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PRINCE CHARMING

A PLAY

FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES



PRINCE CHARMING
OR
THE ART OF GOVERNING MEN

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS, ADAPTED FROM A TRANSLATION
OF THE FRENCH TALE

BY

EDOUARD LABOULAYE

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING BIZARRE, Ruler of the Kingdom of Wild Oats.

PRINCE CHARMING, the King's Son.

THE COUNTESS OF CASTRO.

PAZZA, grand-niece to the Countess.

DOCTOR WIEDUWILLST, Court Physician.

HAFIZ, Philosopher }
MELCHIZADEC, Priest } Tutors to the Prince.
BAYONET, General }

RACHIMBURG, Jailor.

MENTIRAS, Servant.

CHARYBDIS, Servant.

TRISTRAM }
JOCUNDUS } Expert Physicians.
GUILLERET }

DOCTOR TRUTH.

GIPSY.

TONTO, a Page.

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PRINCE CHARMING.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A room in the Palace. Entrances R. L. AND U. Table near centre. Settee at right. Several chairs.*

(KING BIZARRE *in consultation with the TUTORs of the PRINCE.*)

KING BIZARRE. No, Love is not blind, whatever the poets may say. Alas, it would be too happy not to see a jot! But it is the torment of him who loves to become, despite himself, the slave and accomplice of him who feels himself beloved. Rather than to see my son—the dying bequest of my idolized wife—rather than to see this beloved child in tears, I would give him my crown—an I could. My affection renders me powerless. Yet, I must throw off this slavish affection. I must be the stern parent. My son *must* be educated as becomes a King's son. He is a dolt,—an ass,—he knows nothing!

BAYONET. Sire! Sire! You speak with undue vehemence! Prince Charming carries himself like a soldier. He rides like a riding-master. He fences to perfection. He dances enchantingly. He salutes the crowds in passing in a most royal manner—when he is in good humor.

KING BIZARRE. True, true, good Bayonet! Yet, with all these accomplishments, he lives lawless and unconstrained. He is as stubborn as a mule, as irascible as a turkey-cock, as dainty as a cat, and as idle as an adder, and he knows not even the alphabet. Melchizadec, Hafiz, something must be done!

HAFIZ. Sire, though Prince Charming is as beautiful as the sun,—the sun itself has spots: and, as your Royal Highness in your wisdom describes, the Prince has taken a fancy that he ought to know everything without studying.

MELCHIZADEC. Alas, too true, Your Majesty!

HAFIZ. It is true also, Sire, that in your court governesses, servants and courtiers have repeated to him the maxim that "work was not made for kings," and they tell him that a prince always knows enough when he lavishes on poets and writers and artists a little of the money which the people are only too happy to give him.

KING BIZARRE. Yes, yes, Hafiz! 'Tis easy to account for his short-

comings, but your philosophy should offer something better than that if it is worth anything. The question is, what shall we *do* to bring the Prince to a better mind?

MELCHIZADEC. Sire, Your Royal Highness well knows that all *my* philosophy, and Latin, too, have stood for nothing against Prince Charming's royal will. And Sir Bayonet's tactics and the philosophy of Hafiz,—all, alike, have been put to rout, and have left Prince Charming the master of the field,—a most accomplished prince, withal, but with no more learning than could be put in a nutshell! Alas, Sire, I have nothing more to offer.

KING BIZARRE. Begone! all of you! Dolts! Asses! Why, forsooth, do I keep these vaunted wise men about me? (TUTORS *leave* *u.* *backing out in haste as the KING berates them*) Is there no one in the kingdom of Wild Oats who can devise a way to educate my son, willy-nilly? (PRINCE *comes running gaily in, L., whipping a top*) Boy! Ingrate! Stupid! Why will you not learn? Must I have as my successor to the Kingdom of Wild Oats a dolt,—an ignoramus, whom the basest of flatterers might easily deceive? (*Shakes the lad*).

PRINCE CHARMING. (*Frightened, but protesting*) But I don't want to learn, papa! Why must I learn? Hafiz knows,—and Melchizadec knows,—and Bayonet knows, and (*between sobs*)—what—they—know—is mine. It makes my head ache to study, papa,—you know it does. And Melchizadec will say all the Latin in the books for me; and Bayonet will tell me how to fight; and Hafiz will write all my speeches for me. Papa, I won't, I won't! I hate the alphabet! (*Bursts into a storm of tears*)

KING BIZARRE. (*Relenting*) There, there, Charming! One can't expect the wisdom of years in your small pate. (*Aside: Who shall teach him that these all, Hafiz, Melchizadec, Bayonet,—must go the way of all the world, and he must stand alone?*) There, there, my son! (*Pats him on the head and comforts him*) Take this purse and divide it equally among your good friends, the tutors. I was hasty with them just now. Say King Bizarre bids them spend it royally.

PRINCE CHARMING. Thank you, papa! Thank you, papa! (*Goes skipping out joyfully, u, waving the purse*)

(KING *sits down at table and takes up cards, lays them out for a game, Enter* COUNTESS of CASTRO, R. KING *heaves a deep sigh*)

KING BIZARRE. Countess, you see before you the most wretched of fathers and kings. Despite his natural grace, Charming is every day becoming more willful and vicious. Must I leave such an heir after me, and intrust the happiness of my people to a crowned fool?

COUNTESS. That is the way with nature; she always distributes her

gifts with an impartial hand. Stupidity and beauty go hand in hand, and wit and ugliness are seldom separated. I have an example of this in my own family. A few days ago a great grand-niece was sent to me, a child under ten years old, that has no other relative. She is as tawny as a frog, as scraggy as a spider, yet, withal, as cunning as an ape and as learned as a book. Judge for yourself, Sire! Here is the little monster, coming to salute you. (*Meets PAZZA entering, R. removes her hat and smooths her gown. PAZZA approaches and curtsies to the king*)

KING BIZARRE. Who are you? (*chucking her under the chin*)

PAZZA. (*Gravely*) I am Donna Dolores Rosario Coral Concha Balthazara Melchiora Gaspara y Todos Santos, daughter of the most noble knight Don Pasquale Bartolomeo Francesa d'Asiz y—

KING BIZARRE. Enough! I did not ask for your genealogy. We are witnessing neither your baptism nor your marriage. What are you commonly called?

PAZZA. Sire, I am called Pazza.

KING BIZARRE. And why are you called Pazza?

PAZZA. Because that is not my name.

KING BIZARRE. That is strange!

PAZZA. No, it is natural. My aunt pretends that I am far too giddy for any saint to wish to own me for her god-daughter, and that is why she has given me a name that can offend no one in Paradise.

