

Life is a dream

---

Calderón de la Barca



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# PERSONS

\* \* \* \* \*

BASILIOUS, King of Poland.

SIGISMUND, his Son.

ASTOLFO, Duke of Muscovy.

CLOTALDO, a Nobleman.

ESTRELLA, a Princess.

ROSAURA, a Lady.

CLARIN, her Servant.

Soldiers.

Guards.

Musicians.

Attendants.

Ladies.

Servants.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Scene is in the Court of Poland, in a fortress at some distance,  
and in the open field.

LIFE IS A DREAM.

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT THE FIRST.

At one side a craggy mountain, at the other a tower, the lower part of which serves as the prison of Sigismund. The door facing the spectators is half open. The action commences at nightfall.

SCENE I.

ROSAURA, CLARIN.

ROSAURA in man's attire appears on the rocky heights and descends to the plain. She is followed by CLARIN.

ROSAURA. Wild hippogriff swift speeding,  
Thou that dost run, the winged winds exceed-  
ing,  
Bolt which no flash illumines,  
Fish without scales, bird without shifting  
plumes,  
And brute awhile bereft  
Of natural instinct, why to this wild cleft,  
This labyrinth of naked rocks, dost sweep  
Unreined, uncurbed, to plunge thee down the  
steep?  
Stay in this mountain wold,  
And let the beasts their Phaeton behold.  
For I, without a guide,  
Save what the laws of destiny decide,  
Benighted, desperate, blind.  
Take any path whatever that doth wind  
Down this rough mountain to its base,  
Whose wrinkled brow in heaven frowns in the  
sun's bright face.  
Ah, Poland! in ill mood  
Hast thou received a stranger, since in blood

The name thou writest on thy sands  
Of her who hardly here fares hardly at thy  
hands.

My fate may well say so:--

But where shall one poor wretch find pity in  
her woe?

CLARIN. Say two, if you please;

Don't leave me out when making complaints like  
these.

For if we are the two

Who left our native country with the view

Of seeking strange adventures, if we be

The two who, madly and in misery,

Have got so far as this, and if we still

Are the same two who tumbled down this hill,

Does it not plainly to a wrong amount,

To put me in the pain and not in the account?

ROSAURA. I do not wish to impart,

Clarín, to thee, the sorrows of my heart;

Mourning for thee would spoil the consolation

Of making for thyself thy lamentation;  
For there is such a pleasure in complaining,  
That a philosopher I've heard maintaining  
One ought to seek a sorrow and be vain of it,  
In order to be privileged to complain of it.

CLARIN. That same philosopher  
Was an old drunken fool, unless I err:  
Oh, that I could a thousand thumps present  
him,  
In order for complaining to content him!  
But what, my lady, say,  
Are we to do, on foot, alone, our way  
Lost in the shades of night?  
For see, the sun descends another sphere to  
light.

ROSAURA. So strange a misadventure who  
has seen?  
But if my sight deceives me not, between  
These rugged rocks, half-lit by the moon's ray  
And the declining day,

It seems, or is it fancy? that I see  
A human dwelling?

CLARIN. So it seems to me,  
Unless my wish the longed-for lodging mocks.

ROSAURA. A rustic little palace 'mid the rocks  
Uplifts its lowly roof,  
Scarce seen by the far sun that shines aloof.  
Of such a rude device  
Is the whole structure of this edifice,  
That lying at the feet  
Of these gigantic crags that rise to greet  
The sun's first beams of gold,  
It seems a rock that down the mountain rolled.

CLARIN. Let us approach more near,  
For long enough we've looked at it from here;  
Then better we shall see  
If those who dwell therein will generously  
A welcome give us.



ROSAURA. See an open door  
(Funereal mouth 'twere best the name it bore),  
From which as from a womb  
The night is born, engendered in its gloom.

[The sound of chains is heard within.]

CLARIN. Heavens! what is this I hear?

ROSAURA. Half ice, half fire, I stand trans-  
fixed with fear.

CLARIN. A sound of chains, is it not?  
Some galley-slave his sentence here hath got;  
My fear may well suggest it so may be.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE II.

SIGISMUND, [in the tower.] ROSAURA,  
CLARIN.

SIGISMUND [within]. Alas! Ah, wretched me!  
Ah, wretched me!

ROSAURA. Oh what a mournful wail!  
Again my pains, again my fears prevail.

CLARIN. Again with fear I die.

ROSAURA. Clarin!

CLARIN. My lady!

ROSAURA. Let us turn and fly  
The risks of this enchanted tower.

CLARIN. For one,  
I scarce have strength to stand, much less to  
run.

ROSAURA. Is not that glimmer there afar --  
That dying exhalation -- that pale star --  
A tiny taper, which, with trembling blaze  
Flickering 'twixt struggling flames and dying  
rays,  
With ineffectual spark  
Makes the dark dwelling place appear more  
dark?  
Yes, for its distant light,  
Reflected dimly, brings before my sight  
A dungeon's awful gloom,  
Say rather of a living corse, a living tomb;  
And to increase my terror and surprise,  
Drest in the skins of beasts a man there lies:  
A piteous sight,  
Chained, and his sole companion this poor  
light.  
Since then we cannot fly,  
Let us attentive to his words draw nigh,  
Whatever they may be.

[The doors of the tower open wide, and SIGISMUND is discovered in chains and clad in the skins of beasts. The light in the tower increases.]

SIGISMUND. Alas! Ah, wretched me! Ah, wretched me!

Heaven, here lying all forlorn,  
I desire from thee to know,  
Since thou thus dost treat me so,  
Why have I provoked thy scorn  
By the crime of being born?--  
Though for being born I feel  
Heaven with me must harshly deal,  
Since man's greatest crime on earth  
Is the fatal fact of birth --  
Sin supreme without appeal.  
This alone I ponder o'er,  
My strange mystery to pierce through;  
Leaving wholly out of view  
Germs my hapless birthday bore,

How have I offended more,  
That the more you punish me?  
Must not other creatures be  
Born? If born, what privilege  
Can they over me allege  
Of which I should not be free?  
Birds are born, the bird that sings,  
Richly robed by Nature's dower,  
Scarcely floats -- a feathered flower,  
Or a bunch of blooms with wings --  
When to heaven's high halls it springs,  
Cuts the blue air fast and free,  
And no longer bound will be  
By the nest's secure control:--  
And with so much more of soul,  
Must I have less liberty?  
Beasts are born, the beast whose skin  
Dappled o'er with beauteous spots,  
As when the great pencil dots  
Heaven with stars, doth scarce begin  
From its impulses within--  
Nature's stern necessity,

To be schooled in cruelty,--  
Monster, waging ruthless war:--  
And with instincts better far  
Must I have less liberty?  
Fish are born, the spawn that breeds  
Where the oozy sea-weeds float,  
Scarce perceives itself a boat,  
Scaled and plated for its needs,  
When from wave to wave it speeds,  
Measuring all the mighty sea,  
Testing its profundity  
To its depths so dark and chill:--  
And with so much freer will,  
Must I have less liberty?  
Streams are born, a coiled-up snake  
When its path the streamlet finds,  
Scarce a silver serpent winds  
'Mong the flowers it must forsake,  
But a song of praise doth wake,  
Mournful though its music be,  
To the plain that courteously  
Opes a path through which it flies:--

And with life that never dies,  
Must I have less liberty?  
When I think of this I start,  
Aetna-like in wild unrest  
I would pluck from out my breast  
Bit by bit my burning heart:--  
For what law can so depart  
From all right, as to deny  
One lone man that liberty --  
That sweet gift which God bestows  
On the crystal stream that flows,  
Birds and fish that float or fly?

ROSAURA. Fear and deepest sympathy  
Do I feel at every word.

SIGISMUND. Who my sad lament has heard?  
What! Clotaldo!

CLARIN [aside to his mistress]. Say 'tis he.

ROSAURA. No, 'tis but a wretch (ah, me!)

Who in these dark caves and cold  
Hears the tale your lips unfold.

SIGISMUND. Then you'll die for listening so,  
That you may not know I know  
That you know the tale I told.

[Seizes her.]

Yes, you'll die for loitering near:  
In these strong arms gaunt and grim  
I will tear you limb from limb.

CLARIN. I am deaf and couldn't hear:--  
No!

ROSAURA. If human heart you bear,  
'Tis enough that I prostrate me.  
At thy feet, to liberate me!

SIGISMUND. Strange thy voice can so unbend  
me,



Strange thy sight can so suspend me,  
And respect so penetrate me!  
Who art thou? for though I see  
Little from this lonely room,  
This, my cradle and my tomb.  
Being all the world to me,  
And if birthday it could be,  
Since my birthday I have known  
But this desert wild and lone,  
Where throughout my life's sad course  
I have lived, a breathing corse,  
I have moved, a skeleton;  
And though I address or see  
Never but one man alone,  
Who my sorrows all hath known,  
And through whom have come to me  
Notions of earth, sky, and sea;  
And though harrowing thee again,  
Since thou'lt call me in this den,  
Monster fit for bestial feasts,  
I'm a man among wild beasts,  
And a wild beast amongst men.

But though round me has been wrought  
All this woe, from beasts I've learned  
Polity, the same discerned  
Heeding what the birds had taught,  
And have measured in my thought  
The fair orbits of the spheres;  
You alone, 'midst doubts and fears,  
Wake my wonder and surprise --  
Give amazement to my eyes,  
Admiration to my ears.  
Every time your face I see  
You produce a new amaze:  
After the most steadfast gaze,  
I again would gazer be.  
I believe some hydropsy  
Must affect my sight, I think  
Death must hover on the brink  
Of those wells of light, your eyes,  
For I look with fresh surprise,  
And though death result, I drink.  
Let me see and die: forgive me;  
For I do not know, in faith,

If to see you gives me death,  
What to see you not would give me;  
Something worse than death would grieve me,  
Anger, rage, corroding care,  
Death, but double death it were,  
Death with tenfold terrors rife,  
Since what gives the wretched life,  
Gives the happy death, despair!

ROSAURA. Thee to see wakes such dismay,  
Thee to hear I so admire,  
That I'm powerless to inquire,  
That I know not what to say:  
Only this, that I to-day,  
Guided by a wiser will,  
Have here come to cure my ill,  
Here consoled my grief to see,  
If a wretch consoled can be  
Seeing one more wretched still.  
Of a sage, who roamed dejected,  
Poor, and wretched, it is said,  
That one day, his wants being fed

By the herbs which he collected,  
"Is there one" (he thus reflected)  
"Poorer than I am to-day?"  
Turning round him to survey,  
He his answer got, detecting  
A still poorer sage collecting  
Even the leaves he threw away.  
Thus complaining to excess,  
Mourning fate, my life I led,  
And when thoughtlessly I said  
To myself, "Does earth possess  
One more steeped in wretchedness?"  
I in thee the answer find.  
Since revolving in my mind,  
I perceive that all my pains  
To become thy joyful gains  
Thou hast gathered and entwined.  
And if haply some slight solace  
By these pains may be imparted,\*  
Hear attentively the story  
Of my life's supreme disasters.  
I am ....

[footnote] \*The metre changes here to the vocal "asonante" in "a--e", and continues to the end of the Fourth Scene.

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SCENE III.

CLOTALDO, Soldiers, SIGISMUND, ROSAURA, CLARIN.

CLOTALDO [within]. Warders of this tower,

Who, or sleeping or faint-hearted,  
Give an entrance to two persons  
Who herein have burst a passage . . . .

ROSAURA. New confusion now I suffer.

SIGISMUND. 'Tis Clotaldo, who here guards  
me;  
Are not yet my miseries ended?

CLOTALDO [within]. Hasten hither, quick! be  
active!  
And before they can defend them,  
Kill them on the spot, or capture!

[Voices within.] Treason!

CLARIN. Watchguards of this tower,  
Who politely let us pass here,  
Since you have the choice of killing  
Or of capturing, choose the latter.

[Enter CLOTALDO and Soldiers; he with a pistol, and all with their faces covered.]

CLOTALDO [aside to the Soldiers]. Keep your faces all well covered,  
For it is a vital matter  
That we should be known by no one,  
While I question these two stragglers.

CLARIN. Are there masqueraders here?

CLOTALDO. Ye who in your ignorant rashness  
Have passed through the bounds and limits  
Of this interdicted valley,  
'Gainst the edict of the King,  
Who has publicly commanded  
None should dare descry the wonder  
That among these rocks is guarded,  
Yield at once your arms and lives,  
Or this pistol, this cold asp

Formed of steel, the penetrating  
Poison of two balls will scatter,  
The report and fire of which  
Will the air astound and startle.

SIGISMUND. Ere you wound them, ere you  
hurt them,  
Will my life, O tyrant master,  
Be the miserable victim  
Of these wretched chains that clasp me;  
Since in them, I vow to God,  
I will tear myself to fragments  
With my hands, and with my teeth,  
In these rocks here, in these caverns,  
Ere I yield to their misfortunes,  
Or lament their sad disaster.

CLOTALDO. If you know that your misfor-  
tunes,  
Sigismund, are unexampled,  
Since before being born you died  
By Heaven's mystical enactment;



If you know these fetters are  
Of your furies oft so rampant  
But the bridle that detains them,  
But the circle that contracts them.  
Why these idle boasts? The door  
[To the Soldiers.]  
Of this narrow prison fasten;  
Leave him there secured.

SIGISMUND. Ah, heavens,  
It is wise of you to snatch me  
Thus from freedom! since my rage  
'Gainst you had become Titanic,  
Since to break the glass and crystal  
Gold-gates of the sun, my anger  
On the firm-fixed rocks' foundations  
Would have mountains piled of marble.

CLOTALDO. 'Tis that you should not so pile  
them  
That perhaps these ills have happened,

[Some of the SOLDIERS lead SIGISMUND into his prison, the doors of which are closed upon him.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE IV.

