. On the table in the middle of the dining-room, the table is laid for two with a certain care and taste and even very fresh red roses. It’s late spring, almost summer. The last rays of daylight filter in from the terrace.

Filumena Marturano stands right next to the bedroom, her arms crossed, oozing defiance. She wears a long white nightgown. Her hair is uncombed, piled up in a hurry. Her feet are bare inside bedroom slippers. Filumena’s face has lines of distress: the marks of a life of struggle and sadness. She is not vulgar, but cannot hide her working-class origins, nor would she want to: her gestures are generous and open, her tone of voice is direct and decisive, that of a woman who is conscious, full of natural intelligence and moral force. A woman who interprets the rules of life in her own manner and acts accordingly. She is forty-eight, her age betrayed by a few grey hairs, but her eyes have kept their Neapolitan black and their youthful vivacity.

Filumena is as white as a corpse, partly because of the act she’s just put on – which is that she was at death’s door – and partly because of the storm