KING BIZARRE. Well answered, my child. I see that you are not an ordinary girl. The saints in Paradise are not always treated with such consideration. Since you know so much, tell me, what is a wise man?

PAZZA. A wise man, Sire, is one who knows what he says when he speaks, and what he does when he acts.

KING BIZARRE. Upon my word, if my wise men were what you fancy them, I would make the Academy of Sciences my Council of State, and would give it my kingdom to govern. What is an ignorant man?

PAZZA. Sire, there are three kinds of ignorant men: he who knows nothing; he who talks of what he does not know; and he who will learn nothing. All three are fit for nothing but to be burned or hanged.

KING BIZARRE. That is a proverb. Do you know what proverbs are called?

PAZZA. Yes, Sire, they are called the wisdom of the nations.

KING BIZARRE. And why are they so called?

PAZZA. Because they are mad; they say whatever you please; they are of all colors, to suit all tastes. Proverbs are like bells, which answer yes or no, according to the humor of the listener.

(*PAZZA seats herself on the floor with her doll, and begins to rock it to and fro in her arms, humming softly*)

COUNTESS. Well, Sire, what think you of this child?

KING BIZARRE. She has too much wit. She will not live long.

PAZZA. (*Looking up*) Ah, Sire, you are not complimentary to my aunt; she is considerably older than I am.

COUNTESS. Hush, gipsy! (*Smiling*) Don't you know that nobody lectures kings?

(*KING shuffles cards about. COUNTESS adjusts hat and wrap for PAZZA.*)

KING BIZARRE. Countess, an idea has just struck me which is so strange I hardly dare tell it to you; yet I have a violent wish to carry it out. I can do nothing with my son. Reason has no power with the stubborn child. Who knows whether folly might not be more successful? If I thought so, I would make Pazza Charming's teacher. The intractable boy, who rejects all masters, might be defenceless before a child. The only objection is that no one will be of my opinion.

COUNTESS. Bah! Everybody is so stupid that that is a proof that you are right, to think differently. Try it, Sire.

KING BIZARRE. Ah Countess! You are a wise woman; you dandled me on your knees when I was an infant, and you give me good advice in my old age. Let it be tried tomorrow. We shall see what the child's wit can accomplish where wise men have failed.

COUNTESS. Sire, she is witty to the tips of her fingers.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2. *Same. Next day.* (*PAZZA and CHARMING alone together are gazing at each other shyly.*)

PAZZA. What is your name?

CHARMING. (*In a piqued tone*) Those who know me call me "Your Highness," those who do not know me call me simply "My Lord," and everybody says "Sir" to me. Etiquette requires it.

PAZZA. What is etiquette?

CHARMING. I don't know. When I want to shout and roll on the ground, I am told it is contrary to etiquette. Then I keep still and yawn for lack of amusement,—that is etiquette.

PAZZA. Since we are here to amuse ourselves, there is no etiquette needed. Speak to me as if I were your sister, and I will speak to you as if you were my brother. I will not call you "My Lord."

CHARMING. But you don't know me.

PAZZA. What does that matter? I will love you, that is better. They say you dance beautifully. Teach me to dance, will you?
(*He teaches her the latest step*)

CHARMING. How well you dance! You have caught the step directly.

PAZZA. It is because you are a good teacher. Now it is my turn to teach you something. (*Takes up beautiful picture book and shows CHARMING pictures, in which he is greatly interested*)

PAZZA. See, here is the explanation of all the pictures,—read it.

CHARMING. I don't know how to read.

PAZZA. I will teach you. I will be your little tutor.

CHARMING. No, I do not wish to read. My masters tire me.

PAZZA. Very well, but I am not a master. See, here is A. Beautiful, great A. Say A.

CHARMING. No, (*frowning*) I will never say A.

PAZZA. Not to please me?

CHARMING. No, enough of this! I don't like people to differ from me.

PAZZA. Sir, a polite man never refuses ladies anything.

CHARMING. I would refuse the devil in petticoats. (*Tosses his head.*) I am tired of you. Let me alone. I don't love you any longer. Call me "My Lord."

PAZZA. My Lord Charming,—or my charming lord, (*angrily*) you shall read, or I will know the reason why.

CHARMING. I won't read!

PAZZA. Will you not? One—two—three—

CHARMING. No—no—no—

(*PAZZA gives him sharp box on the ear. CHARMING trembles, and then gazes with intent look at PAZZA until she gives a sudden start. He regains his self-possession, and in a tremulous voice speaks.*)

CHARMING. Pazza, that is A.

PAZZA. B. (*pointing*)

CHARMING. B.

PAZZA. C. (*pointing*)

CHARMING. C. (*So on, with increasing rapidity, through the alphabet.*)

PAZZA. Now, sing it.

CHARMING. A-b-c-d, e-f-g, h-i-j-k, l-m-n-o-p,

Q-r-s-t, u-w-v.

These are all the letters, saving

x-y-z.

PAZZA. Very good, Charming. Now you know your alphabet, you shall learn to spell.

CHARMING. (*Sings as PAZZA points, from another book*)

B-a, ba; b-e, be; b-i, bi; ba, be, bi.

B-o, bo; ba, be, bi, bo; b-u, bu; ba, be, bi, bo, bu.

D-a, da; d-e, de; d-i, di; etc.

PAZZA. Good, Charming, good! Now who shall say I am not a good teacher? Let us dance again. (*Taking hold of hands, they dance as the curtain falls*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Corridor in the castle. Entrances R. L. and U. Time—Seven years later. HAFIZ seated L. and DR. WIEDUWILLST R. of table*)

HAFIZ. And do you know, Dr. Wieduwillst, just how this romance started, and when the Prince Charming—it is hard for me to learn to say King Charming, peace to the ashes of the good King Bizarre! —I say, when did the Prince first become enamoured of our Queen Pazza? True, they were playmates together, but love is a different matter, and seems not oft to spring from the constant companionship of early youth.

WIEDUWILLST. Ah, Hafiz, you could ask no one better prepared than I am to inform you on this matter, for it was I, Wieduwillst himself, who was close by when the news was broken to our good King Bizarre,—peace to his soul!

HAFIZ. Say on, good Doctor.

WIEDUWILLST. Upon one day not long before his death, came Prince Charming to him, saying, "Father I have long reflected on your wise words. You have often admonished me, 'Never forget that you owe everything to Pazza.' You gave me life, my father, but Pazza has done still more in awakening my mind and soul. I see but one way of paying the debt of my heart. That is, to marry the woman to whom I am indebted for what I am. I come to ask you for Pazza's hand."