ROSAURA, CLOTALDO, CLARIN, Soldiers.

ROSAURA. Since I now have seen how pride  
Can offend thee, I were hardened  
Sure in folly not here humbly  
At thy feet for life to ask thee;  
Then to me extend thy pity,  
Since it were a special harshness  
If humility and pride,  
Both alike were disregarded.

CLARIN. If Humility and Pride  
Those two figures who have acted  
Many and many a thousand times  
In the "autos sacramentales",  
Do not move you, I, who am neither  
Proud nor humble, but a sandwich  
Partly mixed of both, entreat you  
To extend to us your pardon.

CLOTALDO. Ho!

SOLDIERS. My lord?

CLOTALDO. Disarm the two,  
And their eyes securely bandage,  
So that they may not be able  
To see whither they are carried.

ROSAURA. This is, sir, my sword; to thee  
Only would I wish to hand it,  
Since in fine of all the others  
Thou art chief, and I could hardly

Yield it unto one less noble.

CLARIN. Mine I'll give the greatest rascal  
Of your troop: [To a Soldier.] so take it, you.

ROSAURA. And if I must die, to thank thee  
For thy pity, I would leave thee  
This as pledge, which has its value  
From the owner who once wore it;  
That thou guard it well, I charge thee,  
For although I do not know  
What strange secret it may carry,  
This I know, that some great mystery  
Lies within this golden scabbard,  
Since relying but on it  
I to Poland here have travelled  
To revenge a wrong.

CLOTALDO [aside.] Just heavens!  
What is this? Still graver, darker,  
Grow my doubts and my confusion,  
My anxieties and my anguish.--

Speak, who gave you this?

ROSAURA. A woman.

CLOTALDO. And her name?

ROSAURA. To that my answer  
Must be silence.

CLOTALDO. But from what  
Do you now infer, or fancy,  
That this sword involves a secret?

ROSAURA. She who gave it said: "Depart  
hence  
Into Poland, and by study,  
Stratagem, and skill so manage  
That this sword may be inspected  
By the nobles and the magnates  
Of that land, for you, I know,  
Will by one of them be guarded,"--  
But his name, lest he was dead,

Was not then to me imparted.

CLOTALDO [aside]. Bless me, Heaven! what's this I hear?

For so strangely has this happened,  
That I cannot yet determine  
If 'tis real or imagined.

This is the same sword that I  
Left with beauteous Violante,  
As a pledge unto its wearer,  
Who might seek me out thereafter,  
As a son that I would love him,  
And protect him as a father.  
What is to be done (ah, me!)  
In confusion so entangled,  
If he who for safety bore it  
Bears it now but to dispatch him,  
Since condemned to death he cometh  
To my feet? How strange a marvel!  
What a lamentable fortune!  
How unstable! how unhappy!  
This must be my son -- the tokens

All declare it, superadded  
To the flutter of the heart,  
That to see him loudly rappeth  
At the breast, and not being able  
With its throbs to burst its chamber,  
Does as one in prison, who,  
Hearing tumult in the alley,  
Strives to look from out the window;  
Thus, not knowing what here passes  
Save the noise, the heart uprusheth  
To the eyes the cause to examine --  
They the windows of the heart,  
Out through which in tears it glances.  
What is to be done? (O Heavens!)  
What is to be done? To drag him  
Now before the King were death;  
But to hide him from my master,  
That I cannot do, according  
To my duty as a vassal.  
Thus my loyalty and self-love  
Upon either side attack me;  
Each would win. But wherefore doubt?

Is not loyalty a grander,  
Nobler thing than life, than honour?  
Then let loyalty live, no matter  
That he die; besides, he told me,  
If I well recall his language,  
That he came to revenge a wrong,  
But a wronged man is a lazar,--  
No, he cannot be my son,  
Not the son of noble fathers.  
But if some great chance, which no one  
Can be free from, should have happened,  
Since the delicate sense of honour  
Is a thing so fine, so fragile,  
That the slightest touch may break it,  
Or the faintest breath may tarnish,  
What could he do more, do more,  
He whose cheek the blue blood mantles,  
But at many risks to have come here  
It again to re-establish?  
Yes, he is my son, my blood,  
Since he shows himself so manly.  
And thus then betwixt two doubts



A mid course alone is granted:  
'Tis to seek the King, and tell him  
Who he is, let what will happen.

A desire to save my honour  
May appease my royal master;  
Should he spare his life, I then  
Will assist him in demanding  
His revenge; but if the King  
Should, persisting in his anger,  
Give him death, then he will die  
Without knowing I'm his father.--

[To ROSAURA and CLARIN.]

Come, then, come then with me, strangers.  
Do not fear in your disasters  
That you will not have companions  
In misfortune; for so balanced  
Are the gains of life or death,  
That I know not which are larger.

[Exeunt.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE V.

A HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

[Enter at one side ASTOLFO and Soldiers, and at the other the INFANTA ESTRELLA and her Ladies. Military music and salutes within.]

ASTOLFO. Struck at once with admiration  
At thy starry eyes outshining,  
Mingle many a salutation,  
Drums and trumpet-notes combining,  
Founts and birds in alternation;  
Wondering here to see thee pass,  
Music in grand chorus gathers  
All her notes from grove and grass:  
Here are trumpets formed of feathers,  
There are birds that breathe in brass.  
All salute thee, fair Senora,

Ordnance as their Queen proclaim thee,  
Beauteous birds as their Aurora,  
As their Pallas trumpets name thee,  
And the sweet flowers as their Flora;  
For Aurora sure thou art,  
Bright as day that conquers night --  
Thine is Flora's peaceful part,  
Thou art Pallas in thy might,  
And as Queen thou rul'st my heart.

ESTRELLA. If the human voice obeying  
Should with human action pair,  
Then you have said ill in saying  
All these flattering words and fair,  
Since in truth they are gainsaying  
This parade of victory,  
'Gainst which I my standard rear,  
Since they say, it seems to me,  
Not the flatteries that I hear,  
But the rigours that I see.  
Think, too, what a base invention  
From a wild beast's treachery sprung,--

Fraudful mother of dissension --  
Is to flatter with the tongue,  
And to kill with the intention.

ASTOLFO. Ill informed you must have been,  
Fair Estrella, thus to throw  
Doubt on my respectful mien:  
Let your ear attentive lean  
While the cause I strive show.  
King Eustorgius the Fair,  
Third so called, died leaving two  
Daughters, and Basilius heir;  
Of his sisters I and you  
Are the children -- I forbear  
To recall a single scene  
Save what's needful. Clorilene,  
Your good mother and my aunt,  
Who is now a habitant  
Of a sphere of sunnier sheen,  
Was the elder, of whom you  
Are the daughter; Recisunda,  
Whom God guard a thousand years,

Her fair sister (Rosamunda  
Were she called if names were true)  
Wed in Muscovy, of whom  
I was born. 'Tis needful now  
The commencement to resume.  
King Basilius, who doth bow  
'Neath the weight of years, the doom  
Age imposes, more inclined  
To the studies of the mind  
Than to women, wifeless, lone,  
Without sons, to fill his throne  
I and you our way would find.  
You, the elder's child, averred,  
That the crown you stood more nigh:  
I, maintaining that you erred,  
Held, though born of the younger, I,  
Being a man, should be preferred.  
Thus our mutual pretension  
To our uncle we related,  
Who replied that he would mention  
Here, and on this day he stated,  
What might settle the dissension.

With this end, from Muscovy  
I set out, and with that view,  
I to-day fair Poland see,  
And not making war on you,  
Wait till war you make on me.  
Would to love -- that God so wise --  
That the crowd may be a sure  
Astrologue to read the skies,  
And this festive truce secure  
Both to you and me the prize,  
Making you a Queen, but Queen  
By my will, our uncle leaving  
You the throne we'll share between --  
And my love a realm receiving  
Dearer than a King's demesne.

ESTRELLA. Well, I must be generous too,  
For a gallantry so fine;  
This imperial realm you view,  
If I wish it to be mine  
'Tis to give it unto you.  
Though if I the truth confessed,

I must fear your love may fail --  
Flattering words are words at best,  
For perhaps a truer tale  
Tells that portrait on your breast.

ASTOLFO. On that point complete content  
Will I give your mind, not here,  
For each sounding instrument  
[Drums are heard.]  
Tells us that the King is near,  
With his Court and Parliament.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE VI.

The KING BASILIUS, with his retinue. --  
ASTOLFO, ESTRELLA, Ladies, Soldiers.

ESTRELLA. Learned Euclid . . .

ASTOLFO. Thales wise . .

ESTRELLA. The vast Zodiac . . .

ASTOLFO. The star spaces . . .

ESTRELLA. Who dost soar to . . .

ASTOLFO. Who dost rise...

ESTRELLA. The sun's orbit . . .

ASTOLFO. The stars' places . . .

ESTRELLA. To describe . . .

ASTOLFO. To map the skies . . .

ESTRELLA. Let me humbly interlacing . . .



ASTOLFO. Let me lovingly embracing . . .

ESTRELLA. Be the tendril of thy tree.

ASTOLFO. Bend respectfully my knee.

BASILIOUS. Children, that dear word displacing  
Colder names, my arms here bless;  
And be sure, since you assented  
To my plan, my love's excess  
Will leave neither discontented,  
Or give either more or less.  
And though I from being old  
Slowly may the facts unfold,  
Hear in silence my narration,  
Keep reserved your admiration,  
Till the wondrous tale is told.  
You already know -- I pray you  
Be attentive, dearest children,\*  
Great, illustrious Court of Poland,  
Faithful vassals, friends and kinsmen,  
You already know -- my studies

Have throughout the whole world given me  
The high title of "the learned,"  
Since 'gainst time and time's oblivion  
The rich pencils of Timanthes,  
The bright marbles of Lysippus,  
Universally proclaim me  
Through earth's bounds the great Basilius.  
You already know the sciences  
That I feel my mind most given to  
Are the subtle mathematics,  
By whose means my clear prevision  
Takes from rumour its slow office,  
Takes from time its jurisdiction  
Of, each day, new facts disclosing;  
Since in algebraic symbols  
When the fate of future ages  
On my tablets I see written,  
I anticipate time in telling  
What my science hath predicted.  
All those circles of pure snow,  
All those canopies of crystal,  
Which the sun with rays illumines,

Which the moon cuts in its circles,  
All those orbs of twinkling diamond,  
All those crystal globes that glisten,  
All that azure field of stars  
Where the zodiac signs are pictured,  
Are the study of my life,  
Are the books where heaven has written  
Upon diamond-dotted paper,  
Upon leaves by sapphires tinted,  
With light luminous lines of gold,  
In clear characters distinctly  
All the events of human life,  
Whether adverse or benignant.  
These so rapidly I read  
That I follow with the quickness  
Of my thoughts the swiftest movements  
Of their orbits and their circles.  
Would to heaven, that ere my mind  
To those mystic books addicted  
Was the comment of their margins  
And of all their leaves the index,  
Would to heaven, I say, my life

Had been offered the first victim  
Of its anger, that my death-stroke  
Had in this way have been given me,  
Since the unhappy find even merit  
Is the fatal knife that kills them,  
And his own self-murderer  
Is the man whom knowledge injures!--  
I may say so, but my story  
So will say with more distinctness,  
And to win your admiration  
Once again I pray you listen.--  
Clorilene, my wife, a son  
Bore me, so by fate afflicted  
That on his unhappy birthday  
All Heaven's prodigies assisted.  
Nay, ere yet to life's sweet life  
Gave him forth her womb, that living  
Sepulchre (for death and life  
Have like ending and beginning),  
Many a time his mother saw  
In her dreams' delirious dimness  
From her side a monster break,

Fashioned like a man, but sprinkled  
With her blood, who gave her death,  
By that human viper bitten.  
Round his birthday came at last,  
All its auguries fulfilling  
(For the presages of evil  
Seldom fail or even linger):  
Came with such a horoscope,  
That the sun rushed blood-red tinted  
Into a terrific combat  
With the dark moon that resisted;  
Earth its mighty lists outspread  
As with lessening lights diminished  
Strove the twin-lamps of the sky.  
'Twas of all the sun's eclipses  
The most dreadful that it suffered  
Since the hour its bloody visage  
Wept the awful death of Christ.  
For o'erwhelmed in glowing cinders  
The great orb appeared to suffer  
Nature's final paroxysm.  
Gloom the glowing noontide darkened,

Earthquake shook the mightiest buildings,  
Stones the angry clouds rained down,  
And with blood ran red the rivers.  
In this frenzy of the sun,  
In its madness and delirium,  
Sigismund was born, thus early  
Giving proofs of his condition,  
Since his birth his mother slew,  
Just as if these words had killed her,  
"I am a man, since good with evil  
I repay here from the beginning,"--  
I, applying to my studies,  
Saw in them as 'twere forewritten  
This, that Sigismund would be  
The most cruel of all princes,  
Of all men the most audacious,  
Of all monarchs the most wicked;  
That his kingdom through his means  
Would be broken and partitioned,  
The academy of the vices,  
And the high school of sedition;  
And that he himself, borne onward

By his crimes' wild course resistless,  
Would even place his feet on me;  
For I saw myself down-stricken,  
Lying on the ground before him  
(To say this what shame it gives me!)  
While his feet on my white hairs  
As a carpet were imprinted.  
Who discredits threatened ill,  
Specially an ill previsioned  
By one's study, when self-love  
Makes it his peculiar business?--  
Thus then crediting the fates  
Which far off my science witnessed,  
All these fatal auguries  
Seen though dimly in the distance,  
I resolved to chain the monster  
That unhappily life was given to,  
To find out if yet the stars  
Owned the wise man's weird dominion.  
It was publicly proclaimed  
That the sad ill-omened infant  
Was stillborn. I then a tower

Caused by forethought to be builded  
'Mid the rocks of these wild mountains  
Where the sunlight scarce can gild it,  
Its glad entrance being barred  
By these rude shafts obeliscal.  
All the laws of which you know,  
All the edicts that prohibit  
Anyone on pain of death  
That secluded part to visit  
Of the mountain, were occasioned  
By this cause, so long well hidden.  
There still lives Prince Sigismund,  
Miserable, poor, in prison.  
Him alone Clotaldo sees,  
Only tends to and speaks with him;  
He the sciences has taught him,  
He the Catholic religion  
Has imparted to him, being  
Of his miseries the sole witness.  
Here there are three things: the first  
I rate highest, since my wishes  
Are, O Poland, thee to save



From the oppression, the affliction  
Of a tyrant King, because  
Of his country and his kingdom  
He were no benignant father  
Who to such a risk could give it.  
Secondly, the thought occurs  
That to take from mine own issue  
The plain right that every law  
Human and divine hath given him  
Is not Christian charity;  
For by no law am I bidden  
To prevent another proving,  
Say, a tyrant, or a villain,  
To be one myself: supposing  
Even my son should be so guilty,  
That he should not crimes commit  
I myself should first commit them.  
Then the third and last point is,  
That perhaps I erred in giving  
Too implicit a belief  
To the facts foreseen so dimly;  
For although his inclination

Well might find its precipices,  
He might possibly escape them:  
For the fate the most fastidious,  
For the impulse the most powerful.  
Even the planets most malicious  
Only make free will incline,  
But can force not human wishes.  
And thus 'twist these different causes  
Vacillating and unfixed,  
I a remedy have thought of  
Which will with new wonder fill you.  
I to-morrow morning purpose,  
Without letting it be hinted  
That he is my son, and therefore  
Your true King, at once to fix him  
As King Sigismund (for the name  
Still he bears that first was given him)  
'Neath my canopy, on my throne,  
And in fine in my position,  
There to govern and command you,  
Where in dutiful submission  
You will swear to him allegiance.

