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FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA

THE ACTING EDITION.

No. CLXXVII.

L A N G E L O ;

OR, THE

ACTRESS OF PADUA.

A PLAY, IN FOUR ACTS.

ALTERED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

G. Æ BECKETT.

//

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A Description of the Costume---Cast of the Characters---Entrances and Exits---
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and
the whole of the Stage Business.

AS PERFORMED AT THE PRINCIPAL
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN THEATRES.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS.—[ACTRESS OF PADUA.]

	<i>Bowery, 1852. Burton's, 1857.</i>	
HOMODEL, - - - -	Mr. E. Eddy.	Mr. Boniface.
SIG. GAUDAGUINI, -	" Martin.	_____
SIG. BERZONIZI, -	" Jordan.	_____
LOREDANO, - - -	" Adams.	" Warwick.
ANGELO MALPIERI,	" E. L. Tilton	" C. Fisher.
RODOLFO, - - - -	" C. W. Clarke	" Briggs.
ANAFESTO, - - -	" Hamilton.	" Mac Rae.
FIRST PRIEST, - -	" Warren.	_____
SECOND PRIEST, - -	" Gouldson.	_____
OFFICER, - - - -	" Favour.	_____
PAGE, - - - - -	Miss Hart.	_____
FIRST WATCHMAN, -	Mr. Smith.	" Bishop.
THISBE, (the Actress,)	Miss Wemyss.	Miss C. Cushman.
CATHERINE, - - -	Mrs. Jordan.	" S. Delni..
REGINELLA, - - -	" Walcot.	" Miller.
DAFNE, - - - - -	Miss Hiffert.	Mrs. Seymour.

COSTUME.

- ANGELO.—Rich shirt—robe—hat and feathers.
- RODOLFO.—Handsome shirt—hat—white feathers—boots, &c.
- ANAFESTO.—Ibid.
- GAUDAGUINI. } Handsome shirts, &c.
BERZONIZI. }
- HOMODEL.—A plain shirt—dark tights—shoes, &c.
- PRIESTS.—Monks' gowns.
- PAGE.—Handsome shirt, &c.
- THISBE.—Handsomely trimmed crimson velvet train, &c.
- CATHERINE.—White satin train. *Second dress:* White muslin.
- REGINELLA. }
DAFNE. } Satin, trimmed with silver.

ANGELO,

AND

THE ACTRESS OF PADUA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Terrace and Garden illuminated for a Fête—Palace L., lighted within, with entrance to Terrace, which is separated by balustrade, with opening in centre to Garden in background—Outline of the Town of Padua seen through the Trees in distance—A bench on each side of the Palace Portal, on one of which lies a Man (Homodei) asleep—Day breaks towards the close of the Act—distant Dance Music as the Curtain rises, which continues during the first dialogue.**

Enter, from Palace, SIGNORS GUADAGUINI, BERGONZI, and LOREDANO.

Gua. (L.) A brilliant fête this. Our actress entertains the nobles as if she had been born among them.

Lor. (R.) Her profusion should indicate great wealth.

Ber. (C.) The admired of all, in all ranks, all become tributary to her.

Gua. Truly so!—Whenever Thisbe enters a city or province, every prince and noble in it seems to be encumbered with diamonds, jewels, or flowers, so profusely are they poured at her feet.

Lor. Well; and if she but give them a smile in return, they have the best of the bargain.

Ber. Bravo! but we cannot be too cautious in speaking for she is now in the favour of one who can strike off our heads for even looking at her.

Gua. Yes! and woe to him who should be suspected of standing between him and the object of his admiration! But see—here he *th*es, and Thisbe with him—gloom and sunshine in unnatural conjunction! [*They retire, R. U. E.*]

* The Piece may be opened with a Ballet, in which case the Dancers should emerge from the Palace as the Curtain rises, and the Performers in the first Dialogue come forward at its conclusion.

Enter THISBE and ANGELO, L. E. E.

This. Yes, here indeed you are master, my lord—the dignified governor of Padua. Sent hither by Venice, you appear to bear in your own person the whole majesty of that terrible republic. When you pass through the streets, the windows are closed, the passengers retreat in awe, and the inmates of the houses tremble. Here you are every body's master, and—[*Laughingly.*—]—you would like to be mine. But, listen, while I tell you a little truth—Don't be afraid,—I'm not going to speak on state affairs, but on your own. [*Hesitatingly.*] Well! yes! I will speak out—you are a strange man, and I do not understand you;—you profess to be enamoured of me, and yet you are jealous of your wife!

Ang. I am jealous of you, too, madame.

This. Oh gracious! You have no right to be jealous of me;—for, although the voice of calumny may pronounce me your mistress, you know that I am not.

Ang. [*Looking around in his desire to change the conversation.*] The fête you have given to-night has been magnificent.

This. Oh! I am but a poor actress, after all, although I am allowed to fête nobles and senators. I did hope to amuse my master, but I have failed. My lights and lamps seem only to render more sombre the shade on your brow. If I give you music, you might at least give me a little gaiety in return. [*Laughing.*] Come now, let me have one patronising smile!

Ang. Well, I do smile.—But did not you call him your brother—that young man whom you brought with you to Padua?

This. I did;—and what of that?

Ang. You were speaking to him just now.—What is this brother's name?

This. Rodolfo, my lord—Rodolfo!—I have told you so at least twenty times before.—Cannot you find something more agreeable to talk about?

Ang. Pardon me, Thisbe—I will not worry you with any more questions. How beautifully you played Rosamanda!—All Italy admires you—but the crowds who gaze on you with admiring eyes fire my jealousy;—I am maddened when I see your beauties made the object of vulgar adoration!—Ah, Thisbe, who was that man in the mask, with whom you spoke so long?

This. [*Mimicking him.*] 'Pardon me, Thisbe—I wil

not worry you with any more questions.' Still, if you must be told, that man, my lord, was Virgilio Tasca.

Ang. My lieutenant!

This. The same.

Ang. And what could you want with him?

This. It would be recounting my history to tell you; and that you cannot care to hear.

Ang. Thisbe, I'm impatient!

This. Well, then, listen.—You know what I am—an actress—a thing caressed to-day, and cast away in scorn to-morrow—one whose destiny it is to act, and therefore supposed to be always acting a part. The daughter of poor people, I live for the fame I have made;—but I have had something better to live for—a mother! Know you what it is to have had a good mother?

Ang. Certainly.

This. I doubt it!—None but the poor know what a mother can be! You have not known what it is to be a poor feeble child, naked, hungry, wandering in helplessness;—but that you have near you—around you—above you—walking when you walk—stopping when you stop—weeping when you weep—smiling when you smile—a woman—more than a woman—the angel destined to watch over you—to teach you to smile, to speak, to love—she whom you call mother, and who calls you child, in accents so sweet, that you can only hope to hear the like again in heaven!—Well, such was the mother I had; she was a poor widow, and a ballad-singer in the streets of Brescia. I used to accompany her, and pick up the money that was thrown to her. It was thus I began my career. One day, it seemed from the laughter of those around, that the song my mother was singing, though she did not understand it, contained some verses derisive of the Venetian government. A senator was passing, who heard and understood it. Turning to an officer who was following him, he ordered him to seize her, and hang her at the nearest place of execution!—My poor mother said nothing—she knew how useless it would be.—She embraced me, let fall one large tear on my forehead, took her crucifix from her bosom, and quietly submitted to be bound. I still see that crucifix—it was of polished brass, with my name, Thisbe, in large letters on the base of it. Motionless as in a trance, I saw my poor mother bound, without power to speak, or cry, or weep. The crowd dared not to speak. But with the senator there was a little girl, whom he held by the hand—his daughter, doubtlessly—who wept aloud her

pity. Oh, she was a beautiful girl, my lord!—Poor child! she threw herself at the feet of the senator—she prayed—she wept such tears from her beautiful eyes, that she obtained my mother's pardon. Yes, my lord, that child saved my mother. When she was released, she took her crucifix, and gave it to that fair child, begging her to preserve it, in the assurance that, sooner or later, it would prove her protector!—

Ang. But how can this concern my lieutenant, Vigilio Tasea?

This. Since then, my mother has died—sainted woman, and I have become rich. I would again see that child—that angel, that saved my mother's life. Child, do I say?—She must be a woman now, and possibly in misery! In every town I visit, I inquire of the governor—of the provost—of the police;—to all I recount my story;—and to him who shall discover the woman I seek, I will freely give ten thousand golden sequins.

Ang. Ten thousand sequins!—Then what would you give to the woman herself, if you found her?