HAFIZ. I'll venture his majesty was surprised.

WIEDUWILLST. The King was surprised, but not displeased. Indeed, Hafiz, you know how dear to his heart the Countess' grand-niece has always been. "My dear child," he said, "this step does you credit. Pazza is not of royal blood. She is not the one whom, under different circumstances, I should have chosen for your wife. But her virtues, her merit, and above all, the service which she has rendered us, make us forget idle prejudices. Pazza has the soul of a queen. She shall mount the throne with you. In the country of Wild Oats, wit and humor are held in sufficient estimation to win you forgiveness for what fools call a misalliance, and what I call a princely marriage. Happy is he who can choose an intelligent wife, capable of understanding and loving him. Tomorrow your betrothal shall be celebrated, and in two years your marriage shall take place."

HAFIZ. How like our gracions and just Bizarre, forsooth!

WIEDUWILLST. Those were the words of His Majesty, my dear Hafiz,

and the betrothal was duly celebrated, as you know. Alas, that our good king was not permitted to live to see the fulfillment of those betrothal vows,—to witness what our eyes have just seen—the most splendid and gorgeous wedding that the kingdom of Wild Oats has ever beheld!

HAFIZ. Truly said, Dr. Wieduwillst, it was a sight to dazzle eyes and warm hearts. What though the taxes were doubled! Who could regret money so nobly employed? Men have come from a hundred leagues round to gaze at our new king and his beautiful bride.

WIEDUWILLST. Beautiful, indeed, Hafiz! Wondrous beautiful! But think you what she was when she was first introduced to our king! How has the chrysalis given birth to the butterfly! Just a few years, and the frightful little girl of ten blossoms into the royal beauty! Was ever anything more graceful than the royal pair as they descended from the throne? Truly 'tis a rare union, and the Kingdom of Wild Oats is blessed in its sovereign.

(Enter BAYONET L.)

BAYONET. Oh, these dinners, and these harangues, and these poems to be listened to by the hour! Glorious they are, but tedious to a man of war—sore tedious.

Tomorrow, good friends, tomorrow is Bayonet's day! Then will the troops pass in review before the king and queen, and Bayonet shall show what he can do for their majesties. Come, Hafiz.—come Wieduwillst.—prepare for the morrow's festivities by rest and sleep. The hours wear away toward morn. (*The three men withdraw v.*)

(Enter KING CHARMING, R. leading QUEEN PAZZA by the hand with cold politeness, as he shows her over the castle. King shows back a panel in the wainscoting, showing a grated door leading off from the corridor into a dungeon with bars at the window.)*

PAZZA. What is this? It looks like a prison.

KING. Yes (*with a terrible look*), it is a prison which you will quit only for the grave.

PAZZA. My dear, you frighten me. (*Smilingly*) Am I a criminal without knowing it? Have I deserved your displeasure, that you threaten me with a dungeon?

* NOTE. This may be managed with a tapestry or curtain of some sort hung so that it conceals an ordinary door, but can be easily shoved aside. This door may be slightly opened instead of using the grating. A grated window should be shown opposite door, with light shining through.

KING. You have a short memory. An insult is written on sand to the giver; it is inscribed on marble and bronze to the receiver.

PAZZA. Charming, you are repeating something from those speeches that tired me so much. Can you find nothing better to say to me today?

KING. Wretch! You no longer remember the box on the ear that you gave me seven years ago, but I have not forgotten it. Know that if I wished you for my wife, it has been only to have your life in my hands, and to make you slowly expiate your crime of high treason.

PAZZA. (*Pettishly*) My dear, you may put on your Bluebeard airs, but you will not frighten me, I assure you. I know you, Charming, and I warn you that if you do not put an end to this bad jest, I will not only give you one box on the ear, but three, before I forgive you. Make haste, and let me go out, or I vow that I will keep my word.

KING. Vow it then, Madam! (*Furious at not intimidating PAZZA*) I accept your vow. I vow, too, on my side, that I will never acknowledge you as my wife till I have been base enough to receive three times an insult which nothing but blood can wash out. He laughs well who laughs last. Rachimburg! Ho, Rachimburg!

(*Enter RACHIMBURG, who roughly pushes the queen into the dungeon where she falls down on a pallet of straw. Whereupon RACHIMBURG turns away, and closes and noisily locks the great door.*)

KING. Let no one see her, Rachimburg, and bread and water shall be her diet.

(*The king himself slides back the panel, then walks away. The jailor paces to and fro several minutes and then gently slides open the panel, and is seen but not heard to converse through the grating. A small hand is thrust through the bars. The rough hand of the jailor meets it. The panel is slid back again, and the curtain goes down on the jailor pacing back and forth.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2. Room in the castle.

Time—one week later.

(*MENTIRAS and CHARYBDIS busied about some work*)

MENTIRAS. 'Tis terrible, Charybdis, this mishap that hath befallen our fair queen on her marriage eve. A terrible blow to King Charming! What think you, Charybdis,—that 'tis a judgment on him?

CHARYBDIS. (*Softly*) Sh—sh—sh, an you think thus, Mentiras, speak it

not out. Walls have ears. (*Louder*) Did you also note Queen Pazza's manner, her bright eyes, her flushed cheeks? Methought they became her well, and that she never looked more beautiful than under the stress of the excitement after the wedding celebration; but I see the Court Gazette says all her brilliancy was but a sign and symptom of the fatal madness that seized her a few hours later.

MENTIRAS. 'Tis well that she will have the great Dr. Wieduwillst to prognosticate her malady. Know you how learned he is, Charybdis?

CHARYBDIS. I have heard somewhat of his learning.

MENTIRAS. He came from the Land of Dreams to find his fortune here in the Kingdom of Wild Oats.

CHARYBDIS. And he is too able a man not to find it, at any cost.

MENTIRAS. Five years did he study at the great University of Lugenmaulberg, and during that time the medical theory, as they tell me, changed twenty-five times! Such a solid education! Ah, nothing can shake the principles of the great Wieduwillst.

CHARYBDIS. 'Tis true he swears sometimes in the presence of ladies.

MENTIRAS. But his rudeness only seems to make them esteem him greater. In a controversy, he is, always of the same opinion as the stronger, and he often demands a great fee for having no opinion.

CHARYBDIS. He will cure the malady of the queen if it can be done. But, alas, they say the case is hopeless!

MENTIRAS. So says the Court Gazette. 'Tis good authority.

(Exeunt servants v. Enter KING R., who throws himself into a chair, disconsolately. Picks up Court Gazette from table. Reads idly. Throws it down wearily. Sighs and looks bored to death. Enter L. RACHIMBURG, who throws himself at the King's feet trembling.)