My resources thus are triple,  
As the causes of disquiet  
Were which I revealed this instant.  
The first is; that he being prudent,  
Careful, cautious and benignant,  
Falsifying the wild actions  
That of him had been predicted,  
You'll enjoy your natural prince,  
He who has so long been living  
Holding court amid these mountains,  
With the wild beasts for his circle.  
Then my next resource is this:  
If he, daring, wild, and wicked,  
Proudly runs with loosened rein  
O'er the broad plain of the vicious,  
I will have fulfilled the duty  
Of my natural love and pity;  
Then his righteous deposition  
Will but prove my royal firmness,  
Chastisement and not revenge  
Leading him once more to the prison.  
My third course is this: the Prince

Being what my words have pictured,  
From the love I owe you, vassals,  
I will give you other princes  
Worthier of the crown and sceptre;  
Namely, my two sisters' children,  
Who their separate pretensions  
Having happily commingled  
By the holy bonds of marriage,  
Will then fill their fit position.  
This is what a king commands you,  
This is what a father bids you,  
This is what a sage entreats you,  
This is what an old man wishes;  
And as Seneca, the Spaniard,  
Says, a king for all his riches  
Is but slave of his Republic,  
This is what a slave petitions.

[footnote] \*The metre changes here to the "asonante" in "i--e", or their vocal equivalents, and is kept up for the remainder of the Act.

ASTOLFO. If on me devolves the answer,  
As being in this weighty business  
The most interested party,  
I, of all, express the opinion:--  
Let Prince Sigismund appear;  
He's thy son, that's all-sufficient.

ALL. Give to us our natural prince,  
We proclaim him king this instant!

BASILIUS. Vassals, from my heart I thank you  
For this deference to my wishes:--  
Go, conduct to their apartments  
These two columns of my kingdom,  
On to-morrow you shall see him.

ALL. Live, long live great King Basilius!

[Exeunt all, accompanying ESTRELLA and AS-  
TOLFO;  
The King remains.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE VII.

CLOTALDO, ROSAURA, CLARIN, and  
BASILIUS.

CLOTALDO. May I speak to you, sire?

BASILIOUS. Clotaldo,  
You are always welcome with me.

CLOTALDO. Although coming to your feet  
Shows how freely I'm admitted,  
Still, your majesty, this once,  
Fate as mournful as malicious  
Takes from privilege its due right,  
And from custom its permission.

BASILIUUS. What has happened?

CLOTALDO. A misfortune,  
Sire, which has my heart afflicted  
At the moment when all joy  
Should have overflown and filled it.

BASILIUUS. Pray proceed.

CLOTALDO. This handsome youth here,  
Inadvertently, or driven  
By his daring, pierced the tower,  
And the Prince discovered in it.  
Nay . . . .

BASILIUUS. Clotaldo, be not troubled  
At this act, which if committed  
At another time had grieved me,  
But the secret so long hidden  
Having myself told, his knowledge  
Of the fact but matters little.

See me presently, for I  
Much must speak upon this business,  
And for me you much must do  
For a part will be committed  
To you in the strangest drama  
That perhaps the world e'er witnessed.  
As for these, that you may know  
That I mean not your remissness  
To chastise, I grant their pardon.  
[Exit.]

CLOTALDO. Myriad years to my lord be  
given!

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE VIII.

CLOTALDO, ROSAURA, and CLARIN.



CLOTALDO [aside]. Heaven has sent a happier fate;  
Since I need not now admit it,  
I'll not say he is my son.--  
Strangers who have wandered hither,  
You are free.

ROSAURA. I give your feet  
A thousand kisses.

CLARIN. I say misses,  
For a letter more or less  
'Twixt two friends is not considered.

ROSAURA. You have given me life, my lord,  
And since by your act I'm living,  
I eternally will own me  
As your slave.

CLOTALDO. The life I've given  
Is not really your true life,

For a man by birth uplifted  
If he suffers an affront  
Actually no longer liveth;  
And supposing you have come here  
For revenge as you have hinted,  
I have not then given you life,  
Since you have not brought it with you,  
For no life disgraced is life.--  
[Aside.] (This I say to arouse his spirit.)

ROSAURA. I confess I have it not,  
Though by you it has been given me;  
But revenge being wreaked, my honour  
I will leave so pure and limpid,  
All its perils overcome,  
That my life may then with fitness  
Seem to be a gift of yours.

CLOTALDO. Take this burnished sword  
which hither  
You brought with you; for I know,  
To revenge you, 'tis sufficient,

In your enemy's blood bathed red;  
For a sword that once was girded  
Round me (I say this the while  
That to me it was committed),  
Will know how to right you.

ROSAURA. Thus  
In your name once more I gird it,  
And on it my vengeance swear,  
Though the enemy who afflicts me  
Were more powerful.

CLOTALDO. Is he so?

ROSAURA. Yes; so powerful, I am hindered  
Saying who he is, not doubting  
Even for greater things your wisdom  
And calm prudence, but through fear  
Lest against me your prized pity  
Might be turned.

CLOTALDO. 'Twill rather be,

By declaring it, more kindled;  
Otherwise you bar the passage  
'Gainst your foe of my assistance.--  
[Aside.] (Would that I but knew his name!)

ROSAURA. Not to think I set so little  
Value on such confidence,  
Know my enemy and my victim  
Is no less than Prince Astolfo,  
Duke of Muscovy.

CLOTALDO [aside]. Resistance  
Badly can my grief supply  
Since 'tis heavier than I figured.  
Let us sift the matter deeper.--  
If a Muscovite by birth, then  
He who is your natural lord  
Could not 'gainst you have committed  
Any wrong; reseek your country,  
And abandon the wild impulse  
That has driven you here.

ROSAURA. I know,  
Though a prince, he has committed  
'Gainst me a great wrong.

CLOTALDO. He could not,  
Even although your face was stricken  
By his angry hand. [Aside.] (Oh, heavens!)

ROSAURA. Mine's a wrong more deep and  
bitter.

CLOTALDO. Tell it, then; it cannot be  
Worse than what my fancy pictures.

ROSAURA. I will tell it; though I know not,  
With the respect your presence gives me,  
With the affection you awaken,  
With the esteem your worth elicits,  
How with bold face here to tell you  
That this outer dress is simply  
An enigma, since it is not  
What it seems. And from this hint, then,

If I'm not what I appear,  
And Astolfo with this princess  
Comes to wed, judge how by him  
I was wronged: I've said sufficient.

[Exeunt ROSAURA and CLARIN.]

CLOTALDO. Listen! hear me! wait! oh, stay!  
What a labyrinthine thicket  
Is all this, where reason gives  
Not a thread whereby to issue?  
My own honour here is wronged,  
Powerful is my foe's position,  
I a vassal, she a woman;  
Heaven reveal some way in pity,  
Though I doubt it has the power;  
When in such confused abysses,  
Heaven is all one fearful presage,  
And the world itself a riddle.

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT THE SECOND.

A HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE I.

BASILIOUS and CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO. Everything has been effected  
As you ordered.

BASILIOUS. How all happened\*  
Let me know, my good Clotaldo.

[footnote] \*The metre of this and the following scene is the asonante in a--e.

CLOTALDO. It was done, sire, in this manner.  
With the tranquillising draught,  
Which was made, as you commanded,  
Of confections duly mixed  
With some herbs, whose juice extracted  
Has a strange tyrannic power,  
Has some secret force imparted,  
Which all human sense and speech  
Robs, deprives, and counteracteth,  
And as 'twere a living corpse  
leaves the man whose lips have quaffed it  
So asleep that all his senses,  
All his powers are overmastered . . . .  
-- No need have we to discuss  
That this fact can really happen,  
Since, my lord, experience gives us  
Many a clear and proved example;  
Certain 'tis that Nature's secrets



May by medicine be extracted,  
And that not an animal,  
Not a stone, or herb that's planted,  
But some special quality  
Doth possess: for if the malice  
Of man's heart, a thousand poisons  
That give death, hath power to examine,  
Is it then so great a wonder  
That, their venom being abstracted,  
If, as death by some is given,  
Sleep by others is imparted?  
Putting, then, aside the doubt  
That 'tis possible this should happen,  
A thing proved beyond all question  
Both by reason and example . . . .  
-- With the sleeping draught, in fine,  
Made of opium superadded  
To the poppy and the henbane,  
I to Sigismund's apartment --  
Cell, in fact -- went down, and with him  
Spoke awhile upon the grammar  
Of the sciences, those first studies

Which mute Nature's gentle masters,  
Silent skies and hills, had taught him;  
In which school divine and ample,  
The bird's song, the wild beast's roar,  
Were a lesson and a language.

Then to raise his spirit more  
To the high design you planned here,  
I discoursed on, as my theme,  
The swift flight, the stare undazzled  
Of a pride-plumed eagle bold,  
Which with back-averted talons,  
Scorning the tame fields of air,  
Seeks the sphere of fire, and passes  
Through its flame a flash of feathers,  
Or a comet's hair untangled.

I extolled its soaring flight,  
Saying, "Thou at last art master  
Of thy house, thou'rt king of birds,  
It is right thou should'st surpass them."

He who needed nothing more  
Than to touch upon the matter  
Of high royalty, with a bearing

As became him, boldly answered;  
For in truth his princely blood  
Moves, excites, inflames his ardour  
To attempt great things: he said,  
"In the restless realm of atoms  
Given to birds, that even one  
Should swear fealty as a vassal!  
I, reflecting upon this,  
Am consoled by my disasters,  
For, at least, if I obey,  
I obey through force: untrammelled,  
Free to act, I ne'er will own  
Any man on earth my master."--  
This, his usual theme of grief,  
Having roused him nigh to madness,  
I occasion took to proffer  
The drugged draught: he drank, but hardly  
Had the liquor from the vessel  
Passed into his breast, when fastest  
Sleep his senses seized, a sweat,  
Cold as ice, the life-blood hardened  
In his veins, his limbs grew stiff,

So that, knew I not 'twas acted,  
Death was there, feigned death, his life  
I could doubt not had departed.  
Then those, to whose care you trust  
This experiment, in a carriage  
Brought him here, where all things fitting  
The high majesty and the grandeur  
Of his person are provided.  
In the bed of your state chamber  
They have placed him, where the stupor  
Having spent its force and vanished,  
They, as 'twere yourself, my lord,  
Him will serve as you commanded:  
And if my obedient service  
Seems to merit some slight largess,  
I would ask but this alone  
(My presumption you will pardon),  
That you tell me, with what object  
Have you, in this secret manner,  
To your palace brought him here?

BASILIUUS. Good Clotaldo, what you ask me

Is so just, to you alone  
I would give full satisfaction.  
Sigismund, my son, the hard  
Influence of his hostile planet  
(As you know) doth threat a thousand  
Dreadful tragedies and disasters;  
I desire to test if Heaven  
(An impossible thing to happen)  
Could have lied -- if having given us  
Proofs unnumbered, countless samples  
Of his evil disposition,  
He might prove more mild, more guarded  
At the lest, and self-subdued  
By his prudence and true valour  
Change his character; for 'tis man  
That alone controls the planets.  
This it is I wish to test,  
Having brought him to this palace,  
Where he'll learn he is my son,  
And display his natural talents.  
If he nobly hath subdued him,  
He will reign; but if his manners

Show him tyrannous and cruel,  
Then his chains once more shall clasp him.  
But for this experiment,  
Now you probably will ask me  
Of what moment was't to bring him  
Thus asleep and in this manner?  
And I wish to satisfy you,  
Giving all your doubts an answer.  
If to-day he learns that he  
Is my son, and some hours after  
Finds himself once more restored  
To his misery and his shackles,  
Certain 'tis that from his temper  
Blank despair may end in madness --  
But once knowing who he is,  
Can he be consoled thereafter?  
Yes, and thus I wish to leave  
One door open, one free passage,  
By declaring all he saw  
Was a dream. With this advantage  
We attain two ends. The first  
Is to put beyond all cavil

His condition, for on waking  
He will show his thoughts, his fancies:  
To console him is the second;  
Since, although obeyed and flattered,  
He beholds himself awhile,  
And then back in prison shackled  
Finds him, he will think he dreamed.  
And he rightly so may fancy,  
For, Clotaldo, in this world  
All who live but dream they act here.