This. My life, if she desired it.

Ang. But how can you recognise her?

This. By my mother's crucifix.

Ang. Psha! she will have lost it.

This. Oh no! a thing so acquired is not lightly parted with.

Ang. [*Perceiving Homodei, and in alarm.*] Madame, Madame! there's a man here! Did you know of his being here?

This. [*Laughing.*] Oh yes, I know there is a man there, and that he sleeps—soundly. You need not worry yourself about him—it is only my poor Homodei.

Ang. Homodei!—Who is that?—Homodei?

This. Yes, Homodei. He is a man, my lord, but that he lacks man's intellect. He is a poor idiot guitar-player, whom the Primate of St. Mark, notwithstanding, sent with a letter to me.—(Don't be jealous, I'll show you the letter)—and at the same time a present.

Ang. What present?

This. Oh, a real Venetian present;—a casket containing two vials, one filled with a strong sleeping-draught, the other with a deadly poison. The Primate's letter conveys a hope that I may find them useful on some occasion—a characteristic piece of gallantry, you see.

Ang. [*Thoughtfully.*] Have you answered me truly about that man?

This. Now you must be joking!—A pretty occasion for alarm—a poor guitar-player—an idiot who passes most of his time in sleep!—Ah, my lord, your whole life is consumed in inquiries relative to one or another!—Is this jealousy, or is it fear?

Ang. Both.

This. Jealousy I can understand. You aspire to the love and fidelity of two women, and must abide the consequences!—But fear—in the governor whom every one fears!

Ang. Therefore is it that I fear every one. [*Approaching close y to Thisbe, and speaking in an under-tone.*] Listen, Thisbe. It is true, I am, as you say, the master—the sovereign—the despot over this town. I am the magistrate placed by Venice over Padua—the paw of the tiger on the lamb. Yes, I am all powerful; but absolute as I am, there is beyond me something more terrible—Venice, with its Inquisition and its Council of Ten. Let us speak softly, Thisbe, or we in Padua may be overheard in Venice. They have spies everywhere—men whom none of us know, and yet they know us all—men who are visible at no ceremony, yet are known to be omnipresent—men who have the lives of all in their hands, your's, mine, even that of the Doge himself; yet they have neither star nor crown to mark them to the eye. We walk the earth like kings, but in an hour we are denounced, condemned!—There is a plash in the canal—they who are gliding by in their gondolas to balls and fêtes start, and pass more quickly.—You, my fair actress, know nothing of these horrors; but I know them too well.—There is in every palace, without the knowledge of him who lives there, a secret passage leading to all the rooms—a dark corridor, of which others, and not the occupier, know the doors. Often, in the night, I start up in my bed; I listen, and hear footsteps in the very walls—Thisbe, I am not placed over Padua, but it is placed over me. I am only a master that I may be a tyrant. Never ask me to pardon any one; for I could not refuse you, and I should be ruined. I have power to punish, but none to pardon. I am well watch'd. Only let me set a workman to make a lock, and before the lock is finished, the Council of Ten has possession of the key. Madame, madame, the valet who waits on me is a spy upon me; the friend who takes me by the hand is a spy upon me; the priest who confesses me is a spy upon me; the woman who tells me she loves me is a spy upon me—

This Oh, sir!

Ang. You have never said you loved me. I do not speak of you, Thisbe. Yes, I repeat, the eye of the Council of Ten is ever on me; the ear of the Council of Ten is ever open to me; the hand of the Council of Ten is ever grasping me. Oh, sad and severe is my condition. Pity me, and do not again ask why I tremble!

This. Yours is indeed a fearful position!

Ang. Ah, Thisbe, I am ever unhappy! I have but one consoling hope, and that is in you. And yet I feel you do not love me;—but you do not love another—say you do not love another.

This. No, no! calm yourself.

Ang. You did not say 'no' as if you meant it.

This. I said it as well as I was able.

Ang. Ah! you will never be mine—I must bear with that; but you are not for another, Thisbe,—never let me hear that another——

[Admiringly and coaxingly.]

This. *[Laughingly.]* Do you think yourself irresistible when you look at me thus?

Ang. Ah, Thisbe, when may I hope for your love?

This. When all about you love you.

Ang. Alas!—Well, at least remain in Padua—I would not you should leave it. When you go, my life will be gone! But what are we about! We have been long in conversation, and there may be listeners.—*[Going.]* I will leave you now. *[Stopping and observing Homodei.]* You can answer for that man?

This. As for a sleeping infant.

Ang. *[Looking off, R.]* Here is your brother coming. I will leave you to yourselves. *[Exit, into Palace.]*

Enter RODOLFO, R. U. E.

This. Ah! it is Rodolfo! it is Rodolfo, my beloved!

[Looking towards the road by which Angelo has departed.] No, poor tyrant, he is no brother of mine. Approach, Rodolfo, my brave soldier, my noble exile, my generous friend! Look me well in the face—you are handsome, and I do love you!—I cannot but confess it!

Rod. Thisbe!

This. Why have you come to Padua? I fear some snare. We cannot get away at present. The chief magistrate is smitten with your poor Thisbe; he will not lose sight of us, and I so fear he may discover who you really are. He shall learn nothing from me—you know that, do you not, Rodolfo?—But you are not anxious about it—you do not appear at all jealous of your rival?

Rod. No, Thisbe—you are a noble charming woman.

This. Oh! but I am jealous of you.—I can't bear to hear you even speak to other women;—what right have they to a word from my Rodolfo?—Oh, never let me have a rival; I should kill her. You are the only man I have ever loved. Your love is the light of my life—the sun that warms and cheers me. Oh! that I had known you ten years sooner. I feel now all the chords of my heart that were chilled with the world's coolness begin to revive within me. What joy to be alone but for a moment!—My Rodolfo! my lover!—My brother, indeed!—I am mad with joy in being allowed to speak to you at my ease!—You see how foolish I am!—Do you love me!

Rod. Who does not love you, Thisbe?

This. If that is all you have to say, I must be satisfied. I must go and show myself among my guests. [*Going, but she returns, places her hand on his shoulder, and looks into his face.*] Tell me—for some time past I have observed you to look sad;—are you so?

Rod. No, Thisbe.

This. And you are not ill?

Rod. No.

This. You are sure you are not jealous?

Rod. No.

This. [*Playfully.*] I wish you were—just a little jealous, that I might be sure you love me!—But come, no more downcast looks.—No one here knows that you are not my brother.

Rod. Except Anafesto.

This. Your friend.—Oh, he can be depended on.

Enter ANAFESTO, R.

Here he is. I will leave you with him for a while. [*To Anafesto, laughingly.*] Monsieur Anafesto, take care that he does not speak with any other woman.

Ana. [*Smiling.*] Make yourself easy, madame.

[*Exit Thisbe, into Palace.*]

Ana. [*Coming forward.*] Charming woman! Rodolfo, you are a happy man—she loves you!

Rod. Anafesto, I am not happy—I do not love her.

Ana. How! what do you say?

Rod. [*Tu'ning, and perceiv'ng Homodei.*] Who is that man, sleeping there?

Ana. No one of any consequence,—only the poor musician. Do you not know him?

Rod. Oh yes—the idiot.

Ana. You do not love This! e!—Is it possible?

Rod. Ah! did I say so? Forget that I have said it.

Ana. Thisbe, that adorable woman!

Rod. Adorable to all others, but I cannot love her.

Ana. Poor Thisbe! But why deceive her?—If you cannot love her, why not tell her so?

Rod. Dare you tell her?—You know her!—There is a secret connected with my life known only to myself.

Ana. Some day you will confide it to your friend,—will you not?—You are too depressed in mind, just now, Rodolfo?

Rod. Yes;—pray leave me to myself awhile.

[*Music.*—*Exit Anafesto*, n. v. e.—*Rodolfo* sea's himself on the bench, near the doorway, and buries his head in his hands—*Homodei* opens his eyes, rises, and passes behind *Rodolfo*, who, absorbed in reverie, does not see him—*Homodei* places his hand on the shoulder of *Rodolfo*, who starts, and looks round with astonishment.