RACHIMBURG. Sire! I bring you my head! The Queen has disappeared!

KING. What do you tell me? The thing is impossible. The dungeon is barred on all sides.

RACHIMBURG. Yes, the thing is impossible; the walls are whole, and neither the locks nor the bolts have been disturbed. But there are witches in the world that pass through walls without moving a stone, and who knows but the prisoner is one of them? Was it ever known whence she came?

(King seems struck with the thought and greatly agitated)

KING. Summon Mentiras, knave! (*RACHIMBURG goes out v. and returns immediately with MENTIRAS*) Mentiras, search out the great Dr. Wieduwillst, and summon him to my presence at once. Go! (*Exit*

MENTIRAS, *u. bowing low*) Faithless slave! (*to RACHIMBURG*) you have forfeited your place of trust—yet—(*hesitating*) if she truly be a witch, who could keep her? We will say nothing of this in public, Rachimburg. You must lose your place—but stay. (*as Rachimburg shows great dejection*) you shall be warden of the royal castle. (*Hands him purse*) See that no one hears the particulars of her escape, Rachimburg.

(*RACHIMBURG prostrates himself at the King's feet after pocketing the purse, but rises as WIEDUWILLST enters u. in great haste and bows low before the King.*)

WIEDUWILLST. Sire! Your will?

KING. The Queen—she has escaped, Wieduwillst—the Lord only knows how!

WIEDUWILLST. Alas! alack! Your Highness, this is terrible news!

KING. She is a mad woman at large—helpless, yet dangerous. Summon the police, Wieduwillst,—make thorough search. Let no stone be left unturned. The queen must be found.

WIEDUWILLST. At once, Your Highness! Trusty men shall be sent everywhere, and (*thoughtfully*) spies shall be set upon the Countess, with your permission. Rachimburg shall—

KING. Rachimburg is no longer jailor. He must suffer for his negligence.

WIEDUWILLST. (*Bowing*) A just monarch, in truth!

KING. But such a man is dangerous in idleness. He shall be warden of my castle.

WIEDUWILLST. Yet capable of clemency, withal! Sire, I hasten to do your bidding. Search shall be made in every corner of the kingdom.

(*Enter CHARYBDIS L., in great agitation, and bows low before the king*)

CHARYBDIS. Sire, a fisherman seeks audience with your highness. He has information of sad import.

KING. Permit him to enter.

CHARYBDIS. Oh, Sire, be calm! Remember your Royal Highness' loyal subjects. To them the royal grief is a terrible calamity.

(*Enter fisherman L., followed by WIEDUWILLST and the COUNTESS, the latter wringing her hands and sobbing. The fisherman has a draggled royal robe and mantle formerly worn by the queen. He silently lays them down before the king, who is overcome.*)

KING. (*Leaning on WIEDUWILLST*) Wieduwillst, question him.

WIEDUWILLST. Where were these found, man, and how came you by them?

FISHERMAN. Sire, and Herr Doctor,—at day-break I, myself, found them on the sea-shore.

WIEDUWILLST. Alas, 'tis plain the poor woman has drowned herself.

COUNTESS. Oh, my Pazza! my Pazza!

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE 1. *Corridor in the castle. Time—one month after last scene.*

(*Corridor v. branching off from the main one shows brilliant illumination in the distance, and masked figures promenading from time to time. CHARYBDIS discovered in foreground, transferring bottles from hamper to tray. Enter MENTIRAS v. with vase of flowers.*)

CHARYBDIS. Well, well, Mentiras, it seems but yesternight that you and I were busy as bees at the wedding, and but a horrid dream, all that has happened since.

MENTIRAS. (*Carefully putting down the vase of flowers, goes and kneels by CHARYBDIS*) But, say, Charybdis, think you truly that this is seemly—all this gayety and masking, so soon, alas, after the terrible misfortune to our queen? I tell you, Charybdis, it looks not well to me! (*Shaking his head mournfully*)

CHARYBDIS. (*Softly*) Sh—sh—Did you not read in the Court Gazette, Mentiras, 'tis for the populace 'tis done? Lord Wieduwillst says, and so says the King, that the kingdom must not suffer on account of the great grief of the king. (*MENTIRAS continues shaking his head*) Was it not a splendid funeral, Mentiras, and did we not mourn, from palace to hovel, according to all the rules prescribed by etiquette, the full three weeks of the first period? (*Growing enthusiastic*) The mourning color, blue, was everywhere to be seen,—in draperies and clothes,—yes, and even fields and sky joined in, for was ever such a cloudless sky, and such a carpet of violets in the royal meadows, as last month?

MENTIRAS. Yes, yes, Charybdis, but that this second period, when all should wear pink in memory of the dear queen—that this should be cut off seems to me a sore discourtesy to her late majesty.

CHARYBDIS. Not so, not so, Mentiras. It falls, as you know, upon our Carnival week. How could the kingdom of Wild Oats endure without Carnival week? 'Twas great, I say, to put his people above his personal griefs. And more—you know that editorial in the Court Gazette? 'Twas well put, indeed, after the council had decided that the queen was legally dead, and the king legally a widower, to entreat him in the voice of his people, to abridge a painful mourning and to marry again. 'Twas Wieduwillst, when he advised his majesty thus, that the king embraced, sobbing and calling him his cruel friend. And I hope the king will do 't, Mentiras, I do, indeed.

MENTIRUS. Well, I don't. (*Still shaking his head mournfully, he picks up the vase of flowers and goes off.* CHARYBDIS soon follows with his tray.)

(*Enter R. two masked figures and pass along this corridor L.—a couple promenading. Later, one solitary woman masker enters U. and seats herself on a settee, meditatively. Gives signs of weariness, yawning. Gipsy costume disclosed beneath a domino. Presently a man in somber black domino enters and approaches the gipsy.*)

KING. Fair mask, your place is not here. Why are you not among the eager and curious crowd that is around the King, to dispute his smile and heart? Do you not know there is a crown to be gained there?

GIPSY. I make no such pretensions. In this game of chance one runs the risk of taking the servant for the king. I am too proud to expose myself to such a hazard.

KING. But if I show you the King?

GIPSY. What could I say to him? I could not blame him without offence, nor praise him without flattery.

KING. You think much evil of him then?