CLOTALDO. Reasons fail me not to show  
That the experiment may not answer;  
But there is no remedy now,  
For a sign from the apartment  
Tells me that he hath awoken  
And even hitherward advances.

BASILIOUS. It is best that I retire;  
But do you, so long his master,  
Near him stand; the wild confusion  
That his waking sense may darken

Dissipate by simple truth.

CLOTALDO. Then your licence you have  
granted  
That I may declare it?

BASILIOUS. Yes;  
For it possibly may happen  
That admonished of his danger  
He may conquer his worst passions.  
[Exit]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE II.

CLARIN and CLOTALDO.



CLARIN [aside]. Four good blows are all it cost me  
To come here, inflicted smartly  
By a red-robed halberdier,  
With a beard to match his jacket,  
At that price I see the show,  
For no window's half so handy  
As that which, without entreating  
Tickets of the ticket-master,  
A man carried with himself;  
Since for all the feasts and galas  
Cool effrontery is the window  
Whence at ease he gazes at them.

CLOTALDO [aside]. This is Clarin, heavens!  
of her,  
Yes, I say, of her the valet,  
She, who dealing in misfortunes,  
Has my pain to Poland carried:--  
Any news, friend Clarin?

CLARIN. News?

Yes, sir, since your great compassion  
Is disposed Rosaura's outrage  
To revenge, she has changed her habit,  
And resumed her proper dress.

CLOTALDO. 'Tis quite right, lest possible  
scandal  
Might arise.

CLARIN. More news: her name  
Having changed and wisely bartered  
For your niece's name, she now  
So in honour has advanced her,  
That among Estrella's ladies  
She here with her in the palace  
Lives.

CLOTALDO. 'Tis right that I once more  
Should her honour re-establish.

CLARIN. News; that anxiously she waiteth  
For that very thing to happen,

When you may have time to try it.

CLOTALDO. Most discreetly has she acted;  
Soon the time will come, believe me,  
Happily to end this matter.

CLARIN. News, too; that she's well regaled,  
Feasted like a queen, and flattered  
On the strength of being your niece.  
And the last news, and the saddest,  
Is that I who here came with her  
Am with hunger almost famished.  
None remember me, or think  
I am Clarin, clarion rather,  
And that if that clarion sounded,  
All the Court would know what passes.  
For there are two things, to wit,  
A brass clarion and a lackey,  
That are bad at keeping secrets;  
And it so may chance, if haply  
I am forced to break my silence,  
They of me may sing this passage:

"Never, when the day is near,  
Does clarion sound more clear."\*

\*[footnote] \*"Clarín, que rompe el albor,  
No suena mejor."--

This is a quotation by Calderon from his own  
drama, "En esta vida  
todo es verdad y todo mentira." -- Act 2, sc. x.

CLOTALDO. Your complaint is too well-  
founded;  
I will get you satisfaction,  
Meanwhile you may wait on me.

CLARIN. See, sir, Sigismund advances.

\* \* \* \* \*

### SCENE III.

[Music and song.] SIGISMUND enters, lost in amazement. Servants minister to him, presenting costly robes. -- CLOTALDO, and CLARIN.

SIGISMUND. Help me, Heaven, what's this I see!

Help me, Heaven, what's this I view!

Things I scarce believe are true,

But, if true, which fright not me.

I in palaces of state?

I 'neath silks and cloth of gold?

I, around me, to behold

Rich-robed servants watch and wait?

I so soft a bed to press

While sweet sleep my senses bowed?

I to wake in such a crowd,

Who assist me even to dress?

'Twere deceit to say I dream,

Waking I recall my lot,  
I am Sigismund, am I not?  
Heaven make plain what dark doth seem!  
Tell me, what has phantasy --  
Wild, misleading, dream-adept --  
So effected while I slept,  
That I still the phantoms see?  
But let that be as it may,  
Why perplex myself and brood?  
Better taste the present good,  
Come what will some other day.

FIRST SERVANT [aside to the' Second Servant,  
and to CLARIN]. What a  
sadness doth oppress him!

SECOND SERVANT. Who in such-like case  
would be  
Less surprised and sad than he?

CLARIN. I for one.

SECOND SERVANT [to the First]. You had best address him.

FIRST SERVANT [to SIGISMUND]. May they sing again?

SIGISMUND. No, no;  
I don't care to hear them sing.

SECOND SERVANT. I conceived the song might bring  
To your thought some ease.

SIGISMUND. Not so;  
Voiced that but charm the ear  
Cannot soothe my sorrow's pain;  
'Tis the soldier's martial strain  
That alone I love to hear.

CLOTALDO. May your Highness, mighty Prince,  
Deign to let me kiss your hand,

I would first of all this land  
My profound respect evince.

SIGISMUND [aside]. 'Tis my gaoler! how can he  
Change his harshness and neglect  
To this language of respect?  
What can have occurred to me?

CLOTALDO. The new state in which I find you  
Must create a vague surprise,  
Doubts unnumbered must arise  
To bewilder and to blind you;  
I would make your prospect fair,  
Through the maze a path would show,  
Thus, my lord, 'tis right you know  
That you are the prince and heir  
Of this Polish realm: if late  
You lay hidden and concealed  
'Twas that we were forced to yield  
To the stern decrees of fate,



Which strange ills, I know not how,  
Threatened on this land to bring  
Should the laurel of a king  
Ever crown thy princely brow.  
Still relying on the power  
Of your will the stars to bind,  
For a man of resolute mind  
Can them bind how dark they lower;  
To this palace from your cell  
In your life-long turret keep  
They have borne you while dull sleep  
Held your spirit in its spell.  
Soon to see you and embrace  
Comes the King, your father, here --  
He will make the rest all clear.

SIGISMUND. Why, thou traitor vile and base,  
What need I to know the rest,  
Since it is enough to know  
Who I am my power to show,  
And the pride that fills my breast?  
Why this treason brought to light

Has thou to thy country done,  
As to hide from the King's son,  
'Gainst all reason and all right,  
This his rank?

CLOTALDO. Oh, destiny!

SIGISMUND. Thou the traitor's part has  
played  
'Gainst the law; the King betrayed,  
And done cruel wrong to me;  
Thus for each distinct offence  
Have the law, the King, and I  
Thee condemned this day to die  
By my hands.

SECOND SERVANT. Prince . . . .

SIGISMUND No pretence  
Shall undo the debt I owe you.  
Catiff, hence! By Heaven! I say,  
If you dare to stop my way

From the window I will throw you.

SECOND SERVANT. Fly, Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO. Woe to thee,  
In thy pride so powerful seeming,  
Without knowing thou art dreaming!  
[Exit.

SECOND SERVANT. Think . . . .

SIGISMUND. Away! don't trouble me.

SECOND SERVANT. He could not the King  
deny.

SIGISMUND. Bade to do a wrongful thing  
He should have refused the King;  
And, besides, his prince was I.

SECOND SERVANT. 'Twas not his affair to try  
If the act was wrong or right.

SIGISMUND. You're indifferent, black or white,  
Since so pertly you reply.

CLARIN. What the Prince says is quite true,  
What you do is wrong, I say.

SECOND SERVANT. Who gave you this licence, pray?

CLARIN. No one gave; I took it.

SIGISMUND. Who  
Art thou, speak?

CLARIN. A meddling fellow,  
Prating, prying, fond of scrapes,  
General of all jackanapes,  
And most merry when most mellow.

SIGISMUND. You alone in this new sphere

Have amused me.

CLARIN. That's quite true, sir,  
For I am the great amuser  
Of all Sigismunds who are here.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE IV.

ASTOLFO, SIGISMUND, CLARIN, Servants,  
and Musicians.

ASTOLFO. Thousand tunes be blest the day,  
Prince, that gives thee to our sight,  
Sun of Poland, whose glad light  
Makes this whole horizon gay,  
As when from the rosy fountains  
Of the dawn the stream-rays run,

Since thou issuest like the sun  
From the bosom of the mountains!  
And though late do not defer  
With thy sovran light to shine;  
Round thy brow the laurel twine --  
Deathless crown.

SIGISMUND. God guard thee, sir.

ASTOLFO. In not knowing me I o'erlook,  
But alone for this defect,  
This response that lacks respect,  
And due honour. Muscovy's Duke  
Am I, and your cousin born,  
Thus my equal I regard thee.

SIGISMUND. Did there, when I said "God  
guard thee,"  
Lie concealed some latent scorn? --  
Then if so, now having got  
Thy big name, and seeing thee vexed,  
When thou com'st to see me next

I will say God guard thee not.

SECOND SERVANT [to ASTOLFO]. Think,  
your Highness, if he errs  
Thus, his mountain birth's at fault,  
Every word is an assault.  
[To SIGISMUND.]  
Duke Astolfo, sir, prefers . . . .

SIGISMUND. Tut! his talk became a bore,  
Nay his act was worse than that,  
He presumed to wear his hat.

SECOND SERVANT. As grandee.

SIGISMUND. But I am more.

SECOND SERVANT. Nevertheless respect  
should be  
Much more marked betwixt ye two  
Than 'twixt others.

SIGISMUND. And pray who  
Asked your meddling thus with me?

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE V.

ESTRELLA. -- THE SAME.

ESTRELLA. Welcome may your Highness be,  
Welcomed oft to this thy throne,  
Which long longing for its own  
Finds at length its joy in thee;  
Where, in spite of bygone fears,  
May your reign be great and bright,  
And your life in its long flight  
Count by ages, not by years.



SIGISMUND (to CLARIN). Tell me, thou, say,  
who can be  
This supreme of loveliness --  
Goddess in a woman's dress --  
At whose feet divine we see  
Heaven its choicest gifts doth lay?--  
This sweet maid? Her name declare.

CLARIN. 'Tis your star-named\* cousin fair.

[footnote] \*'Estrella', which means star in Spanish.

SIGISMUND. Nay, the sun, 'twere best to say.-

-

[To ESTRELLA.]

Though thy sweet felicitation  
Adds new splendour to my throne,  
'Tis for seeing thee alone  
That I merit gratulation;

Therefore I a prize have drawn  
That I scarce deserved to win,  
And am doubly blessed therein:--  
Star, that in the rosy dawn  
Dimmest with transcendent ray  
Orbs that brightest gem the blue,  
What is left the sun to do,  
When thou risest with the day?--  
Give me then thy hand to kiss,  
In whose cup of snowy whiteness  
Drinks the day delicious brightness.

ESTRELLA. What a courtly speech is this?

ASTOLFO [aside]. If he takes her hand I feel  
I am lost.

SECOND SERVANT [aside]. Astolfo's grief  
I perceive, and bring relief:--  
Think, my lord, excuse my zeal,  
That perhaps this is too free,  
Since Astolfo . . . .

SIGISMUND. Did I say  
Woe to him that stops my way?--

SECOND SERVANT. What I said was just.

SIGISMUND. To me  
This is tiresome and absurd.  
Nought is just, or good or ill,  
In my sight that balks my will.

SECOND SERVANT. Why, my lord, yourself I  
heard  
Say in any righteous thing  
It was proper to obey.

SIGISMUND. You must, too, have heard me  
say  
Him I would from window throw  
Who should tease me or defy?

SECOND SERVANT. Men like me perhaps  
might show  
That could not be done, sir.

SIGISMUND. No?  
Then, by Heaven, at least, I'll try!  
[He seizes him in his arms and rushes to the  
side. All follow, and  
return immediately.]

ASTOLFO. What is this I see? Oh, woe!

ESTRELLA. Oh, prevent him! Follow me!  
[Exit.]

SIGISMUND. [returning]. From the window  
into the sea  
He has fallen; I told him so.

ASTOLFO. These strange bursts of savage mal-  
ice  
You should regulate, if you can;

Wild beasts are to civilised man  
As rude mountains to a palace.

SIGISMUND. Take a bit of advice for that:  
Pause ere such bold words are said,  
Lest you may not have a head  
Upon which to hang your hat.

[Exit ASTOLFO.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE VI.

BASILIOUS, SIGISMUND, and CLARIN.

BASILIOUS. What's all this?

SIGISMUND. A trifling thing:

One who teased and thwarted me  
I have just thrown into the sea.

CLARIN [to SIGISMUND]. Know, my lord, it  
is the King.

BASILIUUS. Ere the first day's sun hath set,  
Has thy coming cost a life?

SIGISMUND Why he dared me to the strife,  
And I only won the bet.

BASILIUUS. Prince, my grief, indeed is great,  
Coming here when I had thought  
That admonished thou wert taught  
To o'ercome the stars and fate,  
Still to see such rage abide  
In the heart I hoped was free,  
That thy first sad act should be  
A most fearful homicide.  
How could I, by love conducted,  
Trust me to thine arms' embracing,

When their haughty interlacing,  
Has already been instructed  
How to kill? For who could see,  
Say, some dagger bare and bloody,  
By some wretch's heart made ruddy,  
But would fear it? Who is he,  
Who may happen to behold  
On the ground the gory stain  
Where another man was slain  
But must shudder? The most bold  
Yields at once to Nature's laws;  
Thus I, seeing in your arms  
The dread weapon that alarms,  
And the stain, must fain withdraw;  
And though in embraces dear  
I would press you to my heart,  
I without them must depart,  
For, alas! your arms I fear.

SIGISMUND. Well, without them I must stay,  
As I've staid for many a year,  
For a father so severe,

Who could treat me in this way,  
Whose unfeeling heart could tear me  
From his side even when a child,  
Who, a denizen of the wild,  
As a monster there could rear me,  
Any by many an artful plan  
Sought my death, it cannot grieve me  
Much his arms will not receive me  
Who has scarcely left me man.