Hom. [*Slowly and emphatically.*] Your name is not Rodolfo, but Ezzelon da Romano. You are of an ancient family, that reigned over Padua, and was banished two hundred years ago. You wander, under a false name, from town to town, sometimes venturing into the state of Venice. Seven years ago, in that city—you were then twenty years old—you saw a beautiful girl in the chapel of St. George. You did not follow her, for in Venice to follow a woman is to rush upon a dagger's point; but you often went again to the chapel, and so did the maiden. You had fallen in love with her, and she with you. Without knowing her name—and you know it not even yet, except that she allowed you to address her as Catherine, you found means to correspond with her, and she granted you meetings at the house of a woman named Cecilia. She was noble—that was all you could learn of her, and a Venetian noble can only wed a noble, or a sovereign; and you are neither the one nor the other. At length, the woman Cecilia apprised you that your Catherine was married. You were no more successful in learning the name of her husband than of her father. In distraction you quitted Venice, and travelled over all Italy, hoping thereby to dispel your suffering, but in vain; you have rushed into the pleasures and dissipations of great cities, equally in vain; you have tried to love other women—you have thought yourself in love with this actress, more in vain still. Three months ago you came to Padua with

Thisbe. One night, while sauntering in solitude, on the bridge of Molino, a woman in a veil passed, and beckoned you. Following her, she led you to the street of St. Peter, in which are the ruins of an old palace. There you found the lady whom you had loved at Venice, true in heart to you as you to her. From that time, and in that place, you had frequent meetings; but, sternly faithful to her enforced marriage vows, you were only allowed to know her as Catherine. About a month ago she failed to come, and it is now nearly five weeks since you have seen her. The reason is, that her husband distrusts her, and keeps her closely guarded. You seek her everywhere—by day and by night—but you cannot find her; and you never will, except through my assistance. Would you like to see her this evening!

Rod. [*Gazing steadfastly at Homodei.*] Man, who are you?

Hom. Ah! question me not—I shall not reply.—Once again, do you wish to see the lady this evening?

Rod. Yes! yes! I would see her. In the name of heaven, let me see her once again, and die.

Hom. You shall see her.

Rod. Where?

Hom. In her own house.

Rod. But tell me about her.—Who is she? what is her name?

Hom. You shall learn more from her own lips.

Rod. Ah! surely you are sent from heaven.

Hom. To-night, at the rising of the moon—or say midnight, that is more specific—be at the angle of the palace that abuts on the street St. Urbano. I shall be there, and will conduct you farther. Mind—at midnight.

Rod. Thanks, thanks! But will you not tell me who you are?

Hom. [*Sardonically.*] Who am I?—An idiot! [*Exit, R.*]

Rod. [*Solus.*] Who can this man be?—No matter! At midnight—how long it seems to have to wait till midnight!—Oh, Catherine, for the hour he promises me with you, I would give up my lifetime.

Enter THISBE, from her Palace.

This. Here I am again, Rodolfo—I cannot be long separated from you—I am the shadow of your body, and you are the soul of mine.

Rod. Beware, Thisbe. My race is fated! There is a malediction hanging over us, that must inevitably descend from father to son. It is death to love us!

This. Very well!—Then you will kill me—what an idea—because I love you.

Rod. Thisbe!

This. You'll make me weep presently—I will have no more of this.

Rod. Thisbe, you deserve the love of an angel!

[*Kisses her hand, and exit, R. S. E.*]

This. Bless me, how he leaves me!—Rodolfo!—he's gone! What can be the matter with him? [*Looking towards the bench on which Homodei had lain.*] Oh! Homodei has awakened.

Re-enter HOMODEI, R. U. E.

Hom. [*With affected incoherency.*] Rodolfo is Ezzelino; the seeming adventurer is a prince; the idiot is a wit; the sleeper is a cat on the watch;—while the eye is shut, the ear is wide open.

This. What is he trying to say?

Hom. [*Showing his guitar.*] This guitar has strings that vibrate to the touch;—so has the heart of man and of woman chords that one may play upon.

This. What can he mean?

Hom. Madame, what I wish to say is this;—that if, by chance, you should this day lose a cavalier who wears a white feather in his hat, I could show you where to find him in the evening, with a woman.

This. With a woman!

Hom. Ay, a handsome woman!

This. What! what do you say?—who are you?

Hom. I know nothing.

This. Ah, you are not what I have taken you for. The Podesta was right,—you are a cunning man! Who are you?—Oh, who are you?—Rodolfo with a woman! and this very night! Is that what you would say, eh?—Is that what you would say?

Hom. I know nothing.

This. Oh, you speak falsely! 'Tis impossible! Rodolfo loves me!

Hom. I know nothing.

This. Wretch, thou liest! Some one must have paid you to say this—I have enemies, but Rodolfo loves me! [*Endeavouring to appear composed.*] Go, you have not succeeded in alarming me! I do not believe you!—It must be very mortifying to you to see that what you say has no effect upon me.

Hom. You have doubtlessly remarked that the Signor

Angelo carries on a chain around his neck a little jewel worked in gold. It is a key. Pretend to admire it, and ask him to give it you. I can show you how to use it.

This. A key, do you say?—I will not ask for it! I will not ask for anything. [*Aside.*] This wretch would make me suspect Rodolfo.—[*Aloud.*] I do not want the key.—Go, I will not listen to you.

Hom. [*Crossing, R.*] Angelo comes. When you have got the key, I'll explain to you how it will serve you to-night; I shall return shortly.

This. Wretch! do you not hear me? I told you I did not want the key—I have full trust in Rodolfo—as to the key, I shall not trouble myself about it—I will not say a word to Angelo—therefore do not return, it is useless.

Hom. I shall return shortly. [*Exit, L.*]

Enter ANGELO, R.

This. Ah, sir! whom did you expect to find here?—Are you still jealous?

Ang. Always, madame.

This. You are very silly—what's the good of being jealous?—If I loved a man, I should certainly not be jealous.

Ang. Do you love no one?

This. Oh, yes; I love somebody.

Ang. Whom?

This. You.

Ang. You love me?—Is it possible?—don't trifle with me—oh! repeat what you have just said to me.

This. I love you. [*Sh. approaches him rapturously, and takes hold of the chain that hangs to his neck.*] Oh! what's this——? I never remarked it before.—It's very pretty—well worked—charming—it's so pretty it ought to belong to a woman.

Ang. Ah, Thisbe! you have filled my heart with joy by a word of kindness.

This. Well—well—but tell me what is this?

Ang. This—it's only a key.

This. Ah, a key, is it? Well, I never should have thought of that.—Ah! I see now—yes, it is a key.

Ang. Yes, my Thisbe.

This. Oh, as it's only a key, I don't want it.

Ang. Why did you then want it, Thisbe?

This. Why—yes—merely as a prettily worked trifle.

Ang. Oh, then—pray take it.

[*He detaches the key from his collar.*]

This. It is of use to you, perhaps.

Ang. Oh, very seldom; besides, I have another—you can take it.

This. No, I've no wish for it—can doors be opened with that key?—it's a very small one.

Ang. Oh, that's nothing—these keys are meant for secret locks—this opens many doors—among others, that of my sleeping apartment;—pray take it.

This. Indeed! well, since you are so pressing, I will take it.

Ang. Oh! thank you—what happiness! you have made me happy by accepting this trifle.

This. Ah! I remember, the French Ambassador had something very like it—By the bye, I think a stranger was inquiring for you just now in the gallery.

Ang. Do you think so?—A stranger, say you?

This. Yes; and a suspicious-looking person he is.

Ang. Curses on the fellow, to snatch me so soon from you.

This. [*Pointing, r.*] That way.

Ang. [*Kissing her hand.*] Oh, Thisbe! then you do love me?

This. That way—that way—he's waiting for you.

[*Exit Angelo, r.*]

Re-enter HOMODIE L. U. E.

This. [*Running to meet him.*] I've got the key.

Hom. Let me look. [*Examines the key.*] Yes, that's well.—There is in the palace of Angelo a gallery that looks upon the bridge Molino. Conceal yourself there to-night—behind the furniture—behind the tapestry—anywhere you please.

This. I will reward you better hereafter.—For the present, take this purse. [*Gives purse.*]

Hom. Just as you please—but let me finish.—At two hours after midnight I will come and fetch you; I will show you the first door you will have to open with that key.—After that I shall leave you; you can do the rest without me—you have but to go straight onwards.

This. What shall I find after passing the first door.

Hom. A second, which that key will also open.

This. And after the second?

Hom. A third.—That key opens them all.

This. And after the third?

Hom. You will see.

[*Exit Homodei, r. u. e.*—*Thisbe looks after him with astonishment, as Curtain falls.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber richly hung with scarlet, fringed with gold—A magnificent Bed, L., under a Canopy supported by twisted Columns—At the corners of the Canopy crimson Curtains, which can shut and conceal the Bed—An open Window, R.—and a Door concealed by Drapery—A chair for devotion in front of Dressing-Table—Dressing-glass, on which is suspended a Crucifix of polished brass—Folding-doors at back—A door, L., and a small door L. of bed, very much ornamented—Table, C.—Arm-chairs—Large Candlesticks, with candles burning—A large Wardrobe—Gardens, and Steeples seen through the Windows, R. in the Moonlight—Rosary on Table.*

DAFNE and REGINELLA discovered.