GIPSY. No, a little evil, and much good,—but what does it matter? (*Opening fan, relapses into a reverie*)

KING. Fair gipsy, I pray you, let me see the mouth that can give utterance to such kind and discerning words. The eyes your mask reveals could speak volumes, too, an they would. Unmask, fair gipsy, and make my confidence in the beauty that your mask conceals, a certainty. (*GIPSY fans wearily, but says nothing*) You drive me to despair! Why this cruel silence?

GIPSY. Because I know you, my lord. Your voice, which goes to the heart,—your language, your grace, all tell me who you are. (*As king tries to detain her*) Let me go, Prince Charming!

KING. No, madam! You alone have recognized me. You alone have understood me. To you belong my heart and kingdom! Throw off that suspicious mask. (*Ardently*) This very instant we will return to the ball room, and I will present to the ignorant crowd the woman whom I have the happiness not to displease. Say but one word, and all my people shall be at your feet.

GIPSY. (*Sadly*) My lord, permit me to refuse an offer which does me honor, and the memory of which I shall always preserve. I am ambitious, I own. The time has been when I should have been proud to share your throne and name. But before all things I am a woman, and place all my happiness in love. I will not have a divided heart, should my rival be only a memory. I am jealous even of the past.

KING. I have never loved in my life. There is a mystery connected with my marriage which I can reveal only to my wife, but I swear that I have never given away my heart. I love now for the first time.

GIPSY. (*Approaching the light*) Show me your hand, and let me see whether you have told the truth. (*Studies lines in his hand*) You are right, my lord, (*sadly*) you have never loved. But this does not appease my jealousy. Another woman has loved you before. These bonds are not broken by death. The queen still loves you. You belong to her. To accept a heart which is no longer at your disposal would be sacrilegious and criminal in me. Farewell!

KING. Madam, you do not know what you make me suffer. There are things which I would gladly bury in eternal silence, but which you force me to reveal. The queen never loved me; ambition alone dictated her conduct.

GIPSY. That is not so. The queen loved you.

KING. No, madam, my father and I were the victims of a detestable intrigue.

GIPSY. Enough! Respect the dead! Do not slander them!

KING. Madam, I assure you, and none ever doubted my word, that the queen never loved me. She was a wicked woman.

GIPSY. Ah!

KING. Willful, violent, and jealous.

GIPSY. If she was jealous, she loved you. Seek for proofs which have at least a shadow of probability! Do not accuse a heart which was wholly yours.

KING. (*Excitedly*) So far from loving me, the very night of my marriage she dared tell me to my face that she married me only for my crown.

GIPSY. That is not true. (*Raises her hand*)

KING. I swear it!

GIPSY. You lie! (*Boxes him on the ear*)

(KING steps back, furious; blinded by the blow, he feels for his sword, but finds only a knot of ribbons. Stumbles off blindly after the gipsy, who disappeared R. immediately after the blow, but he takes the wrong direction. L. Soon huzzas are heard, and couples are seen unmasking in the distance. CHARYBDIS comes hurrying across the stage from U. with a tray. MENTIRAS overtakes him, and pokes him in the ribs, jokingly, almost upsetting the tray, much to CHARYBDIS' annoyance.)

MENTIRAS. Ha, ha, Charybdis, did you see it? My Lord Wieduwillst, indeed! Ha, ha!

CHARYBDIS. The witches take thee, Mentiras, what's all this about? (*Sets down tray and straightens things*)

MENTIRAS. Were you not there? Did you miss it all, Charybdis? 'Twas

thus: The king came running in among the maskers. None knew him till he sprang upon a chair, pulled off his mask and called out loudly "Ladies and gentlemen, day is approaching and pleasure is languishing. Let us revive mirth by a new caprice. Off with the masks. I set the example. Let all who love me follow it."

CHARYBDIS. But the pink rosettes! 'Twas said that he who wore the brown velvet domino with the pink rosettes was King Charming. 'Twas so given out this morning and from Lord Wieduwilist it came, too. What higher authority could one have? Who nearer the King, Mentiras, or more like to know how he would disguise himself? Was it not the king, indeed?

MENTIRAS. There's where I have you, Charybdis! Ha, ha! Our boasted Lord Wieduwilist outdid himself this time. True, he must have enjoyed it while it lasted. All the ladies vied to do him honor; but when the unmasking came—where was Wieduwilist? Ha, ha! The pink rosettes had hidden a modest man, indeed,—a very modest man. Had he wings on his feet he could not have disappeared more rapidly. Now, where is your Lord Wieduwilist? (*Pokes CHARYBDIS again*) Ha, ha! Ha, ha! (*Helps CHARYBDIS off with tray, laughing*) And had the king not been so bent on seeing all the gipsies that the unmasking revealed, he, too, would have seen the great Lord Wieduwilist in flight,—all because of the pink rosettes. Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

CHARYBDIS. (*Warningly*) Sh—sh—

(*Exeunt MENTIRAS and CHARYBDIS L. Enter KING U., from ball room, met by RACHIMBURG, hurrying along the corridor, from R.*)

RACHIMBURG. (*Trembling, and with an air of terror*) Sire,—(*mysteriously*) has your majesty seen it?

KING. What?

RACHIMBURG. The spectre! It passed close by me. I am a lost man. I shall die tomorrow.

KING. What spectre? What fool's tale are you telling me?

RACHIMBURG. A spectre,—a domino with flashing eyes, that threw me on my knees and boxed my ears twice.

KING. It is she! It is she! Why did you let her go?

RACHIMBURG. Your majesty, I had not my pike; but if ever I see her again I will knock her down.

KING. Do no such thing! If ever she returns, do not frighten her; follow her and discover her retreat. But where is she? Which way did she go? Lead me; if I find her, your fortune is made.

RACHIMBURG. Sire, if the spectre is anywhere, it must be up yonder. (*gazing upward*) I saw it, as plainly as I see Your Majesty, dissolving in mist. But before taking flight it gave me a message for Your Majesty.

KING. What? Speak quickly!

RACHIMBURG. Sire, its words were terrible. I shall never dare to repeat them to your majesty.

KING. Speak! I order you.

RACHIMBURG. Sire, the spectre said, in a sepulchral voice, "Tell the king that if he marries again he is a dead man. The loved one will return."

KING. Here, take my purse. Henceforth I attach you to my person. I appoint you my first attendant, counting on your devotion and prudence. Let this affair remain a secret between us.

RACHIMBURG. (*Departing R.*) That makes two.

KING. (*Calling after him as he disappears*) Ho, Rachimbürg!

RACHIMBURG. Sire?

KING. Summon Melchizadec.

RACHIMBURG. Yes, Sire. (*Exit U.*)

KING. (*After MELCHIZADEC enters from U. and bows low before him*) Well, Melchizadec, have you that little paragraph ready for the Court Gazette tomorrow? (*As M produces a document*) Ah, I see you have it. Let us hear it.