BASILIOUS. Would to God it had not been  
Act of mine that name conferred,  
Then thy voice I ne'er had heard,  
Then thy boldness ne'er had seen.

SIGISMUND. Did you manhood's right retain,  
I would then have nought to say,  
But to give and take away  
Gives me reason to complain;  
For although to give with grace  
Is the noblest act 'mongst men,  
To take back the gift again



Is the basest of the base.

BASILIOUS. This then is thy grateful mood  
For my changing thy sad lot  
To a prince's!

SIGISMUND. And for what  
Should I show my gratitude!  
Tyrant of my will o'erthrown,  
If thou hoary art and gray,  
Dying, what do'st give me? Say,  
Do'st thou give what's not mine own?  
Thou'rt my father and my King,  
Then the pomp these walls present  
Comes to me by due descent  
As a simple, natural thing.  
Yes, this sunshine pleaseth me,  
But 'tis not through thee I bask;  
Nay, a reckoning I might ask  
For the life, love, liberty  
That through thee I've lost so long:  
Thine 'tis rather to thank me,

That I do not claim from thee  
Compensation for my wrong.

BASILIOUS. Still untamed and uncontrolled;--  
Heaven fulfils its word I feel,  
I to that same court appeal  
'Gainst thy taunts, thou vain and bold,  
But although the truth thou'st heard,  
And now know'st thy name and race,  
And do'st see thee in this place,  
Where to all thou art preferred,  
Yet be warned, and on thee take  
Ways more mild and more beseeming,  
For perhaps thou art but dreaming,  
When it seems that thou'rt awake.  
[Exit.]

SIGISMUND. Is this, then, a phantom scene? --  
Do I wake in seeming show?--  
No, I dream not, since I know  
What I am and what I've been.  
And although thou should'st repent thee,

Remedy is now too late.  
Who I am I know, and fate,  
Howsoe'er thou should'st lament thee,  
Cannot take from me my right  
Of being born this kingdom's heir.  
If I saw myself erewhile  
Prisoned, bound, kept out of sight,  
'Twas that never on my mind  
Dawned the truth; but now I know  
Who I am -- a mingled show  
Of the man and beast combined.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE VII.

ROSAURA, in female attire; SIGISMUND,  
CLARIN, and Servants.

ROSAURA [aside.] To wait upon Estrella I  
come here,  
And lest I meet Astolfo tremble with much fear;  
Clotaldo's wishes are  
The Duke should know me not, and from afar  
See me, if see he must.  
My honour is at stake, he says; my trust  
Is in Clotaldo's truth.  
He will protect my honour and my youth.

CLARIN [to SIGISMUND]. Of all this palace  
here can boast,  
All that you yet have seen, say which has  
pleased you most?

SIGISMUND. Nothing surprised me, nothing  
scared,  
Because for everything I was prepared;  
But if I felt for aught, or more or less  
Of admiration, 'twas the loveliness  
Of woman; I have read  
Somewhere in books on which my spirit fed,

That which caused God the greatest care to  
plan,  
Because in him a little world he formed, was  
man;  
But this were truer said, unless I err,  
Of woman, for a little heaven he made in her;  
She who in beauty from her birth  
Surpasses man as heaven surpasseth earth;  
Nay, more, the one I see.

ROSAURA [aside]. The Prince is here; I must  
this instant flee.

SIGISMUND. Hear, woman! stay;  
Nor wed the western with the orient ray,  
Flying with rapid tread;  
For joined the orient rose and western red,  
The light and the cold gloom,  
The day will sink untimely to its tomb.  
But who is this I see?

ROSAURA [aside]. I doubt and yet believe that  
it is he.

SIGISMUND [aside]. This beauty I have seen  
Some other time.

ROSAURA [aside]. This proud, majestic mien,  
This form I once saw bound  
Within a narrow cell.

SIGISMUND [aside]. My life I have found.--  
Woman, the sweetest name  
That man can breathe, or flattering language  
frame,  
Who art thou? for before  
I see thee, I believe and I adore;  
Faith makes my love sublime,  
Persuading me we've met some other time.  
Fair woman, speak; my will must be obeyed.

ROSAURA. In bright Estrella's train a hapless  
maid.--

[Aside.] He must not know my name.

SIGISMUND. The sun, say rather, of that star  
whose flame,  
However bright its blaze  
Is but the pale reflection of thy rays.  
In the fair land of flowers,  
The realm of sweets that lies in odorous bow-  
ers,  
The goddess rose I have seen  
By right divine of beauty reign as queen.  
I have seen where brightest shine  
Gems, the assembled glories of the mine,  
The brilliant throng elect the diamond king  
For the superior splendour it doth fling.  
Amid the halls of light,  
Where the unresting star-crowds meet at night,  
I have seen fair Hesper rise  
And take the foremost place of all the skies.  
And in that higher zone  
Where the sun calls the planets round his  
throne,

I have seen, with sovereign sway,  
That he presides the oracle of the day.  
How, then, 'mid flowers of earth or stars of air,  
'Mid stones or suns, if that which is most fair  
The preference gains, canst thou  
Before a lesser beauty bend and bow,  
When thine own charms compose  
Something more bright than sun, stone, star, or  
rose?

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE VIII.

CLOTALDO, who remains at the side-scene;  
SIGISMUND, CLARIN, and Servants.

CLOTALDO [aside]. To calm Prince Sigis-  
mund devolves on me,



Because 'twas I who reared him: -- What do I see?

ROSAURA. Thy favour, sir, I prize;  
To thee the silence of my speech replies;  
For when the reason's dull, the mind depressed,  
He best doth speak who keeps his silence best.

SIGISMUND. You must not leave me. Stay:  
What! would you rob my senses of the ray  
Your beauteous presence gave?

ROSAURA. That licence, from your Highness,  
I must crave.

SIGISMUND. The violent efforts that you  
make  
Show that you do not ask the leave you take.

ROSAURA. I hope to take it, if it is not given.

SIGISMUND. You rouse my courtesy to rage,  
by heaven!--  
In me resistance, as it were, distils  
A cruel poison that my patience kills.

ROSAURA. Then though that poison may be  
strong,  
The source of fury, violence, and wrong,  
Potent thy patience to subdue,  
It dare not the respect to me that's due.

SIGISMUND. As if to show I may,  
You take the terror of your charms away.  
For I am but too prone  
To attempt the impossible; I to-day have  
thrown  
Out of this window one who said, like you,  
I dare not do the thing I said I would do.  
Now just to show I can,  
I may throw out your honour, as the man.

CLOTALDO [aside]. More obstinate doth he grow;  
What course to take, O heavens! I do not know,  
When wild desire, nay, crime,  
Perils my honour for the second time.

ROSAURA. Not vainly, as I see,  
This hapless land was warned thy tyranny  
In fearful scandals would eventuate,  
In wrath and wrong, in treachery, rage and hate.  
But who in truth could claim  
Aught from a man who is but a man in name,  
Audacious, cruel, cold,  
Inhuman, proud, tyrannical and bold,  
'Mong beasts a wild beast born?--

SIGISMUND. It was to save me from such words of scorn  
So courteously I spoke,  
Thinking to bind you by a gentler yoke;  
But if I am in aught what you have said,

Then, as God lives, I will be all you dread.  
Ho, there! here leave us. See to it at your cost,  
The door be locked; let no one in.

[Exeunt CLARIN and the attendants.]

ROSAURA. I'm lost!  
Consider . . . .

SIGISMUND. I'm a despot, and 'tis vain  
You strive to move me, or my will restrain.

CLOTALDO [aside]. Oh, what a moment!  
what an agony!  
I will go forth and stop him though I die.  
[He advances.]

My lord, consider, stay . . . .

SIGISMUND. A second time you dare to cross  
my way.  
Old dotard: do you hold

My rage in such slight awe you are so bold?  
What brought you hither? Speak!

CLOTALDO. The accents of this voice, how-  
ever weak,  
To tell you to restrain  
Your passions, if as King you wish to reign,--  
Not to be cruel, though you deem  
Yourself the lord of all, for all may be a dream.

SIGISMUND. You but provoke my rage  
By these old saws, the unwelcome light of age,  
In killing you, at least I'll see  
If 'tis a dream or truth.

[As he is about to draw his dagger CLOTALDO  
detains it, and throws  
himself on his knees.]

CLOTALDO. Sole hope for me  
To save my life is thus to humbly kneel.

SIGISMUND. Take your audacious hand from  
off my steel.

CLOTALDO. Till some kind aid be sent,  
Till some one come who may your rage pre-  
vent,  
I will not loose my hold.

ROSAURA. Oh, Heaven!

SIGISMUND. I say,  
Loose it, old dotard, grim and gaunt and gray,  
Or by another death

[They struggle.]

I'll crush you in my arms while you have  
breath.

ROSAURA. Quick! quick! they slay  
Clotaldo, help! oh, help!

[ASTOLFO enters at this moment, and CLO-  
TALDO falls at his feet; he  
stands between them.]

ASTOLFO. This strange affray,  
What can it mean, magnanimous Prince?  
would you  
So bright a blade imbrue  
In blood that age already doth congeal?  
Back to its sheath return the shining steel.

SIGISMUND. Yes, when it is bathed red  
In his base blood.

ASTOLFO. This threatened life hath fled  
For sanctuary to my feet;  
I must protect it in that poor retreat.

SIGISMUND. Protect your own life, then, for  
in this way,  
Striking at it, I will the grudge repay  
I owe you for the past.

ASTOLFO. I thus defend  
My life; but majesty will not offend.  
[ASTOLFO draws his sword and they fight.]

CLOTALDO. Oh! wound him not, my lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE IX.

BASILIUS, ESTRELLA and Attendants, SIGIS-  
MUND, ASTOLFO, and CLOTALDO.

BASILIUS. Swords flashing here!--

ESTRELLA [aside]. Astolfo is engaged: -- Oh,  
pain severe!



BASILIUUS. What caused this quarrel? Speak, say why?

ASTOLFO. 'Tis nothing now, my lord, since thou art by.

SIGISMUND. 'Tis much, although thou now art by, my lord.  
I wished to kill this old man with my sword.

BASILIUUS. Did you not then respect  
These snow-white hairs?

CLOTALDO. My lord will recollect  
They scarce deserved it, being mine.

SIGISMUND. Who dares  
To ask of me do I respect white hairs?  
Your own some day  
My feet may trample in the public way,  
For I have not as yet revenged my wrong,

Your treatment so unjust and my sad state so long.

[Exit.]

BASILIUUS. But ere that dawn doth break,  
You must return to sleep, where when you wake

All that hath happened here will seem --  
As is the glory of the world -- a dream.

[Exeunt The King, CLOTALDO, and Attendants.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE X.

ESTRELLA and ASTOLFO

ASTOLFO. Ah, how rarely fate doth lie  
When it some misfortune threatens!\*  
Dubious when 'tis good that's promised,  
When 'tis evil, ah, too certain!--  
What a good astrologer  
Would he be, whose art foretelleth  
Only cruel things; for, doubtless,  
They would turn out true for ever!  
This in Sigismund and me  
Is exemplified, Estrella,  
Since between our separate fortunes  
Such a difference is presented.  
In his case had been foreseen  
Murders, miseries, and excesses,  
And in all they turned out true,  
Since all happened as expected.  
But in mine, here seeing, lady,  
Rays so rare and so resplendent  
That the sun is but their shadow.  
And even heaven a faint resemblance,  
When fate promised me good fortune,  
Trophies, praises, and all blessings,

It spoke ill and it spoke well;  
For it was of both expressive,  
When it held out hopes of favour,  
But disdain alone effected.

[footnote] \*The vocal asonante in e--e here commences, and continues to the end of the Sixteenth Scene.

ESTRELLA. Oh, I doubt not these fine speeches  
Are quite true, although intended  
Doubtless for that other lady,  
She whose portrait was suspended  
From your neck, when first, Astolfo,  
At this Court here you addressed me.  
This being so, 'tis she alone  
Who these compliments deserveth.  
Go and pay them to herself,  
For like bills that are protested

In the counting-house of love,  
Are those flatteries and finesses  
Which to other kings and ladies  
Have been previously presented.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE XI.

ROSAURA, who remains at the side;  
ESTRELLA, and ASTOLFO.

ROSAURA [aside]. Well, thank God, my miseries  
Have attained their lowest level,  
Since by her who sees this sight  
Nothing worse can be expected.

ASTOLFO. Then that portrait from my breast

Shall be taken, that thy perfect  
Beauty there may reign instead.  
For where bright Estrella enters  
Shadow cannot be, or star  
Where the sun; I go to fetch it.--  
[Aside.] Pardon, beautiful Rosaura,  
This offence; the absent never,  
Man or woman, as this shows,  
Faith of plighted vows remember.  
[Exit.]

[ROSAURA comes forward.]  
ROSAURA [aside]. Not a single word I heard,  
Being afraid they might observe me.

ESTRELLA. Oh, Astrea!

ROSAURA. My good lady!

ESTRELLA. Nothing could have pleased me  
better  
Than your timely coming here.

I have something confidential  
To entrust you with.

ROSAURA. You honour  
Far too much my humble service.

ESTRELLA. Brief as is the time, Astrea,  
I have known you, you already  
Of my heart possess the keys  
'Tis for this and your own merits  
That I venture to entrust you  
With what oft I have attempted  
From myself to hide.

ROSAURA. Your slave!