Reg. Yes, Dafne,—it's quite true; the thing really happened;—the last time my lady went to Venice, one of the satellites of the Council of Ten, an infamous minion, presumed to make love to her—'o write to her, Dafne; and he even tried to see her.—Could you imagine such a thing? Madame had him discharged.

Daf. [*Opening the door of the Oratory.*] Well, well, Reginella;—but our mistress waits for her prayer-book, you know;—and you should be cautious how you talk.

Reg. [*Arranging books on table.*] Ah! you're right; one must take care what one says in the palace;—there's always some one listening, you may depend upon it,—even in the very walls.

Daf. Do make haste—we will talk another time—my mistress waits.

Reg. [*Looking at things on table.*] If you're in such a hurry, go yourself, and I'll follow. [*Dafne goes out at door, R., and shuts the door without Reginella perceiving her.*] But you see, Dafne, I always recommend silence in this horrid palace; this is the only room where one's in safety—this is the only place where one can speak freely, and be sure of not being heard.

[*While she is speaking, a wardrobe behind her, fixed to the wall on the right, turns round of itself, and HOMODEI enters through the aperture, without her perceiving him;—the wardrobe again turns, and closes the opening.*

Hom. (R.) [*Mimicking her.*] 'This is the only place where one can speak freely, and be sure of not being heard.'

Reg. [*Turning round.*] Good heavens!

Hom. Silence!

[He opens his cloak, and discovers, on his vest of black velvet, the three letters C. D. X., embroidered in silver—Reginella looks at the letters, and regards the man with terror.]

When any person has seen one of us, and gives the smallest reason for another to guess that one of us has been seen, the party seeing us dies before the day is over. You know the truth of this, for you must have heard us spoken of.

Reg. Heavens! what door did he come in at?

Hom. By none.

Reg. Oh! mercy!

Hom. Answer my questions, and do not deceive me;—your life depends on it.—Where does that door lead to?

[Pointing to door, L.]

Reg. To the sleeping apartment of my master.

Hom. *[Pointing to small door at back.]* And that?

Reg. To a secret staircase that communicates with the galleries of the palace;—my master alone has the key.

Hom. *[Pointing to door near dressing-table.]* And that?

Reg. To the oratory of my lady.

Hom. Is there an outlet from that oratory?

Reg. No:—the oratory is in a tower—and in that there is only one grated window.

Hom. *[Going to window, and looking out.]* Which is on a level with this.—That's well—twenty-four feet to the end of the wall—and then the Brenta.—The grating is unnecessary.—But there is a small staircase in the oratory—where does it lead to?

Reg. To the chamber of Dafne, sir.

Hom. Is there any outlet from that chamber?

Reg. No, sir; only a grated window, and no door but that which leads down to the oratory.

Hom. When your mistress comes in, you will go up into your room, and remain there, without listening, and without speaking.

Reg. I will obey, sir.

Hom. Where is your mistress?

Reg. In the oratory, at prayer.

Hom. She will return here presently?

Reg. Yes, sir.

Hom. Not sooner than a quarter of an hour?

Reg. No, sir.

Hom. That's well; now go.—*[Reginella is going, R., but Homodie stamps with his foot, and she comes back.]* You have not seen me—you do not even know that I exist—you understand? If you hazard a word, I shall hear it;

a glance of the eye, I shall see it; a gesture—a sign—a motion of the hand—I shall perceive it.—Now go.

Reg. Oh, heaven! is any one to be killed here?

Hom. Yes—you, if you speak.

[*Music.*—At the signal from *Homodei*, *Reginella* goes out at the small door near the dressing-table—when she is gone, *Homodei* approaches the wardrobe, which turns round as before, and discovers to the audience a dark passage.

Signor Rodolfo, you can come in now—nine steps to ascend.

Enter RODOLFO, enveloped in a cloak.

Rod. Where am I?

Hom. Where are you?—perhaps on the steps of the scaffold.

Rod. What say you?

Hom. Have you never heard that there is in Padua a chamber, which, though redolent of flowers, of perfumes, and even perhaps of love, no man can penetrate whoever he be, noble or subject, young or old, but his so entering, or even opening the door, is a crime punished by death.

Rod. Yes; the chamber of the wife of the Podesta.

Hom. Just so.

Rod. Well?

Hom. You are in it.

Rod. In the room of Angelo's wife?

Hom. Yes.

Rod. Is it she whom I love?

Hom. Her name is Catherine Bragadine, wife of Angelo Malipieri, chief magistrate of Padua.

Rod. Is it possible?—Catherine Bragadine the wife of the Podesta!

Hom. If you are afraid, there is yet time to retreat.—Look, the door is open.

Rod. I fear not for myself—no!—But for her—[*Placing his hand on his sword, as if about to draw it.*]—this is endangering her! Who are you?—how can I answer for you?

Hom. How can you answer for me?—I'll tell you, since you will have it. Eight nights ago, at one hour past midnight, you were passing the piazza of Saint Prodocini, alone—you heard the noise of swords and cries of distress, behind the church; you ran to yield assistance—

Rod. Yes; and I put to flight three assassins who were attacking one man, who was masked—

Hom. And he left you without either thanking you or telling you his name—He had business that night that could not be delayed.—I am that man.—Will you trust me now?

Rod. Yes—yes—I'll trust you. [*Repl'acing his sword.*] I was afraid there might be treachery towar s her;—but you have made me easy. You have done more for me than I for you. I could not have lived much longer without seeing Catherine.—I saved only your life—you have saved my heart—you have saved my soul!

Hom. Will you then remain?

Rod. Will I remain!—will I remain;—I trust in you, I tell you.—Oh! to see her again—but an hour—a minute.—Where is she?

Hom. There—in the oratory.

Rod. Where shall I see her?

Hom. Here.

Rod. When?

Hom. Very shortly.

Rod. Oh, heaven!

Hom. Attend to me.—[*Pointing to Angelo's chamber.*] That door leads to the bedroom of Ang lo.—He is now asleep, and no one is awake in the pa'ace bnt the Lady Catherine and ourselves. As to the way we came in, I cannot confide to you a see et that must remain known to me alone. [*Pointing to the window, and laughing.*] That is the only outlet which concerns you, as you are the lover; but I do not advise you to use it—twenty-four feet to the bottom, and a river after that.—Now I will leave you.

[*Going*

Rod. In a short time you say Catherine will be here?

Hom. Yes.

Rod. Will she come alone?

Hom. Perhaps not; stand out of sight a few minutes.

Rod. Where?

Hom. Behind the bed;—or, stop—in the balcony.—You can then discover yourself when you think proper. I think I heard a chair move in the oratory.—My Lady Catherine comes.—It is time for us to separate.—Adieu!

Rod. [*Near the balcony.*] Whoever you may be, after such a service as this, everything I have is at your command—my fortune, and even my life.

[*He goes into the balcony, and disappears.*

Hom. [*Coming to the front.*] It's no longer your own to dispose of, my friend.

[*Music.—Homodei looks narrowly that Rodolfo does not see him, and, taking a letter from his bosom, places it on the table—he then goes out by the way through which he entered—the wardrobe turns upon him as he departs.*

Enter CATHERINE and DAFNE, by the door of the Oratory.

Cath. Oh, Dafne! it is all over.—Still, if I could only sleep, I might yet see him in a dream—it is nearly five long weeks since I have seen him—! shall never see him again; I'm shut up—guarded—imprison'd.—It's all over—for to penetrate this chamber is death.—Oh, I would not see him here—here!—I tremble at the thought.—Oh, Rodolfo!—Dafne, tell me the truth—do you think I shall ever see him again?

Daf. (R.) Nay, lady—

Cath. I am not like other women—pleasures, fêtes, diversions, have no charms for me.—For seven years, Dafne, I have had in my heart but one thought, love—but one sentiment, love—and but one name, Rodolfo. Yet mercilessly have I been forced to marry a man to whom I dare not even speak.—Oh, what a wretched fate is mine!

Daf. Dismiss these sad thoughts, my lady.

Cath. Oh! the happy hours we have passed together! Is it guilty to speak thus?—No, it cannot be.—Ah! I see my grief distresses you; I do not wish to give you pain;—go—leave me.