MELCHIZADEC. (*Reading*) "A rumor has been spread that the king is thinking of marrying again. The rumor is not without foundation. The king knows what he owes to his people, and is always ready to sacrifice personal feelings for the good of his subjects. The —"

KING. There, Melchizadec, that must be changed. The thought of marriage is distasteful to me. Make it read differently, Melchizadec. I will not marry. Sit down here, and fix it up. I will wait to hear it.

(*MELCHIZADEC sits down, writes, scratches out, writes, and finally seems satisfied with the result.*)

MELCHIZADEC. Sire, 'tis ready. Will your majesty hear?

KING. Read.

MELCHIZADEC. "A rumor has been spread that the king is thinking of marrying again. The king knows what he owes to his people, and is always ready to sacrifice himself for the happiness of his subjects. But the people of Wild Oats have too much delicacy not to respect a recent affliction. The king's whole thoughts are fixed on his beloved wife; he hopes the consolation from time, that is at present refused him."

KING. That will do, Melchizadec. See that it appears in tomorrow's Gazette.

MELCHIZADEC. 'Tis done, Sire. (*Bows low and retires U.*)

(*KING yawns as curtain goes down.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

SCENE 1. *Room in castle. Time—one month after last scene.*

KING. Wieduwillst, 'tis strange, this malady that lays hold upon me. I know 'tis but an hallucination, but everywhere, everywhere I see the gipsy masker. In the council, in the review of troops,—in the latest novel, as I read it,—the masker comes before me. And always,—after I see her and talk to her, and she talks with me,—when she raises her mask 'tis the same sad, pale face,—'tis Pazza. Oh, Wieduwillst, remorse gnaws at my heart! Why—

WIEDUWILLST. Sire, Sire, this is but the effect of habit. Gain time, multiply impressions, and all will be effaced. I have arranged that the physicians of the faculty, Tristram, Jocundus and Guilleret, shall today give their opinions on your case. They are celebrated men, Your Majesty, and will no doubt recommend to you some course that will dispel these illusions and restore you fully to health.

(Enter RACHIMBURG L.)

RACHIMBURG. Sire, the physicians of the faculty await your pleasure.

KING. *(Languidly)* Let them come in.

(Enter the three physicians of the faculty, to whom the KING pays but little attention, but at WIEDUWILLST'S suggestion permits them to examine him gravely. They then consult together in low tones.)

TRISTRAM. *(At length)* Sire, you must be bled like a peasant, and live without any exertion whatever. Your disease is a deficiency of blood, a constitutional atony. Nothing but a journey to the Clear Waters can cure you. Go quickly, or you are a dead man. You have my opinion.

JOCUNDUS. Sire, I fully share the admirable opinion of my dear professional brother. You are suffering from superabundant vitality. Your disease is a constitutional plethora. Go, drink the Clear Waters, and you will be a well man again, Sire. You have my opinion.

GUILLERET. Sire, the diagnostic of my masters fills me with admiration. I bow before their learning. Like them I believe you are suffering from disorder of the sympathetic nerves. Your disease is a constitutional nervousness. Drink the Clear Waters. Go quickly, or you are a dead man. You have my opinion.

(*Physicians solemnly depart L. KING remains indifferent.*)

WIEDUWILLST. Sire, it is the unanimous opinion of these gentlemen that if you wish to be cured you must go to the Clear Waters, and abandon the affairs of state. Such a resolution appears to me unworthy of your Royal Majesty. A great prince should sacrifice himself for his people—

KING. Enough! Spare me this worn out moralizing, and come to the conclusion. You really wish me to go—you are dying for me to do so, for my own interest of course. Draw up a decree placing the regency in your hands, and I will sign it.

WIEDUWILLST. Sire, the decree is here in your portfolio; a good minister always has papers drawn up to suit whatever circumstances may arise. He never knows what may happen.

(*CHARMING takes up a pen and carelessly signs the document, without reading,—then, seized with a new impulse, takes up the paper and reads.*)

KING. What, no statement of reasons, nothing to assure the people of the kindness I bear them! Doctor, you are too modest. Tomorrow the decree shall be in the Gazette, with a statement from the hand of your friend and master. Good-night! (*Dismissing WIEDUWILLST L.*) These gentlemen have tired me.

(*KING CHARMING sits moodily brooding. Enter DR. TRUTH, L.*)

DR. TRUTH. (*In a high-pitched voice*) Where are those knaves? Where are those ignorant fellows, those pedants, those illbred men that did not wait for me? Ah, so you are the patient? That is good. Put out your tongue. Quick, I am in a hurry.

KING. Who are you?

DR. TRUTH. I am Dr. Truth, the greatest doctor in the world, as you will soon see in spite of my modesty. Ask Wieduwillst, my pupil, who sent for me from the Land of Dreams. I cure everybody, even those who are not ill. Put out your tongue, that's right. Where is the opinion? (*Picks up a paper which the other doctors had left on the table*) Very well. "Atony"—*asinis*. "Plethora"—*asini*. "Nervousness"—*asinorum*. "Drink the Clear Waters"—*asininum*. Do you know what is your disease? It is vexation and even worse.

KING. (*Terrified*) Do you see that?

DR. TRUTH. Yes, my son, it is written on your tongue. But I will cure you. It shall be done by tomorrow noon.

KING. Tomorrow! All my treasures shall—

DR. TRUTH. Silence, my son. What portfolio is that? The minister's? Good! Sign these papers for me. (*Taking papers from portfolio*)

KING. They are blank decrees. What do you wish to do with them?

DR. TRUTH. They are my ordinances. Sign. (*KING signs*) Well done, my son. Be obedient, and tomorrow noon you shall be as gay as a lark.

First ordinance: If you would be at peace, appear at peace. I suppress six regiments.

Second ordinance: A penny in a peasant's pocket is worth twenty in the king's treasury. I suppress one-fourth of the taxes.

Third ordinance: Liberty is like the sunshine, it is the happiness and fortune of the poor. I throw open the political prisons and demolish the debtors' prisons.

You are laughing, my son. It is a good sign when a patient laughs at his doctor.

KING. Yes, I am laughing to think of Wieduwilist's face tomorrow, on reading these ordinances in the Court Gazette. Enough of these follies, buffoon doctor! Give me back the papers, and put an end to this farce.