ESTRELLA. Then concisely to express it,  
Know, Astolfo, my first cousin  
( 'Tis enough that word to mention,  
For some things may best be said  
When not spoken but suggested),  
Soon expects to wed with me,

If my fate so far relenteth,  
As that by one single bliss  
All past sorrows may be lessened.  
I was troubled, the first day  
That we met, to see suspended  
From his neck a lady's portrait.  
On the point I urged him gently,  
He so courteous and polite  
Went immediately to get it,  
And will bring it here. From him  
I should feel quite disconcerted  
To receive it. You here stay,  
And request him to present it  
Unto you. I say no more.  
You are beautiful and clever,  
You must know too what is love.  
[Exit.]

\* \* \* \* \*



## SCENE XII.

ROSAURA. Would I knew it not! O help me  
Now, kind heaven! for who could be  
So prudential, so collected,  
As to know how best to act  
In so painful a dilemma?  
Is there in the world a being,  
Is there one a more inclement  
Heaven has marked with more misfortunes,  
Has 'mid more of sorrow centred?--  
What, bewildered, shall I do,  
When 'tis vain to be expected  
That my reason can console me,  
Or consoling be my helper?  
From my earliest misfortune  
Everything that I've attempted  
Has been but one misery more --  
Each the other's sad successor,  
All inheritors of themselves.  
Thus, the Phoenix they resemble,

One is from the other born,  
New life springs where old life endeth,  
And the young are warmly cradled  
By the ashes of the elder.  
Once a wise man called them cowards,  
Seeing that misfortunes never  
Have been seen to come alone.  
But I call them brave, intrepid,  
Who go straight unto their end,  
And ne'er turn their backs in terror:--  
By the man who brings them with him  
Everything may be attempted,  
Since he need on no occasion  
Have the fear of being deserted.  
I may say so, since at all times,  
Whatsoever life presented,  
I, without them, never saw me,  
Nor will they grow weary ever,  
Till they see me in death's arms,  
Wounded by fate's final weapon.  
Woe is me! but what to-day  
Shall I do in this emergence?--

If I tell my name, Clotaldo,  
Unto whom I am indebted  
For my very life and honour,  
May be with me much offended;  
Since he said my reparation  
Must in silence be expected.  
If I tell not to Astolfo  
Who I am, and he detects me  
How can I dissemble then?  
For although a feigned resemblance  
Eyes and voice and tongue might try,  
Ah, the truthful heart would tremble,  
And expose the lie. But wherefore  
Study what to do? 'Tis certain  
That however I may study,  
Think beforehand how to nerve me,  
When at last the occasion comes,  
Then alone what grief suggesteth  
I will do, for no one holds  
In his power the heart's distresses.  
And thus what to say or do  
As my soul cannot determine,

Grief must only reach to-day  
Its last limit, pain be ended,  
And at last an exit make  
From the doubts that so perplex me  
How to act: but until then  
Help me, heaven, oh, deign to help me!

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XIII.

ASTOLFO, with the portrait; and ROSAURA.

ASTOLFO. Here then is the portrait, Princess:  
But, good God!

ROSAURA. Your Highness trembles;  
What has startled, what surprised you?

ASTOLFO. Thee, Rosaura, to see present.

ROSAURA. I Rosaura? Oh, your Highness  
Is deceived by some resemblance  
Doubtless to some other lady;  
I'm Astrea, one who merits  
Not the glory of producing  
An emotion so excessive.

ASTOLFO. Ah, Rosaura thou mayst feign,  
But the soul bears no deception,  
And though seeing thee as Astrea,  
As Rosaura it must serve thee.

ROSAURA. I, not knowing what your High-  
ness  
Speaks of, am of course prevented  
From replying aught but this,  
That Estrella (the bright Hesper  
Of this sphere) was pleased to order  
That I here should wait expectant  
For that portrait, which to me

She desires you give at present:  
For some reason she prefers  
It through me should be presented --  
So Estrella -- say, my star --  
Wishes -- so a fate relentless  
Wills -- in things that bring me loss --  
So Estrella now expecteth.

ASTOLFO. Though such efforts you attempt,  
Still how badly you dissemble,  
My Rosaura! Tell the eyes  
In their music to keep better  
Concert with the voice, because  
Any instrument whatever  
Would be out of tune that sought  
To combine and blend together  
The true feelings of the heart  
With the false words speech expresses.

ROSAURA. I wait only, as I said,  
For the portrait.

ASTOLFO. Since you're bent then  
To the end to keep this tone,  
I adopt it, and dissemble.  
Tell the Princess, then, Astrea,  
That I so esteem her message,  
That to send to her a copy  
Seems to me so slight a present,  
How so highly it is valued  
By myself, I think it better  
To present the original,  
And you easily may present it,  
Since, in point of fact, you bring it  
With you in your own sweet person.

ROSAURA. When it has been undertaken  
By a man, bold, brave, determined,  
To obtain a certain object,  
Though he get perhaps a better,  
Still not bringing back the first  
He returns despised: I beg, then,  
That your highness give the portrait;  
I, without it, dare not venture.

ASTOLFO. How, then, if I do not give it  
Will you get it?

ROSAURA. I will get it  
Thus, ungrateful.  
[She attempts to snatch it.]

ASTOLFO. 'Tis in vain.

ROSAURA. It must ne'er be seen, no, never  
In another woman's hands.

ASTOLFO. Thou art dreadful.

ROSAURA. Thou deceptive.

ASTOLFO. Oh, enough, Rosaura mine.

ROSAURA. Thine! Thou liest, base deserter.  
[Both struggle for the portrait.]



\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XIV.

ESTRELLA, ROSAURA, and ASTOLFO.

ESTRELLA. Prince! Astrea! What is this?

ASTOLFO [aside] Heavens! Estrella!

ROSAURA [aside]. Love befriend me;  
Give me wit enough my portrait  
To regain: -- If thou would'st learn then  
[To ESTRELLA.]  
What the matter is, my lady,  
I will tell thee.

ASTOLFO [aside to ROSAURA.] Would'st  
o'erwhelm me?

ROSAURA. You commanded me to wait here  
For the Prince, and representing  
You, to get from him a portrait.  
I remained alone, expecting,  
And, as often by one thought  
Is some other thought suggested,  
Seeing that you spoke of portraits,  
I, reminded thus, remembered  
That I had one of myself  
In my sleeve: I wished to inspect it,  
For a person quite alone  
Even by trifles is diverted.  
From my hand I let it fall  
On the ground; the Prince, who entered  
With the other lady's portrait,  
Raised up mine, but so rebellious  
Was he to what you had asked him  
That, instead of his presenting  
One, he wished to keep the other.  
Since he mine will not surrender  
To my prayers and my entreaties:

Angry at this ill-timed jesting  
I endeavoured to regain it,  
That which in his hand is held there  
Is my portrait, if you see it;  
You can judge of the resemblance.

ESTRELLA. Duke, at once, give up the portrait.  
[She takes it from his hand.]

ASTOLFO. Princess . . . .

ESTRELLA. Well, the tints were blended  
By no cruel hand, methinks.

ROSAURA. Is it like me?

ESTRELLA. Like! 'Tis perfect.

ROSAURA. Now demand from him the other.

ESTRELLA. Take your own, and leave our  
presence.

ROSAURA [aside]. I have got my portrait  
back;  
Come what may I am contented.  
[Exit.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XV.

ESTRELLA and ASTOLFO.

ESTRELLA. Give me now the other portrait;  
For -- although perhaps I never  
May again address or see you --  
I desire not, no, to let it  
In your hands remain, if only  
For my folly in requesting  
You to give it.

ASTOLFO [aside]. How escape  
From this singular dilemma?--  
Though I wish, most beauteous Princess,  
To obey thee and to serve thee,  
Still I cannot give the portrait  
Thou dost ask for, since . . . .

ESTRELLA. A wretched  
And false-hearted lover art thou.  
Now I wish it not presented,  
So to give thee no pretext  
For reminding me that ever  
I had asked it at thy hands.  
[Exit.

ASTOLFO. Hear me! listen! wait! I remember! --  
God, what has thou done, Rosaura?  
Why, or wherefore, on what errand,  
To destroy thyself and me  
Hast thou Poland rashly entered?

[Exit.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XVI.

PRISON OF THE PRINCE IN THE TOWER.

SIGISMUND, as at the commencement, clothed in skins, chained, and lying on the ground; CLOTALDO, Two Servants, and CLARIN.

CLOTALDO. Leave him here on the ground,  
Where his day,-- its pride being o'er,--  
Finds its end too.

A SERVANT. As before  
With the chain his feet are bound.

CLARIN. Never from that sleep profound  
Wake, O Sigismund, or rise,  
To behold with wondering eyes  
All thy glorious life o'erthrown,  
Like a shadow that hath flown,  
Like a bright brief flame that dies!

CLOTALDO. One who can so wisely make  
Such reflections on this case  
Should have ample time and space,  
Even for the Solon's sake,  
[To the Servant.]  
To discuss it; him you'll take  
To this cell here, and keep bound.  
[Pointing to an adjoining room]

CLARIN. But why me?

CLOTALDO. Because 'tis found  
Safe, when clarions secrets know,  
Clarions to lock up, that so

They may not have power to sound.

CLARIN. Did I, since you treat me thus,  
Try to kill my father? No.  
Did I from the window throw  
That unlucky Icarus?  
Is my drink somniferous?  
Do I dream? Then why be pent?

CLOTALDO. 'Tis a clarion's punishment.

CLARIN. Then a horn of low degree,  
Yea, a cornet I will be,  
A safe, silent instrument.  
[They take him away, and CLOTALDO re-  
mains alone.]

\* \* \* \* \*



## SCENE XVII.

BASILIOUS, disguised; CLOTALDO, and SIG-ISMUND, asleep.

BASILIOUS. Hark, Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO. My lord here?  
Thus disguised, your majesty?

BASILIOUS. Foolish curiosity  
Leads me in this lowly gear  
To find out, ah, me! with fear,  
How the sudden change he bore.

CLOTALDO. There behold him as before  
In his miserable state.

BASILIOUS. Wretched Prince! unhappy fate!  
Birth by baneful stars watched o'er!--  
Go and wake him cautiously,  
Now that strength and force lie chained

By the opiate he hath drained.

CLOTALDO. Muttering something restlessly,  
See he lies.

BASILIUUS. Let's listen; he  
May some few clear words repeat.

SIGISMUND. [Speaking in his sleep.]  
Perfect Prince is he whose heat  
Smites the tyrant where he stands,  
Yes, Clotaldo dies by my hands,  
Yes, my sire shall kiss my feet.

CLOTALDO. Death he threatens in his rage.

BASILIUUS. Outrage vile he doth intend.

CLOTALDO. He my life has sworn to end.

BASILIUUS. He has vowed to insult my age.

SIGISMUND [still sleeping]. On the mighty  
world's great stage,  
'Mid the admiring nations' cheer,  
Valour mine, that has no peer,  
Enter thou: the slave so shunned  
Now shall reign Prince Sigismund,  
And his sire he wrath shall fear.--

[He awakes.]

But, ah me! Where am I? Oh!--

BASILIOUS. Me I must not let him see.

[To CLOTALDO.]

Listening I close by will be,

What you have to do you know.

[He retires.]

SIGISMUND. Can it possibly be so?

Is the truth not what it seemed?

Am I chained and unredeemed?

Art not thou my lifelong tome,

Dark old tower? Yes! What a doom!

God! what wondrous things I've dreamed!

CLOTALDO. Now in this delusive play  
Must my special part be taken:--  
Is it not full time to waken?

SIGISMUND. Yes, to waken well it may.

CLOTALDO. Wilt thou sleep the livelong  
day?--

Since we gazing from below  
Saw the eagle sailing slow,  
Soaring through the azure sphere,  
All the time thou waited here,  
Didst thou never waken?

SIGISMUND. No,  
Nor even now am I awake  
Since such thoughts my memory fill,  
That it seems I'm dreaming still:  
Nor is this a great mistake;  
Since if dreams could phantoms make  
Things of actual substance seen,

I things seen may phantoms deem.  
Thus a double harvest reaping,  
I can see when I am sleeping,  
And when waking I can dream.

CLOTALDO. What you may have dreamed of,  
say.

SIGISMUND. If I thought it only seemed,  
I would tell not what I dreamed,  
But what I beheld, I may.  
I awoke, and lo! I lay  
(Cruel and delusive thing!)  
In a bed whose covering,  
Bright with blooms from rosy bowers,  
Seemed a tapestry of flowers  
Woven by the hand of Spring.  
Then a crowd of nobles came,  
Who addressed me by the name  
Of their prince, presenting me  
Gems and robes, on bended knee.  
Calm soon left me, and my frame

Thrilled with joy to hear thee tell  
Of the fate that me befell,  
For though now in this dark den,  
I was Prince of Poland then.

CLOTALDO. Doubtless you repaid me well?

SIGISMUND. No, not well: for, calling thee  
Traitor vile, in furious strife  
Twice I strove to take thy life.

CLOTALDO. But why all this rage 'gainst me?

SIGISMUND. I was master, and would be  
Well revenged on foe and friend.  
Love one woman could defend . . . . .  
That, at least, for truth I deem,  
All else ended like a dream,  
THAT alone can never end.  
[The King withdraws.]

CLOTALDO [aside]. From his place the King  
hath gone,

Touched by his pathetic words:--

[Aloud]

Speaking of the king of birds

Soaring to ascend his throne,

Thou didst fancy one thine own;

But in dreams, however bright,

Thou shouldst still have kept in sight

How for years I tended thee,

For 'twere well, whoe'er we be,

Even in dreams to do what's right.

[Exit.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XVIII.