Daf. Shall I, madame?—do you not need me?

Cath. No; I shall not require your assistance. Good night, Dafne.

Daf. May heaven watch over you, my lady.

[*Exit Dafne by the Oratory door, R.*

Cath. There was a song he used to sing—he would sing it at my feet, with a voice so sweet.—[*Rodolfo re-appears at doorway in flat.*] Oh! there are moments when I so long to see him!

[*Rodolfo advances, throws his cloak on chair at back, and kneels before her—she starts, and exclaims—*

You here!—how came you here? Oh, heavens!—Rodolfo, do you know where you are?—Do you know that, by coming here, you have placed your life in the utmost jeopardy.

Rod. (L.) What care I? I should die if I did not see you! Had I not better die for having seen you?

Cath. (R.) My life is also in danger;—but I see you again, and what care I for the rest!—One hour with you—and then let the roof fall in, and crush me if it will.

Rod. But heaven will protect us—every one is asleep in the palace—there is no reason why I should not go out as I came in.

Cath. How did you get in?

Rod. By the help of a man whose life I saved—I will explain that to you another time.—Oh! let us think now only of each other.

[*Leads Catherine to a chair, brings forward another, and takes his seat beside her.*]

Cath. You find me much changed, do you not? For the last five weeks I have done nothing but weep.—And you—how have you passed the time?—Have you been sad, too?—what effect has separation had upon you?—Tell me—speak to me.

Rod. Oh, Catherine! to be separated from you is to have a veil over my heart—it is to be without a lamp in a dungeon—without a star at night—what I have felt I cannot describe—of what I have done, I am ignorant.

Cath. And I the same!—Oh! I see that though I have been a prisoner, and you an exile, our hearts have not been separated!—I have much to tell you—I have been shut up here—not allowed to go out—I have suffered so much.—But I have no fear now—oh, I'm so happy to see you—tell me, will you be able to come again?

Rod. Yes; how could I live without it? Fear nothing.

Cath. We do not die of joy, Rodolpho; or I should die now!

Rod. Dearest Catherine!

[*He kisses her hand—she turns her head, and perceives a letter on table.*]

Cath. What is this?—a letter! did you send me this letter!

Rod. No; but it probably belongs to the man who came with me.

Cath. Did a man come with you—who?—let me read? [*She opens the letter hurriedly, and reads.*] 'Madame, the minion who revels in your love, has small enjoyment to compare with his who consummates his great revenge.'

Rod. Merciful heavens! what do you say?

Cath. I know the hand—it is that of a wretch who presumed to love me,—and dared to tell me so.—He is a man called Homodei, a spy of the Council of Ten.—We are lost—it is all a snare, and we are taken in it. [*Goes to the balcony, and looks out.*] Oh, heavens!

Rod. What is the matter?

Cath. Quick—extinguish the lights!

Rod. What is it?

[*Blowing out the lights.*]

Cath. I saw a light in the gallery appear and disappear.

Rod. Unfortunate that I am!—Oh, Catherine, I shall be the cause of your destruction!

Cath. [*Placing her ear against the door at back.*]

Silence!—listen—I think I hear a noise in the corridor.—Yes, some one opens the door—I hear advancing footsteps!—Which way did you enter?

Rod. By a concealed door, which that devil has closed upon me.

Cath. What's to be done?

Rod. This door?— [Trying door, L.]

Cath. No—no!—it leads to my husband's chamber.

Rod. The window?— [Pointing to window, R.]

Cath. There is a terrible abyss beneath.

Rod. This door, then?—

[Advancing to door of Oratory.]

Cath. My oratory, whence there is no outlet—no escape.—Still it is the best—enter, or we are lost!

[Opens the door—Rodolfo rushes in, and Catherine shuts the door, takes out the key, and puts it in her bosom, then goes to door at back, and listens.]

I hear nothing further,—yes—some one comes—they stop—to listen, doubtlessly.—Ah! I'll pretend to sleep.

[Throws off her upper garment, and gets on the bed.] Oh, heavens! how I tremble!

[She closes the bed curtains, and lies down—after a moment's pause, the door at back is seen to open.]

Enter THISBE, noiselessly, pale and cautious, with a lamp in her hand—advancing to table, she examines the lights that have been extinguished, and puts down her lamp.

This. The lamps still smoke! [Turns, and sees the bed—runs to it, and draws the curtains.] She is alone, and pretends to be asleep. [Goes round the room, and examines all the doors.] This is her husband's door. [Puts the back of her hand against the Oratory door.] There is a door here.

Cath. [Sits up in bed, and looks at her with astonishment.] Who is there? Who are you?

This. [Turning, and looking intently at Catherine.] Who is there!—Listen, and I will tell you.—It is the actress of Padua—she whom Angelo would give heaven and earth to make his mistress, who now confronts the wife of Angelo.

Cath. Heavens! [Leaves the bed.]

This. Who am I, indeed, madame? I am she who holds under her grasp, I tell you, a great lady—a married lady—a lady with bright and revered reputation—and I will not easily leave my hold of her, that she may be assured! It had been better for her that the thunderbolt had fallen on her head, than that my look had fallen upon

her countenance!—Now, madame, tell me—are you not hardened that you dare to raise your eyes on me—knowing you have a man concealed here.

Cath. Madame!

[*Both come forward.*]

This. [*Advancing to the chairs, and touching the lumps.*] Ah, dare not to deny it,—he was here—your places are still marked by the chairs—the lamps on the table are yet warm!—Now, by heaven! false woman, you are not better than the painted courtesan—you are not so good—she deceives no one; you deceive all the world; you deceive your family!—you deceive your husband!—you would deceive heaven!

Cath. O, mercy! madame!—

This. [*Impetuously.*] Where is he?

Cath. Who?

This. He!

Cath. I am alone here—I do not know you—but your words freeze me.—I know nothing I have done against you.

This. Where's that man?—I will see him!

Cath. What will become of me?—you are deceived as regards me.—I live retired—isolated—concealed from all eyes.

This. Are you mad to speak to me thus, while your manner is palpably that of the trembling culprit? Come, draw yourself up in simulated indignation—put yourself in a passion, if you dare—that is the way to act the innocent woman. [*Crosses towards R. U. E.—She perceives the cloak, and snatches it up.*] Oh! it's too late now—here is his cloak!

Cath. Heavens!

This. [*Tauntingly.*] No—it's not a cloak—is it? not a man's cloak?—there is no saying exactly who's it is.— [*Pointing to door of Oratory.*] That is your oratory, you say.—Well, open it for me.

Cath. Why?

This. [*Laconically.*] I wish to pray—as you pray;—open it.

Cath. I have not the key.

This. [*Fiercely.*] Open it.

Cath. I don't know where the key is.

This. Perhaps your husband has it—[*Calls.*] Angelo—Angelo—Angelo!—

[*Runs to the door at front, L.—Catherine throws herself before it, and keeps her back.*]

Cath. Not this door—no—you must not—I have done nothing to you; have pity on me—stop but a moment—

I will explain—I have been so confused—so frightened—and then your words—but you'll have pity—you look too kind to be wicked.—I tell you he is a wretch who has done this—a spy; do not wake my husband; he would kill me—I am not guilty—I have perhaps been impudent, but I have no friends—no mother to counsel and protect me.—Pity me; go not to that door—I implore you—I entreat you.

This. I'll hear no more—Angelo!—Angelo! [*Crosses, L.*

Cath. Stay, for heaven's sake!—grant me an instant—only an instant to say my prayers—I will not quit this spot—I will kneel down here—[*Pointing to the dressing-glass, on which the crucifix is suspended.*]—before this crucifix. [*Thisbe turns, and is instantly transfixed with astonishment, on recognising the crucifix.*] Stop, for mercy's sake—pray at my side, will you? and then, if you can, take my life!—

This. [*Rushing to the table, and snatching up the crucifix.*] What crucifix is this?—Tell me, where did it come from?—where did you get it?—who gave it you?

Cath. Do not disturb me with idle questions at such a time as this.

This. How came it into your possession?—speak quickly

[*Takes it to the lamp at table, and examines it.*

Cath. [*Following her.*] I had it from a woman. I did not know her; but her name is on it—Thisbe, I think—she was a poor creature they were going to kill—I begged her life—it was my father who had condemned her, and he granted it. I was but a child then, but the woman insisted on giving me that crucifix—she said that at some period it would do me service.—But why these questions?—Oh, I am faint!

This. [*Aside, with great emotion.*] Heavens! my mother.