DR. TRUTH. What is this? (*taking up the decree of the regency*) God forgive me! It is an abdication! What are you thinking of, King Charming? What! this inheritance, bequeathed to you by your fathers,—the people intrusted to you by God,—your name, your honor,—will you throw all these at the feet of an adventurer? Will you let yourself be dethroned and duped by a deceiver? Impossible! It does not suit me. I oppose it. Do you hear?

KING. What insolent fellow addresses his king in this way?

DR. TRUTH. Politeness is not in words. Charming, are you mad? Are you dreaming? Are you wholly without heart?

KING. This is too much. Begone, wretch, or I will throw you out of the window.

DR. TRUTH. Begone! No, not till I have destroyed this mad and stupid document. See! I tear your abdication in pieces and trample it under foot! (*At this the KING attempts to seize the doctor; they struggle and the lamp is overturned*) Let me go, for heaven's sake, let me go! You know not what you are doing. You are breaking my arm. (*Noise of struggling, in the dark, ended by what sounds like a blow on the KING's ear*)

KING. Help! Help!

(*RACHIMBURG enters slowly R., bringing a light*)

KING. Where is that infernal doctor?

RACHIMBURG. It is more than an hour, Sire, since His Excellency quitted the palace.

KING. Who is talking of Wieduwillst? Which way did the villain go that just insulted me? (RACHIMBURG *raises his eyes contritely and sighs*) A man went out of the door that leads to your rooms. How did he enter, and where has he fled?

RACHIMBURG. Sire, I have neither quitted my post, nor seen anyone.

KING. I tell you that a man was in this room a moment ago.

RACHIMBURG. Sire, Your Majesty is never mistaken. If a man was in this room, he is here still, unless he has flown through the window, or Your Majesty has been dreaming.

KING. Fool! do I look like a man who has been dreaming? Did I overturn this lamp? Did I tear these papers?

RACHIMBURG. Sire, I am nothing but a worm of the earth. God forbid that I should contradict my sovereign. Your Majesty does not hire me to give him the lie. But this year strange dreams are epidemic. No one knows what he may do or suffer in his sleep. Only just now I was overtaken with sleep in spite of myself, and if I were not sure that I was dreaming, I should declare that an invisible hand boxed my ears twice, at which I awakened with a start.

KING. It was the spectre!

RACHIMBURG. Your Majesty is right. I am nothing but a simpleton,—it was the spectre.

KING. And I did not know her! Nevertheless, it was her voice and air. What does this mean? Is it a new insult? Is it a warning from heaven? Does some danger threaten me? No matter, I will remain in my kingdom.

My friend, not a word of this: take this purse and keep a secret.

RACHIMBURG. That makes three.

CURTAIN.

SCENE 2. *Same. Time—next morning.*

(KING *discovered, seated. Enter RACHIMBURG L.*)

RACHIMBURG. Sire (*presenting large bouquet of flowers*), will His Majesty permit the humblest of his servants to express to him the universal joy? (*Sound of huzzas heard, from without*) Your people are intoxicated with love and gratitude. The taxes lessened! The prisons opened! The army reduced! Sire, you are the greatest prince in the world. Never has the earth seen a ruler like you.

Sire, show yourself at the balcony. Answer these cries of "Hurrah for the king"! Smile on the people that bless you!

(*More huzzas heard. KING steps from the room to balcony L., and is seen bowing acknowledgment of the people's cheers. Clock is heard to strike twelve as he steps back into the room, weeping with joy, overcome with the gratitude of his people. He sinks into a chair, as RACHIMBURG waits upon him. Enter TONTO, with letter which he presents to the KING.*)

TONTO. Sire, a letter from Bayonet,—an officer brought it at full gallop!

KING. (*Reading*) This is terrible news. The disbanded regiments have mutinied—under Wieduwillst! They proclaim the downfall of the king,—and accuse him of terrible crimes. Numerous and well commanded, the insurgents approach the city. Bayonet intreats me to come instantly and take command.

RACHIMBURG. At once, My Lord! This way, Sire.

TONTO. Oh, Sire, make haste!

(*All exeunt hastily, L. as curtain drops*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE 3. *Bayonet's tent. (One entrance at rear.) Time—afternoon of same day.*

(*BAYONET discovered, pacing to and fro impatiently. KING enters and throzes himself disconsolately into a chair. TONTO, having followed him, stands by, looking utterly disheartened.*)

BAYONET. Sire, permit me to speak to you with the frankness of an old soldier and the freedom of an old friend. The army is murmuring and hesitating; we must secure it or all is lost. The enemy is in sight; we must attack him. Five minutes sometimes decides the fate of empires; it is so with us now. Do not wait till it is too late.

(*Enter RACHIMBURG*)

KING. Very well. To horse! In an instant I will be with you.

(*Exit BAYONET*)

KING. My good friends—Rachimburg, and Tonto,—quit a master who can do no more for you. I shall not dispute my wretched life with my enemies. Betrayed in friendship, and treacherously assassinated, I recognize in my misfortune the hand of God. It is in punishment of my crime. I killed the queen in my stupid vengeance; the hour has come to expiate my fault, and I am ready.

TONTO. (*Trying to smile*) Sire, shake off these sad thoughts. If the queen were here, she would tell you to defend yourself. Believe me

(*twisting his mustache*) I am acquainted with women. Were they dead, they would still love to avenge themselves. Besides, you did not kill the queen; and perhaps she is not so dead as you imagine.

KING. What do you say? You are losing your reason.

TONTO. I say there are women who die expressly to enrage their husbands. Why should there not be those who would rise from the dead to enrage them still more? Leave the dead, and think of the living who love you. You are a king; fight like a king, and if necessary fall like a king.

BAYONET. (*Entering.*) Sire, time presses!

TONTO. General, to horse! Let us go! (*Exit BAYONET*)

KING. No, I will not go. I do not understand my feelings. I am not afraid of death. I am going to kill myself; nevertheless I will not fight.

TONTO. Sire, in heaven's name summon up your courage! To horse! Great God, the prince will not listen to me! (*wringing his hands*) We are lost! Come! (*taking hold of the KING's cloak*) Up, Sire! To horse, unhappy prince! Save your kingdom—save your people—save all that love you!

Coward! Look at me. I am nothing but a child, yet I am about to die for you. Fight! Do not disgrace yourself. If you do not rise, I will insult you—I, your servant! You are a coward, do you hear? A coward! (*Boxes his ears*)

KING. (*Drawing his sword*) 'S death! Before I die I will have the pleasure of punishing one subject at least!

(*TONTO makes his escape and is heard outside*)

TONTO. The King! my friends, the King! Sound the trumpets! Forward!