SIGISMUND. That is true: then let's restrain

This wild rage, this fierce condition  
Of the mind, this proud ambition,  
Should we ever dream again:  
And we'll do so, since 'tis plain,  
In this world's uncertain gleam,  
That to live is but to dream:  
Man dreams what he is, and wakes  
Only when upon him breaks  
Death's mysterious morning beam.  
The king dreams he is a king,  
And in this delusive way  
Lives and rules with sovereign sway;  
All the cheers that round him ring,  
Born of air, on air take wing.  
And in ashes (mournful fate!)  
Death dissolves his pride and state:  
Who would wish a crown to take,  
Seeing that he must awake  
In the dream beyond death's gate?  
And the rich man dreams of gold,  
Gilding cares it scarce conceals,  
And the poor man dreams he feels



Want and misery and cold.  
Dreams he too who rank would hold,  
Dreams who bears toil's rough-ribbed hands,  
Dreams who wrong for wrong demands,  
And in fine, throughout the earth,  
All men dream, whate'er their birth,  
And yet no one understands.  
'Tis a dream that I in sadness  
Here am bound, the scorn of fate;  
'Twas a dream that once a state  
I enjoyed of light and gladness.  
What is life? 'Tis but a madness.  
What is life? A thing that seems,  
A mirage that falsely gleams,  
Phantom joy, delusive rest,  
Since is life a dream at best,  
And even dreams themselves are dreams.

\* \* \* \* \*

ACT THE THIRD.

WITHIN THE TOWER.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE I.

CLARIN. In a strange enchanted tower,  
I, for what I know, am prisoned;\*  
How would ignorance be punished,  
If for knowledge they would kill me?  
What a thing to die of hunger,  
For a man who loves good living!  
I compassionate myself;  
All will say: "I well believe it";  
And it well may be believed,  
Because silence is a virtue

Incompatible with my name  
Clarinet, which of course forbids it.  
In this place my sole companions,  
It may safely be predicted,  
Are the spiders and the mice:  
What a pleasant nest of linnets!--  
Owing to this last night's dream,  
My poor head I feel quite dizzy  
From a thousand clarionets,  
Shawms, and seraphines and cymbals,  
Crucifixes and processions,  
Flagellants who so well whipped them,  
That as up and down they went,  
Some even fainted as they witnessed  
How the blood ran down the others.  
I, if I the truth may whisper,  
Simply fainted from not eating,  
For I see me in this prison  
All day wondering how this Poland  
Such a 'Hungary' look exhibits,  
All night reading in the 'Fasti'  
By some half-starved poet written.\*\*

In the calendar of saints,  
If a new one is admitted,  
Then St. Secret be my patron,  
For I fast upon his vigil;  
Though it must be owned I suffer  
Justly for the fault committed,  
Since a servant to be silent  
Is a sacrilege most sinful.

[A sound of drums and trumpets, with voices within.]

\*[footnote] The asonante to the end of Scene IV. is in i--e, or their vocal equivalents.

\*\*[footnote] These four lines are a paraphrase of the original.  
Clarín's jokes are different, and not much better. He says he spends

his days studying philosophy in the works of  
'Nicomedes' (or  
'Not-eating'), and his nights perusing the de-  
crees of the 'Nicene'  
Council (Concilio 'Niceno', the Council of 'No-  
Supper').

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE II.

Soldiers and CLARIN.

FIRST SOLDIER [within]. He is here within  
this tower.

Dash the door from off its hinges;  
Enter all

CLARIN: Good God! 'tis certain

That 'tis me they seek so briskly,  
Since they say that I am here.  
What can they require?

FIRST SOLDIER [within]. Go in there.  
[Several Soldiers enter.

SECOND SOLDIER. Here he is.

CLARIN. He's not.

ALL THE SOLDIERS. Great lord!

CLARIN [aside]. Are the fellows mad or tipsy?

FIRST SOLDIER. Thou art our own Prince, and  
we  
Will not have, and won't admit of,  
Any but our natural Prince;  
We no foreign Prince here wish for.  
Let us kneel and kiss thy feet.

THE SOLDIERS. Live, long live our best of Princes!

CLARIN [aside.] 'Gad! the affair grows rather serious.

Is it usual in this kingdom  
To take some one out each day,  
Make him Prince, and then remit him  
To this tower? It must be so,  
Since each day that sight I witness.  
I must therefore play my part.

SOLDIERS. Thy feet give us!

CLARIN. I can't give them,  
As I want them for myself.  
For a prince to be a cripple  
Would be rather a defect.

SECOND SOLDIER. We have all conveyed our wishes  
To your father; we have told him

You alone shall be our Prince here,  
Not the Duke.

CLARIN. And were you guilty  
'Gainst my sire, of disrespect?

FIRST SOLDIER. 'Twas the loyalty of our  
spirit.

CLARIN. If 'twas loyalty, I forgive you.

SECOND SOLDIER. Come, regain thy lost  
dominion.  
Long live Sigismund!

ALL. Live the Prince.

CLARIN [aside]. Say they Sigismund? Good.  
Admitted.  
Sigismund must be the name  
Given to all pretended princes.



\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE III.

SIGISMUND, CLARIN, and Soldiers.

SIGISMUND. Who has named here Sigismund?

CLARIN [aside.] Ah, I'm but an addled prince, then!

FIRST SOLDIER. Who is Sigismund?

SIGISMUND. Who? I.

SECOND SOLDIER [to CLARIN]. How, then, didst thou, bold and silly,  
Dare to make thee Sigismund?

CLARIN. I a Sigismund? Thou fibbest;  
It was you yourselves that thus  
Sigismundized me and prined me:  
All the silliness and the boldness  
Have been by yourselves committed.

FIRST SOLDIER. Great and brave Prince Sig-  
ismund  
(For thy bearing doth convince us  
Thou art he, although on faith  
We proclaim thee as our prince here).  
King Basilius, thy father,  
Fearful of the Heavens fulfilling  
A prediction, which declared  
He would see himself submitted  
At thy victor feet, attempts  
To deprive thee of thy birthright,  
And to give it to Astolfo,  
Muscovy's duke. For this his missives  
Summoned all his court: the people  
Understanding, by some instinct,

That they had a natural king,  
Did not wish a foreign princeling  
To rule o'er them. And 'tis thus,  
That the fate for thee predicted  
Treating with a noble scorn,  
They have sought thee where imprisoned  
Thou dost live, that issuing forth,  
By their powerful arms assisted,  
From this tower, thy crown and sceptre  
Thou shouldst thus regain, and quit them  
Of a stranger and a tyrant.  
Forth! then; for among these cliffs here  
There is now a numerous army,  
Formed of soldiers and banditti,  
That invoke thee: freedom waits thee;  
To the thousand voices listen.

[Voices within.] Long, long live Prince Sigismund!

SIGISMUND. Once again, O Heaven! wouldst wish me

Once again to dream of greatness  
Which may vanish in an instant?  
Once again to see the glories,  
That a royal throne encircle,  
Die in darkness and in gloom,  
Like a flame the winds extinguish?  
Once again by sad experience  
To be taught the dangerous limits  
Human power may overleap,  
At its birth and while it liveth?  
No, it must not, must not be:--  
See me now one more submitted  
To my fate; and since I know  
Life is but a dream, a vision,  
Hence, ye phantoms, that assume  
To my darkened sense the figure  
And the voice of life -- although  
Neither voice nor form is in them.  
I no longer now desire  
A feigned majesty, a fictitious  
And fantastic pomp -- illusions  
Which the slightest breath that ripples

The calm ether can destroy,  
Even as in the early spring-time,  
When the flowering almond tree  
Unadvisedly exhibits  
All its fleeting bloom of flowers,  
The first blast their freshness withers,  
And the ornament and grace  
Of its rosy locks disfigures.  
Now I know ye -- know ye all,  
And I know the same false glimmer  
Cheats the eyes of all who sleep.  
Me false shows no more bewilder;  
Disabused, I now know well  
Life is but a dream -- a vision.

SECOND SOLDIER. If thou thinkest we de-  
ceive thee,  
Turn thine eyes to those proud cliffs here,  
See the crowds that wait there, willing,  
Eager to obey thee.

SIGISMUND. Yet

Just as clearly and distinctly,  
I have seen another time  
The same things that now I witness,  
And 'twas but a dream.

SECOND SOLDIER. At all times  
Great events, my lord, bring with them  
Their own omens; and thy dream  
But the actual fact prefigured.

SIGISMUND. You say well, it was an omen;  
But supposing the bright vision  
Even were true, since life is short,  
Let us dream, my soul a little,  
Once again, remembering now  
With all forethought and prevision  
That we must once more awake  
At the better time not distant;  
That being known, the undeceiving,  
When it comes, will be less bitter;  
For it takes the sting from evil  
To anticipate its visit.

And with this conviction, too,  
Even its certainty admitting,  
That all power being only lent  
Must return unto the Giver,  
Let us boldly then dare all.--  
For the loyalty you exhibit,  
Thanks, my lieges. See in me  
One who will this land deliver  
From a stranger's alien yoke.  
Sound to arms; you soon shall witness  
What my valour can effect.  
'Gainst my father I have lifted  
Hostile arms, to see if Heaven  
Has of me the truth predicted.  
At my feet I am to see him . . .  
But if I, from dreams delivered,  
[Aside.  
Wake ere then, and nothing happens,  
Silence now were more befitting.

ALL. Long live Sigismund, our king!

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE IV.

CLOTALDO, SIGISMUND, CLARIN, and Soldiers.

CLOTALDO. Ha! what tumult, Heavens! has risen?

SIGISMUND. Well, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO. Sire . . . . On me  
[Aside.  
Will his wrath now fall.

CLARIN [aside]. He'll fling him  
Headlong down the steep, I'll bet.  
[Exit.



CLOTALDO. At your royal feet submitted  
I know how to die.

SIGISMUND. My father,  
Rise, I pray, from that position,  
Since to you, my guide and polestar,  
Are my future acts committed;  
All my past life owes you much  
For your careful supervision.  
Come, embrace me.

CLOTALDO. What do you say?

SIGISMUND. That I dream, and that my  
wishes  
Are to do what's right, since we  
Even in dreams should do what's fitting.

CLOTALDO. Then, my prince, if you adopt  
Acting rightly as your symbol,  
You will pardon me for asking,

So to act, that you permit me.  
No advice and no assistance  
Can I give against my king.  
Better that my lord should kill me  
At his feet here.

SIGISMUND. Oh, ungrateful!  
Villain! wretch! [Aside.] But Heavens! 'tis  
fitter  
I restrain myself, not knowing  
But all this may be a vision.--  
The fidelity I envy  
Must be honoured and admitted.  
Go and serve your lord, the king.  
Where the battle rages thickest  
We shall meet. -- To arms, my friends!

CLOTALDO. Thanks, most generous of  
princes.  
[Exit.

SIGISMUND. Fortune, we go forth to reign;

Wake me not if this is vision,  
Let me sleep not if 'tis true.  
But whichever of them is it,  
To act right is what imports me.  
If 'tis true, because it is so;  
If 'tis not, that when I waken  
Friends may welcome and forgive me.  
[Exeunt all, drums beating.]

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE V.

HALL IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

BASILIIUS and ASTOLFO.

BASILIIUS. Who can expect, Astolfo, to restrain  
An untamed steed that wildly turns to flee?

Who can the current of a stream detain,  
That swollen with pride sweeps down to seek  
the sea?

Who can prevent from tumbling to the plain  
Some mighty peak the lightning's flash sets  
free?

Yet each were easier in its separate way,  
Than the rude mob's insensate rage to stay.  
The several bands that throng each green re-  
treat

This truth proclaim by their disparted cries;  
Astolfo here the echoing notes repeat,  
While there 'tis Sigismund that rends the skies  
The place where late the land was glad to greet  
The choice we made, a second venture tries;  
And soon will be, as Horror o'er it leans,  
The fatal theatre of tragic scenes.

ASTOLFO. My lord, let all this joy suspended  
be,  
These plaudits cease, and to another day  
Defer the rapture thou hast promised me;

For if this Poland (which I hope to sway)  
Resists to-day my right of sovereignty,  
'Tis that by merit I should win my way.  
Give me a steed; to stem this wild revolt  
My pride shall be the flash that bears the bolt.  
[Exit.

BASILIOUS. Slight help there is for what is fixed  
by fate,  
And much of danger to foresee the blow;  
If it must fall, defence is then too late,  
And he who most forestalls doth most fore-  
know.  
Hard law! Stern rule! Dire fact to contemplate!  
That he who thinks to fly doth nearer go.  
Thus by the very means that I employed,  
My country and myself I have destroyed.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE VI.

ESTRELLA and BASILIUS.

ESTRELLA. If, mighty lord, thy presence,  
which it braves,  
The tumult of the crowd cannot defeat --  
The frenzy of the multitude that raves  
In hostile bands through every square and  
street,--  
Thou'lt see thy kingdom swim in crimson  
waves,  
A purple sea of blood shall round it beat;  
For even already in its dismal doom  
All is disaster, tragedy, and gloom.  
Such is thy kingdom's ruin, so severe  
The hard and bloody trial fate hath sent,  
Dazed is the eye, and terrified the ear;  
Dark grows the sun, and every wind is spent;  
Each stone a mournful obelisk doth rear,  
And every flower erects a monument;

A grave seems every house, whence life is gone,--  
Each soldier is a living skeleton.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE VII.

CLOTALDO, BASILIUS, and ESTRELLA.

CLOTALDO. Thanks be to God, I reach thy feet alive.

BASILIUS. What news of Sigismund, Clotaldo, say?

CLOTALDO. The crowd, whom frenzy and blind impulse drive,  
Into the tower resistless burst their way,

Released the Prince, who seeing thus revive  
The honour he had tasted for one day,  
Looked brave, declaring, in a haughty tone,  
The truth at last that heaven must now make  
known.

BASILIUS. Give me a horse! In person forth I'll  
ride  
To check the pride of this ungrateful son.  
Where Science erred let now the sword decide;  
By my own valour shall my throne be won!  
[Exit.

ESTRELLA. Let me the glory of the fight di-  
vide --  
A twinkling star beside that royal sun --  
Bellona matched with Mars: for I would dare  
To scale even heaven to rival Pallas there.