[*She buries her face in her hands, and recedes to back of stage—The door leading to Angelo's apartment opens, and he appears in his dressing-gown.*

Cath. [*Coming to the front.*] My husband!—I am lost!

Ang. [*Without seeing Thisbe, who remains near the balcony.*] What is the meaning of this, madame? I thought I heard a noise in your apartment.

Cath. Sir!

Ang. How is it you are not asleep at this hour?

Cath. [*Hesitatingly.*] It is—that——

Ang. Madame, you are trembling—there is some one with you.

This. [*Advancing, c.*] Yes, sir—it is I——

Ang. You, Thisbe!

This Yes—Thisbe.

Ang. What brings you out at so late an hour of the night?—how is it you are here?—and Madame——

This. Why is she trembling, you would ask?—I will tell you.—Listen—it most deeply concerns you.

Cath. (R.) [*Aside, in agony.*] Now all is over!

This. You were to have been assassinated to-morrow morning.

Ang. I——?

Cath. In passing from your palace to mine, you generally go alone; you were to be waylaid and stabbed; I received an intimation of it this very night, and I came in haste to warn your lady against letting you go out to-morrow—that is why I am here so late—that is why your lady is trembling.

Cath. [*Aside.*] Great heaven! who can this woman be?

Ang. Is it possible?—Well—I'm not surprised—you see I spoke the truth when I told you of the dangers that encircle me—but how did you get this warning?

This. From an unknown man, who made me, before he would divulge his secret, promise I would allow him to escape—I have kept my promise.

Ang. You have done wrong—you were right to promise, but you should have afterwards arrested him.—How did you get into the palace?

This. The man I have spoken of found means to open a small door near the bridge Molino.

Ang. How did you penetrate thus far?

This. With that key which you gave me yourself.

Ang. I don't think I told you it opened the door of this room.

This. Yes, indeed you did;—you must have forgotten it.

Ang. [*Perceiving the cloak.*] What cloak is that?

This. [*Furried, but quickly recovering herself.*] It is a cloak the man lent me, to facilitate my passing the outer gates of the palace.—I had also a hat, but I don't know what I've done with it.

Ang. What a life is mine!—ever surrounded by danger.—But tell me, Thisbe——

This. Oh, put off all questions till to-morrow, I entreat—your life is saved for to-night—you ought to be satisfied—you have only now to thank your lady and me.

Ang. Pardon, Thisbe.

This. My conveyance is waiting for me below—you will escort me—let us leave Madame to her repose.

Ang. I am at your service ; but first I must go to my room for my sword—it is necessary I should arm myself.

[*Exit at door, R.*

This. [*Takes Catherine aside.*] Let him escape—quick—by the way I came—there's the cloak—[*Pointing to it, and placing the small key in Catherine's hand.*]—and there's the key. [*Catherine goes towards Oratory.*] Oh! that door—oh! what I suffer—but I don't know yet to a certainty that it is he.

Ang. [*Returning through doorway, L., crossing over to R., and addressing Thisbe.*] Madame, I'm waiting for you.

[*Music.—Angelo takes Thisbe by the hand, and leads her off through balcony—Catherine falls on her knees, as the Curtain falls.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Catherine's Chamber (as before)—The Curtains of the Canopy that encircle the Bed closely drawn.*

Enter ANGELO, and two Priests, at D. F.

Ang. (c.) [*To 1st Priest.*] You, sir, chief of the convent of Saint Antony, cause the nave, the choir, and the altar of your chapel to be hung with black—In two hours—mark me, in two hours—you will perform the funeral service for the soul of an illustrious personage, who will require the ritual at that time; you will light three hundred torches of black wax, as you do at the obsequies of queens; you will place on the black draperies no other ornaments but the arms of Malipieri and those of Bragadine.

1st Priest. Your orders shall be attended to. [*Going.*

Ang. Stay—you will descend immediately, with all your clergy, the cross and banner at your head, into the vault of the Ducal Palace, where the tombs are situated. One of them has been opened—a grave has been dug—you will consecrate that grave. Lose no time.—You will also pray for me.

1st Priest. Is it any of your family, sire, that is dead?

Ang. Go. [*The Priest bows low, and exit at D. F.—The other Priest is following—Angelo stops him.*] You, sir, remain;—there is in that oratory a person who wishes to confess to you.

2nd Priest. A condemned man, signor?

Ang. A woman.

2nd Priest. Must I prepare her for death?

Ang. Yes; I will myself lead you to her.

Enter Officer, from door at back.

Offi. Your Excellency ordered the attendance of the lady 'Thisbe;—she is here. [*Exit, L. D. F.—Angelo opens the Oratory, n., and motions the Priest to enter—stopping him at the doorway.*] Remember, sir—on your life, when you depart hence, take care never to divulge the name of the woman you are about to see.

[*Angelo and Priest enter Oratory—door in flat opens.*

Re-enter Officer, conducting THISBE, D. F.

This. [*To Officer.*] Do you know who wants me?

Offi. No, madame.

[*Exit, L. D. F.*

This. Oh! this room—and that door; it affects me strangely to see that door again—he was behind that door.—Am I sure that it was he? Oh! if I were sure Rodolfo was the lover, I would destroy him. [*Pausing.*] No—I would kill myself—yes; when I am once certain that Rodolfo loves another, I shall have nothing left to live for—yes, I will die!—but, without revenge!—and why not?—Rodolfo—Catherine—if it be he, what shall I do!—Oh! what shall I do?—which of us shall die—they, or I?

Re-enter ANGELO, from Oratory.

You have sent for me, I believe?

Ang. Yes, 'Thisbe; I have something of the greatest importance to say to you;—I told you that every day of my life I was in danger, and that treason daily renders it necessary for me to strike at others, in order to avert the point of the dagger from my own bosom.—My most private chambers are no sanctuary from treason!—In one word, my wife is false—she has a lover.

This. [*Eagerly.*] What is his name?

Ang. He is the same that was with her, the night we were in her chamber.

This. His name?

Ang. I'll tell you.—I found it out through a man—a spy of the Council of Ten, who was found stabbed, this morning, by the river's side—two of the night-watch picked him up,—but whether it was a duel or a planned thing, no one knows; he pronounced but a few words, and died.—At the moment of his being struck, he had, however, the presence of mind, to keep in his possession a letter, which he

had doubtless intercepted, and which was brought to me by the man who found him; it was a letter written to my wife, by her lover.

This. What is his name?

Ang. The letter had no signature.—You ask me the lover's name—that is what I cannot discover.—The man who was assassinated mentioned it to the night-watch, but the fools have forgotten it—at any rate, they cannot agree as to what it is;—one says Roderigo—the other Randolpho.

This. And the letter—have you got it?

Ang. [*Feeling in his breast.*] I have!—you may know the writing.

This. Give it me.

Ang. [*Holding the letter in his hand.*] I thought no man could dare to raise his eyes towards the wife of a Malipieri.—Yet some one has dared to stain the golden book of Venice in its fairest page, the page whereon my name was written—the name of Malipieri.—There is a man has been into this chamber—perhaps has walked where I now stand—the wretch has written this letter, and I cannot seize him—I cannot have his blood! Oh! if I could but learn who wrote this letter, I would give the sword of my father, ten years of my life, and this good name, to be revenged.

[*Crosses, L.*

This. But show me the letter.

Ang. [*Letting her take it.*] There it is.

This. [*Looking at it.*] It is Rodolfo!

[*Aside.*

Ang. Do you know the writing?

This. Let me read it. [*Reads.*] “My beloved Catherine you see that heaven protects us—nothing but a miracle saved us last night, from your husband and that woman.” That woman!—[*Continues.*] “Catherine, I love you; you are the only woman I ever loved.—Fear not for me—I am in safety.”

Ang. Well—do you know the writing?

This. [*Returning letter.*] I cannot say who who wrote it, sir. [*With assumed calmness.*

This. You do not know? what think you of it?—It is probably from one who has recently arrived in Padua.—It is the language of a former lover.—What do you advise me, Thisbe?

This. I know not what to advise.

Ang. I have given orders that no one shall enter the palace to-day, but yourself and your brother.—All others are to be arrested, and brought before me.—I shall interrogate

them singly, face to face.—Part of my vengeance I have already secured.

This. What is it?

Ang. The death of my wife.

This. Your wife?

Ang. All is ready—within an hour Catherine Bragadine will be beheaded, as she deserves.

This. Beheaded?

Ang. In this chamber.

This. In this chamber?