(*Exit KING, in a blind rage, after TONTO*)

RACHIMBURG. (*Gazing after them*) By my pike, that is a good page! The king may thank me that he has so good a page. . . . (*Goes to tent door*) . . . Bravo! Bravo! The king is in a mighty fighting mood now. . . . Ah, . . . the little Tonto leads all the troops, still shouting for the king. . . . His Majesty is close on Tonto's heels. . . . Hooray! Hooray! Tonto has disappeared in the ranks. The king is forced to forget everything but the stress of the charge! . . . Ah, now he is a king indeed! He rides like a god! . . . Ah, the insurgents! . . . How their weapons flash! They come apace, but they never can withstand our troops. Oh! (*turning from the door and seizing a weapon*) that Rachimbürg might use this good halberd! I would cleave that false doctor's head from his shoulders—thus—(*suits action to the word*). But no,—my king and my queen have other need of Rachimbürg.

(Falls to picking up weapons, cloaks, etc., that have been left in confusion . . . pauses in his work, meditatively) . . . RACHIMBURG, Jailor . . . RACHIMBURG, Warden of the Castle . . . RACHIMBURG, Personal attendant to his majesty! . . . and a purse with every advance. . . . RACHIMBURG, what next? Be ready!

(Sounds of battle in the distance give way to nearer sounds—clattering and voices. RACHIMBURG goes to door, steps outside, and is heard from without) Ho, comrades . . . What, the page? Bring him within . . . (Enters, followed by soldiers bearing TONTO who has been wounded) . . . There is a couch behind the curtains. Place him there . . . (As soldiers withdraw after placing TONTO on the couch, R. speaks to the last one) . . . Send a messenger at once for his aunt, the Countess of Castro.

(Enter KING, as RACHIMBURG comes from behind curtains)

KING. Is the page dead?

RACHIMBURG. No, Sir, unfortunately for him, he is still living. He is hopeless. I ordered him brought in here, My Lord, and word sent to his aunt, the Countess of Castro.

KING. Is he the Countess' nephew? I was never told of it.

RACHIMBURG. Your Majesty has forgotten it. (Quietly) The poor child is fatally wounded in the shoulder; he cannot recover. It would give him great happiness to see Your Majesty before he dies.

(Enter COUNTESS)

COUNTESS. (Breathlessly) Oh, Sir, I have come in all haste to see my poor P—p—Tonto. Where is my poor, dear Tonto!

KING. Lead us to him, RACHIMBURG.

(RACHIMBURG draws back the curtains that conceal the couch, where TONTO lies pale and bleeding—but able to raise his head in greeting, as the KING and the COUNTESS approach. Tonto, without mustache, keeps only one side of face to audience.)

TONTO. Sire!

KING. What a miracle! This is the strangest wound I ever saw in my life. One side of Tonto's mustache is gone.

COUNTESS. Sire, the blade of the sword probably swept off one side. Nothing is so capricious as a sword wound, as every one knows.

KING. How strange! On one side it is Tonto, my page, my insolent subject, and on the other it is—it is you, my good angel and my savior; it is you, my poor Pazza!

(Falls on his knees and seizes her hands and kisses them reverently)

PAZZA. Sire, my days are numbered, but before dying—

KING. No, no, Pazza, you shall not die!

PAZZA. Before dying—I hope Your Majesty will forgive the box on the ear which I gave you this day, in indiscreet zeal—

KING. Enough! I forgive you. After all, a throne and honor were well worth—what I received.

PAZZA. Alas, that is not all.

KING. What, is there anything more?

COUNTESS. (*As PAZZA seems to be fainting*) Oh, sire! What have you done. My child is dying—

KING. My Pazza, you must not die. Speak, and be sure that I forgive you in advance all that you have done. Alas, it is I who have need of forgiveness.

PAZZA. Sire, the little doctor who took the liberty of boxing your ears—

KING. Was it you that sent him?

PAZZA. No, Sire, I, myself, was he. Ah, what would I not have done to save my King! It was I who, to save Your Majesty from the traitorous knaves that surrounded you, took the liberty of boxing your ears—

KING. Enough! I forgive you, though the lesson was a hard one.

PAZZA. Alas, that is not all.

KING. (*Rising*) What! more?

PAZZA. Oh, aunt! I am dying! (*Sinks back. COUNTESS supports her*)

KING. (*I cry anxiously*) Do you think she will recover, Countess?

COUNTESS. Bah! No matter how ill a woman may be, happiness will bring her back from the brink of the grave. Kiss the queen, my nephew; it will do her more good than all the doctors in the world.

(KING kisses PAZZA, who gradually recovers. COUNTESS withdraws)

PAZZA. Sire,—the gipsy girl at the masked ball, who dared to box your ears—

KING. Was yourself, Pazza. Oh, I forgive you for that. I well deserved it. How could I doubt you, who are sincerity itself? But, now I think of it, do you remember the rash vow you made on the night of your marriage? You have kept your promise. It is for me to keep mine. Pazza, make haste to recover, and return to the castle, from which happiness fled with you.

PAZZA. I have a last favor to ask of Your Majesty. Rachimburg was this day the witness of a scene for which I blush, and of which all must remain ignorant. I commend this faithful servant to your goodness.

KING. Rachimburg, take this purse, and keep the secret, under penalty of your head.

RACHIMBURG. (*After receiving purse*) This makes the fourth. My fortune is made. (*Retires*)

KING. (*Kissing PAZZA'S hand*) My faithful Pazza, I am nothing except through you. All that I know, and all that I think, I owe to you. Without you, I am nothing but a soulless body, fit only for follies.

PAZZA. Pardon me if I contradict Your Majesty.

KING. Oh, I affect no false modesty: I know very well that I have the clearest head of any in my council—my ministers themselves are forced to acknowledge it, for they are always of my opinion. But with all this, there is more wisdom in your little finger than in all my royal brain. My resolution, therefore, is fixed. Let my court and people celebrate my wisdom, my goodness, and even my valor; it is all very well, and I accept the homage. You, alone, have the right to laugh at it, and you will not betray me. But from this day I abandon my power to you.

The king, my dear Pazza, will be only the chief of your subjects, the faithful minister of your will. You shall write the piece, and I will play it; the applause will be mine, according to custom, and I will give it back to you by force of love.

(PAZZA, *who has been slowly rising, during the preceding speech, now stands, rather weakly, supported by CHARMING*)

PAZZA. Do not talk in this way, my dear—

KING. I know what I am saying. I wish you to rule. I mean that in my empire, as in my home, nothing shall be done except by your command. I am the master and the King. I desire and order it.

PAZZA. Sire, I am your wife and servant. It is my duty to obey.

CURTAIN.





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