Ang. Listen.—Her bed shall be changed into her tomb; I have decided—I have decided too coolly for any one to interfere with my resolve—no prayer could extinguish my rage.—My better feelings, if weak heartedness can be called a better feeling, have interceded for her, but I have cast them aside.—Thisbe! I hate this woman, and married her but for her wealth.—Yet I would not harm her, but that she is guilty.—She must die: it is a necessity, a resolution taken, and she must die.

This. Does the government of Venice permit you to do this?

Ang. I am all powerful to punish, though not to pardon.

This. But your wife's family——?

Ang. Will thank me.

This. Your resolution is taken, you say? She must die! [*After a pause, passed in meditation.*] Well, I approve; but, since all is yet secret—since no name has been pronounced, you would not stain the palace with blood, or make the affair public.—The executioner is a witness—a witness is dangerous. Would it not be better to give her poison?

Ang. You are right, poison would be better—but it must be sure and quick—and I have no poison.

This. But I have.

Ang. Where? what poison?

This. In the box sent me by the Primate of St. Mark.

Ang. Oh, yes; you told me so.—It is a sure and quick poison—well, you're right—I'm glad you thought of it; it is much better.—Listen, Thisbe;—I have every confidence in you—you understand that what I am now compelled to do is justifiable; I do but avenge my honour.—Will you aid me?

This. Yes.

Ang. Her grave is dug—a service is about to be performed—but no one knows for whom—I will have the body conveyed away in secret, by my emissaries.—Quick, the poison.

This. No one but myself knows where it is;—I will myself fetch it.

Ang. Go—I will wait for you.

[*Exit Thisbe, D. F.—The Oratory door opens—The Priest comes out with downcast eyes, his arms crossed on his breast—he traverses the room slowly—as he is going out at the door at the end, Angelo stops him.*]

Is she ready?

2nd Priest. [*Sighing, and bowing in apparent awe and horror.*] Yes, signor.

[*Exit Priest, L.U.E.—Catherine appears at Oratory door.*]

Enter CATHERINE.

Cath. Ready for what?

Ang. To die.

Cath. Die! Is it, then, true?—can it be possible?—Oh, I cannot bring myself to believe it.—To die!—No! I am not ready.

Ang. Does your courage fail you, madame?

Cath. To die thus suddenly! but I have done nothing to merit death.—Grant me but a day—no, not a day—for I feel I should not have more courage to-morrow.—Spare my life—immure me in a convent—but, oh! spare my life!

Ang. I can spare it, as I have already told you, on one condition.

Cath. What?—I do not remember.

Ang. Who wrote that letter? Tell me—name the man—yield him to my vengeance. [*Showing letter*]

Cath. [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, heavens!

Ang. If you deliver him up, you shall live—the scaffold for him, and the convent for you.—I wish to be merciful to you, madame.

Enter THISBE, R. D. F.

Cath. [*Aside.*] What woman is that? 'Tis the one of last night.

Ang. Have you reflected, madame?

Cath. Yes, signor.

Ang. Have you decided to deliver him up?

Cath. I have not for a moment thought of it.

This. [*Aside.*] You are a good and courageous woman!

[*Angelo makes a sign to Thisbe, who gives him a vial of silver—he places it on the table.*]

Ang. Then you will drink this?

Cath. 'Tis poison!

Ang. Yes, madame.

Cath. Great Heaven! you will one day judge this man?—I ask pardon for him.—[*To Thisbe.*] You are a wretch!—you come coldly with poison in your hands.—[*To Angelo.*] I, guilty?—no, I am not;—but I will not condescend to justify myself.—You married me for my money—because I was rich—and how have I passed my life with you these five years?—You never loved me, but yet were jealous—you have imprison'd me—you have had your mistresses—that is allowed you—every thing is allowed to man!—You have been always harsh to me, never even greeting me with a kind word.—Yes, sir—I confess I loved, before I knew you, a man whom I still love—you will kill me for that—you are fortunate in having a letter—a scrap of paper for a pretext.—You judge me, you condemn me, and you execute me, in the dark—in secret—by poison.—You have the power;—but it is the act of a coward.

Ang. Have a care—

Cath. [*To Thisbe.*] And you—who are you?—you are interested in destroying me; you have been a spy upon me; you think you have taken me in the fault, and your place your foot upon my head.—You assist my husband in this abominable act.—Why are you here?—To exult over my destruction?

Ang. [*Seizing her arm, and offering the poison.*] Come, madame, no more delay.

Cath. Well, I will do what you command [*Puts her hand towards the bottle.*] since it must be so. [*Recoils.*] No, it is too horrible—I will not—I cannot.—Think of it once more, while there is yet time—you that are all powerful—reflect—a woman—alone, abandoned, weak, defenceless—no parent—no family—no friend—no help;—to assassinate her—to poison her, miserably, in a corner of her house!—My mother! my mother! my mother!

This. (L.) Poor woman!

Cath. (c.) 'Poor woman'—you then do pity me, madame? Oh, yes; allow yourself to relent—let me explain to you—tell you all.—You will speak to my husband afterwards—you will tell him how horrible is the thing he would do.—As for me, it is natural for me to say so; but if you say so too, it will have some effect.—Sometimes, a word from an indifferent person brings a man back to reason.—If I offended you just now, pardon me, madame—I have done you no harm—no real harm.—I have always been loyal—you understand me, I see—but I cannot say this to my

husband—men will never believe us, you know.—Oh, madame! don't tell me to have courage, I entreat you—ought I to have courage?—I am not ashamed to be a weak woman, in need of your pity.

Ang. Catherine Bragadine, your crime calls for punishment—you must die. [*Again offering poison.*] Will you, or will you not take this, madame?

Cath. [*Crossing, R.*] No!

Ang. No!—Then I return to my first intent.—The executioner! the executioner!

[*Rushes out violently by the door, L. D. F., and shuts it.*
This. [*Advancing hurriedly, taking Catherine by the arm, and addressing her in an under-tone.*] Listen—quick;—we have but a moment.—Since it is you that he loves, I must yield me to my destiny.—Do as you are required, or you are lost—I can't explain more fully.—But of this be assured: the vial, although so labelled, is not poison, but merely a sleeping-draught. Take it, and rely on my after care of you. Just now, the words 'poor woman!' escaped me, and you repeated them aloud—such folly, if repeated, will make the Podesta suspicious of me—I dare not say more.—There is in this room one unhappy woman that must die—but it is not you.—Is that sufficient?

Cath. I will do as you desire, madame.

This. That's well—I hear him returning. [*Thisbe throws herself before the door at the moment it is opened.*] Alone—alone—come in alone!—She is resigned to the poison.

Ang. Then give it to her.

[*He places the vial in the hand of Thisbe, who passes it to Catherine.*

Cath. (c.) [*Taking the vial.—To Thisbe.*] I know of your intimacy with my husband.—If your secret thought is to take my place, you are wrong to envy it.—This is an abominable act, and though it is hard to die at my age—yet I would rather do so than change conditions with you. [*She drinks.—Thisbe gets round to R.*] Oh! the liquid freezes my blood. [*Looks fixedly on Angelo.*] Now, murderer! are you satisfied?—I feel that I am dying—yes—you are my destroying devil, as I will presently tell the Creator of us all—I have loved, but I have never violated my nuptial vows!—I feel my senses fail me.—[*Thisbe makes an effort to place a chair for her.*] No—not that chair—do not touch me.] *She falters towards her Oratory.*] I wish to die upon my knees—before the altar there;—to die alone—in tranquility. [*Having, by this time, reached the door, she leans against the door-post.*] I have lived in

purity, and I wish to die in prayer!

[Exit, staggering into Oratory, as Curtain falls.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A handsomely furnished and carpeted Apartment, with Bed in Recess at back, screened from view by Curtains—Door on R. of Recess—Dressing-table, R.—Hand-mirror on do.—Chairs, Tables, &c., on which are scattered Theatrical Dresses, Masks, Manuscripts, &c.*

This. [*Solus, seated at table, c.*] Oh, what are stage exhibitions compared with the realities of life! Scarcely could Angelo have supposed the life-blood of his victim—his wedded wife—to have cooled in her veins—or her heart to have performed its last vibration, ere he had ordered her instant, unattended, unblessed burial, in a grave already made in the dark vaults of his unhallowed habitation!—There she would indeed have perished, but for the actress's gold;—for two hundred sequins, the mercenaries have contrived to bear her hither. [*Takes hand-mirror from table—draws the curtains, and discovers bed, on which Catherine is laid, with the brass crucifix on her breast—holds the mirror over her mouth, and, after examining it, says—*] Thank heaven, she breathes! [*Takes up crucifix.*] Oh! if this crucifix has brought happiness to any one, that one is not your child, my mother!

[Closes the curtains, comes forward, and lays the crucifix on the table.]

Enter PAGE, R.

Page. Two men, night watchers, ask for admittance.

This. Desire them to come in. [*Exit Page, L. S. E.*]

Enter two Watchers of the Night, L. S. E.

This. You are sure that no one saw you pass from the palace hither?

1st Watcher. Quite, Madame. The night is densely dark—the town is deserted—we have not met a soul on our way. We have put the coffin into the grave, and have covered it with the stone, as ordered by the Podesta. Fear nothing. We know not whether the woman be dead or

not, but it is certain that we have made believe to bury her, and you can now do as you like with her.

This. That is well!—[*To Page.*] Where is the male attire I bade you to have ready.

Page. [*Pointing to parcel on table.*] There, Madame.

This. And the two horses—are they in readiness?

Page. They are in the forecourt, saddled and bridled.

This. [*To Night Watcher.*] How long does it take, with a good horse, to get out of the Venetian states?

1st Watcher. According to circumstances. Not above three hours, in fine weather.

This. That is sufficient.—Now go.—Be silent about all this, and come to-morrow morning to receive your promised reward. [*Exeunt Night Watchers, L. U. E.*] Now, [*To Page.*] go and close the outer doors, and find some excuse for letting no one in.

Page. The Signor Rodolfo, Madame—is he also to be excluded?

This. No, let him pass—no one else.—Take care that not another living being pass in here; and, above all, when Rodolfo has arrived, be you in readiness to enter when I call.—For the present, leave me. [*Exit Page, u.*] I think it will not be long ere she awakes.—She was loath to die—no wonder—I can now understand why: she loves, and has her love returned.—My head burns—it is three nights since I have slept; but to-night I will sleep. [*Contemplates the stage dresses scattered around.*] Oh yes, we actresses are a happy race—we are so admired, so flattered. Nightly, we have flowers cast at our feet—how then can we have hearts bleeding within us!—Oh, Rodolfo, Rodolfo, to believe that you loved me was the one idea on which I existed. I have often thought I should like to die near him—to die in such a way that he could never tear my remembrance from his soul, but that my shadow should for ever be at his side, standing between him and all womankind.—To die is nothing—but awful it is to be forgotten by the one loved before all the world!—Oh, Rodolfo, see to what I am fallen—see what love has done for me!

[*Greatly agitated—after a pause, she starts as if hearing footsteps, and turns round.*]

Enter RODOLFO, from door in panel of flat.

Is it you, Rodolfo?—So much the better.—I have something to say to you—Listen!

Rod. And I have something to say to you ;—so listen you, Madame——

This. Rodolfo !

Rod. Are you alone, Madame ?

This. I am alone.

Rod. Give orders that no one enter.

This. I have already done so.

Rod. Let me be sure that all the doors are fast.

[*Passes round and examines them.*]

This. [*Anxiously.*] I wait for what you have to say to me.

Rod. [*Advancing close to Thisbe, and scrutinizing her face with ill-suppressed vengeance.*] Whence have you come?—why are you pale?—what have you been doing?—Tell me—what have those hands done? Tell me—how have you passed each of the hours of the last execrable day?—Tell me—no, you need not tell me—I will tell you.—Don't answer—don't deny—don't invent—don't lie!—I know all—I know all, I tell you,—you shall see that I know all!—Dafne, who was within a few paces of you, has told me all. She was separated from you by one door only.—In the oratory—she was there—at your very side—she heard you—she saw you—I'll tell you the very words that passed. Angelo said, 'I have no poison;' you replied,—'But I have—I have—I have!' Did you not say so?—Yes or no?—Oh! you had poison, had you!—Well, Madame, and I have a dagger!

[*Drawing a dagger from his vest.*]

This. Rodolfo !

Rod. You have but a few moments for preparation, Madame!

This. Ah! you would kill me!—You would kill me without even listening to me!—For the love of another, you would kill me!—Oh, Rodolfo, it is then true—tell me from your own mouth—you have never loved me?

Rod. Never!

This. That word has killed me!—your dagger can but shorten the pangs of dying!—But tell me, did you love her?—

Rod. Did I love her?—Oh, she was a being pure, chaste, and holy—that woman was my altar, my life, my blood, my fondest thought, my consolation, the light of my eyes.—Let that tell you whether I loved her!

This. Then I have done well!

[*Crossing, L.*]

Rod. Done well!

This. [*Returning.*] Yes, I have done well;—but you know not what I have done!

Rod. Too well I know!—What Dafne has told me still rings in my ears. There were but three in the chamber—she, her husband, and yourself. For two long hours you kept her there, weeping, praying, asking pardon, begging for her life on her knees;—but all in vain!—It was you—Thisbe—who made her drink the poison!—Angelo went out to fetch the executioner, and you then said to her, in a whisper, some terrible things, which made her swallow the deadly potion!—Madame, [*Drawing a handkerchief from his breast.*] this handkerchief, found in Catherine's chamber, is yours!—and [*Pointing to the crucifix.*] that crucifix was hers!—I know them both!—Come—pray, weep, cry, ask pardon—do quickly what you have to do.

This. Rodolfo!

Rod. Say what you have to say, quick—speak at once!
[*Raising the dagger as if to strike.*]

This. It is all true; and what I have done I would do again!—Strike!

[*Rodolfo is about to strike her, but falters—his arm drops—Thisbe catches the hand in which he has the dagger and stabs herself—Rodolfo stands aghast—Thisbe staggers to a chair, and then supports herself by the back of it*]

[*After a pause.*] Your arrival was opportune, for I had determined to die!—I shall now die near you—at your feet—perhaps in your arms. At least, you will hear my last words—you will receive my last breath—my parting benediction! Listen for a moment;—what I have now to say are not mere words, but the overflowing of a bursting heart. As a child, I was a beggar—at sixteen years of age, I had achieved the world's idolatry, and, as a consequence, worldly wealth was heaped upon me,—yet still was I poor—I yearned after a heart that could understand me, and would love me.—I thought I had found it in you!—Oh, Rodolfo, how much the poor creature who now speaks to you has loved you, you will find, when I am dead. I have made your look my life, your smile my joy, your breath my soul. I have lived on the one idea that you loved me! All is now explained, and I have nothing left to live for. [*Sinks to floor, and appears to be expiring.*]

Rod. [*Calling.*] Help, help!

Enter PAGE, hurriedly, L.

Page. [*Rushing up to Thisbe.*] Ah me, who has done this deed?

This. I myself—no one else has done it. [*A bell is tolled*]

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and continues to be tolled at intervals, till the conclusion of the drama.] What means that knell?

Page. My lady, the Podesta is dead!—That bell announces the event to the citizens of Padua.

This. The Podesta dead, said you?

Page. Yes, Madame; he has but just been discovered dead in his bed. From a vial found by his bedside, labelled as a sleeping-draught, it is concluded he has drank the contents, and that to him they have brought eternal sleep;—for the physicians declare that he has been dead for some hours, and that the bottle has contained a most deadly poison?

This. [*Partially raising herself.*] Oh, horror! I see it all. I left the casket and bottles in his room, and, in the hope of soothing his unquiet mind with a sleeping-draught, he has taken the poison he intended for his wife!

[*Catherine's voice heard behind the curtain of recess, c.*

Cath. Where am I?—Rodolfo!

Rod. [*Starting.*] What do I hear?—what voice is that?

[*Turns round and sees the white figure of Catherine, who enters through the curtains.*

Cath. Rodolfo!

Rod. [*Running to her, and bringing her forward in his arms.*] Catherine! Great Heaven, you here, and alive! How is this?—By whom have you been saved?

[*Catherine points to Thisbe.*

This. By me—for you!

Rod. Oh! what have I done!—Help, help—wretch that I am!

This. [*Faintly.*] No, all help is useless—I feel it. Give yourselves up to joy as if I were not here—I do not wish you to lament. I deceived Angelo by giving Catherine a sleeping-draught instead of the poison. Every one thought her dead, while she did but sleep, and he who thought but to sleep will wake no more!—You are now both free—be happy.

[*She makes an effort to join their hands, but is too feeble—Catherine and Rodolfo fall on their knees, fixing their eyes on the expiring Thisbe.*

I am dying!—you will sometimes think of me, will you not?—You will sometimes bless my memory. Farewell, Madame—let me once more call him my Rodolfo—farewell, my Rodolfo!—I die!—Live and be happy.

[*She expires as the Curtain slowly descends and the bell again tolls.*

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