[Exit, and they sound to arms.



\* \* \* \* \*

## SCENE VIII.

ROSAURA, who detains CLOTALDO.

ROSAURA. Though the trumpets from afar  
Echo in thy valorous breast,  
Hear me, list to my request,  
For I know that all is war.  
Well thou knowest that I came  
Poor to Poland, sad, dejected;  
And that graciously protected,  
Thou thy pity let me claim.  
It was thy command, ah, me!  
I should live here thus disguised,  
Striving, as thy words advised  
(Hiding all my jealousy),  
To avoid Astolfo's sight;  
But he saw me, and though seeing,

With Estrella, he -- false being!--  
Converse holds this very night  
In a garden bower. The key  
I have taken, and will show  
Where, by entering, with a blow  
Thou canst end my misery.  
Thus, then, daring, bold, and strong,  
Thou my honour wilt restore;  
Strike, and hesitate no more,  
Let his death revenge my wrong.

CLOTALDO. It is true, my inclination  
Since thou first wert seen by me,  
Was to strive and do for thee  
(Be thy tears my attestation)  
All my life could do to serve thee.  
What I first was forced to press,  
Was that thou should'st change thy dress;  
Les if chancing to observe thee  
Masquerading like a page,  
By appearances so strong  
Led astray, the Duke might wrong

By a thought thy sex and age.  
Meanwhile various projects held me  
In suspense, oft pondering o'er  
How thy honour to restore;  
Though (thy honour so compelled me)  
I Astolfo's life should take --  
Wild design that soon took wing --  
Yet, as he was not my king,  
It no terror could awake.  
I his death was seeking, when  
Sigismund with vengeful aim  
Sought for mine; Astolfo came,  
And despising what most men  
Would a desperate peril deem,  
Stood in my defence; his bearing,  
Nigh to rashness in its daring,  
Showed a valour most extreme.  
How then, think, could I, whose breath  
Is his gift, in murderous strife,  
For his giving me my life,  
Strive in turn to give him death?  
And thus, grateful, yet aggrieved,

By two opposite feelings driven,  
Seeing it to thee have given,  
And from him have it received,  
Doubting this, and that believing,  
Half revenging, half forgiving,  
If to thee I'm drawn by giving,  
I to him am by receiving;  
Thus bewildered and beset,  
Vainly seeks my love a way,  
Since I have a debt to pay,  
Where I must exact a debt

ROSAURA. It is settled, I believe,  
As all men of spirit know,  
That 'tis glorious to bestow,  
But a meanness to receive.  
Well, admitting this to be,  
Then thy thanks should not be his,  
Even supposing that he is  
One who gave thy life to thee;  
As the gift of life was thine,  
And from him the taking came,

In this case the act was shame,  
And a glorious act in mine.  
Thus by him thou art aggrieved,  
And by me even complimented,  
Since to me thou hast presented  
What from him thou hast received:  
Then all hesitation leaving,  
Thou to guard my fame shouldst fly,  
Since my honour is as high  
As is giving to receiving.

CLOTALDO. Thou it seems a generous fever  
In a noble heart to give,  
Still an equal fire may live  
In the heart of the receiver.  
Heartlessness is something hateful,  
I would boast a liberal name;  
Thus I put my highest claim  
In the fact of being grateful.  
Then to me that title leave,--  
Gentle birth breeds gentleness;  
For the honour is no less

To bestow than to receive.

ROSAURA. I received my life from thee,  
But for thee I now were dead;  
Still it was thyself that said  
No insulted life could be  
Called a life: on that I stand;  
Nought have I received from thee,  
For the life no life could be  
That was given me by thy hand.  
But if thou wouldst first be just  
Ere being generous in this way  
(As I heard thyself once say),  
Thou wilt give me life I trust,  
Which thou hast not yet; and thus  
Giving will enhance thee more,  
For if liberal before,  
Thou wilt then be generous.

CLOTALDO. Conquered by thy argument,  
Liberal I first will be.  
I, Rosaura, will to thee

All my property present;  
In a convent live; by me  
Has the plan been weighed some time,  
For escaping from a crime  
Thou wilt there find sanctuary;  
For so many ills present them  
Through the land on every side,  
That being nobly born, my pride  
Is to strive and not augment them.  
By the choice that I have made,  
Loyal to the land I'll be,  
I am liberal with thee,  
And Astolfo's debt is paid;  
Choose then, nay, let honour, rather,  
Choose for thee, and for us two,  
For, by Heaven! I could not do  
More for thee were I thy father!--

ROSAURA. Were that supposition true,  
I might strive and bear this blow;  
But not being my father, no.

CLOTALDO. What then dost thou mean to do?

ROSAURA. Kill the Duke.

CLOTALDO. A gentle dame,  
Who no father's name doth know,  
Can she so much valour show?

ROSAURA. Yes.

CLOTALDO. What drives thee on?

ROSAURA. My fame.

CLOTALDO. Think that in the Duke thou'llt  
see . . . .

ROSAURA. Honour all my wrath doth rouse.

CLOTALDO. Soon thy king -- Estrella's  
spouse.



ROSAURA. No, by Heaven! it must not be.

CLOTALDO. It is madness.

ROSAURA. Yes, I see it.

CLOTALDO. Conquer it.

ROSAURA. I can't o'erthrow it.

CLOTALDO. It will cost thee . . . .

ROSAURA. Yes, I know it.

CLOTALDO. Life and honour.

ROSAURA. Well, so be it.

CLOTALDO. What wouldst have?

ROSAURA. My death.

CLOTALDO.        Take care!  
It is spite.

ROSAURA. 'Tis honour's cure.

CLOTALDO. 'Tis wild fire.

ROSAURA.     That will endure.

CLOTALDO. It is frenzy.

ROSAURA.     Rage, despair.

CLOTALDO. Can there then be nothing done  
This blind rage to let pass by?

ROSAURA. No.

CLOTALDO. And who will help thee?

ROSAURA.     I.

CLOTALDO. Is there then no remedy?

ROSAURA. None.

CLOTALDO. Think of other means whereby . .

..

ROSAURA. Other means would seal my fate.  
[Exit.

CLOTALDO. If 'tis so, then, daughter, wait,  
For together we shall die.  
[Exit.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE IX.

THE OPEN PLAIN.

SIGISMUND, clothed in skins: Soldiers marching. CLARIN.

[Drums are heard.]

SIGISMUND. If Rome could see me on this day

Amid the triumphs of its early sway,

Oh, with what strange delight

It would have seen so singular a sight,

Its mighty armies led

By one who was a savage wild beast bred,

Whose courage soars so high,

That even an easy conquest seems the sky!

But let us lower our flight,

My spirit; 'tis not thus we should invite

This doubtful dream to stay,

Lest when I wake and it has past away,

I learn to my sad cost,

A moment given, 'twas in a moment lost;

Determined not to abuse it,

The less will be my sorrow should I lose it.

[A trumpet sounds.

CLARIN. Upon a rapid steed,  
(Excuse my painting it; I can't indeed  
Resist the inspiration),  
Which seems a moving mass of all creation,  
Its body being the earth,  
The fire the soul that in its heart hath birth,  
Its foam the sea, its panting breath the air,  
Chaos confused at which I stand and stare,  
Since in its soul, foam, body, breath, to me  
It is a monster made of fire, earth, air, and sea;  
Its colour dapple grey,  
Speckled its skin, and flecked, as well it may,  
By the impatient spur its flank that dyes,  
For lo! it doth not run, the meteor flies;  
As borne upon the wind,  
A beauteous woman seeks thee.

SIGISMUND. I'm struck blind!

CLARIN. Good God, it is Rosaura, oh, the pain!

[Retires.

SIGISMUND. Heaven has restored her to my sight again.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE X.

ROSAURA, in a light corselet, with sword and dagger;

SIGISMUND, and Soldiers.

ROSAURA. Noble-hearted Sigismund!  
Thou whose hidden light heroic  
Issues from its night of shadows  
To the great deeds of its morning;

And as heaven's sublimest planet  
From the white arms of Aurora  
Back restores their beauteous colour  
To the wild flowers and the roses,  
And upon the seas and mountains,  
When endiademed with glory,  
Scatters light, diffuses splendour,  
Braids their foam, their hair makes golden;  
Thus thou dawnest on the world  
Bright auspicious sun of Poland,  
Who will help a hapless woman,  
She who at thy feet doth throw her,  
Help her, since she is unhappy,  
And a woman; two good motives  
Quite enough to move a man  
Who of valour so doth boast him,  
Though even one would be sufficient,  
Though even one would be all potent.  
Thou hast seen me thrice already,  
Thrice thou hast not truly known me,  
For each time by different dresses  
Was I strangely metamorphosed.

First I seemed to thee a man,  
When within thy sad and sombre  
Cell thou sawest me, when thy life  
Wiled from me mine own misfortunes.  
As a woman next thou sawest me,  
Where the splendours of thy throne-room  
Vanished like a fleeting vision,  
Vain, phantasmal and abortive.  
The third time is now, when being  
Something monstrous and abnormal,  
In a woman's dress thou see'st me  
With a warrior's arms adorned.  
And to pity and compassion  
That thou may'st be moved more strongly,  
Listen to the sad succession  
Of my tragical misfortunes.  
In the Court of Muscovy  
I was born of a noble mother,  
Who indeed must have been fair  
Since unhappiness was her portion.  
Fond and too persuading eyes  
Fixed on her, a traitor lover,



Whom, not knowing, I don't name,  
Though mine own worth hath informed me  
What was his: for being his image,  
I sometimes regret that fortune  
Made me not a pagan born,  
That I might, in my wild folly,  
Think he must have been some god,  
Such as he was, who in golden  
Shower wooed Danae, or as swan  
Leda loved, as bull, Europa.  
When I thought to lengthen out,  
Citing these perfidious stories,  
My discourse, I find already  
That I have succinctly told thee  
How my mother, being persuaded  
By the flatteries of love's homage,  
Was a fair as any fair,  
And unfortunate as all are.  
That ridiculous excuse  
Of a plighted husband's promise  
So misled her, that even yet  
the remembrance brings her sorrow.

For that traitor, that Aeneas  
Flying from his Troy, forgot there,  
Or left after him his sword.  
By this sheath its blade is covered,  
But it shall be naked drawn  
Ere this history is over.  
From this loosely fastened know  
Which binds nothing, which ties nothing,  
Call it marriage, call it crime,  
Names its nature cannot alter,  
I was born, a perfect image,  
A true copy of my mother,  
In her loveliness, ah, no!  
In her miseries and misfortunes.  
Therefore there is little need  
To say how the hapless daughter,  
Heiress of such scant good luck,  
Had her own peculiar portion.  
All that I will say to thee  
Of myself is, that the robber  
Of the trophies of my fame,  
Of the sweet spoils of my honour,

Is Astolfo . . . . Ah! to name him  
Stirs and rouses up the choler  
Of the heart, a fitting effort  
When an enemy's name is spoken,--  
Yes, Astolfo was that traitor,  
Who, forgetful of his promise  
(For when love has passed away,  
Even its memory is forgotten),  
Came to Poland, hither called.  
From so sweet so proud a conquest,  
To be married to Estrella,  
Of my setting sun the torch light.  
Who'll believe that when one star  
Oft unites two happy lovers,  
Now one star, Estrella, comes  
Two to tear from one another?  
I offended, I deceived,  
Sad remained, remained astonished,  
Mad, half dead, remained myself;  
That's to say, in so much torment,  
That my heart was like a Babel  
Of confusion, hell, and horror:

I resolving to be mute,  
(For there are some pains and sorrows  
That by feelings are expressed,  
Better than when words are spoken).  
I by silence spoke my pain,  
Till one day being with my mother  
Violante, she (oh, heavens!)  
Burst their prison; like a torrent  
Forth they rushed from out my breast,  
Streaming wildly o'er each other.  
No embarrassment it gave me  
To relate them, for the knowing  
That the person we confide to  
A like weakness must acknowledge  
Gives as 'twere to our confusion  
A sweet soothing and a solace,  
For at times a bad example  
Has its use. In fine, my sorrows  
She with pity heard, relating  
Even her own grief to console me:  
When he has himself been guilty  
With what ease the judge condoneth!

Knowing from her own experience  
That 'twas idle, to slow-moving  
Leisure, to swift-fleeting time,  
To intrust one's injured honour.  
She could not advise me better,  
As the cure of my misfortunes,  
Than to follow and compel him  
By prodigious acts of boldness  
To repay my honour's debt:  
And that such attempt might cost me  
Less, my fortune wished that I  
Should a man's strange dress put on me.  
She took down an ancient sword,  
Which is this I bear: the moment  
Now draws nigh I must unsheath it,  
Since to her I gave that promise,  
When confiding in its marks,  
Thus she said, "Depart to Poland,  
And so manage that this steel  
Shall be seen by the chief nobles  
Of that land, for I have hope  
That there may be one among them

Who may prove to thee a friend,  
An adviser and consoler."  
Well, in Poland I arrived;  
It is useless to inform thee  
What thou knowest already, how  
A wild steed resistless bore me  
To thy caverned tower, wherein  
Thou with wonder didst behold me.  
Let us pass too, how Clotaldo  
Passionately my cause supported,  
How he asked my life of the king  
Who to him that boon accorded;  
How discovering who I am  
He persuaded me my proper  
Dress to assume, and on Estrella  
To attend as maid of honour,  
So to thwart Astolfo's love  
And prevent the marriage contract.  
Let us, too, pass by, that here  
thou didst once again behold me  
In a woman's dress, my form  
Waking thus a twofold wonder,

And approach the time, Clotaldo  
Being convinced it was important  
That should wed and reign together  
Fair Estrella and Astolfo,  
'Gainst my honour, me advised  
To forego my rightful project.  
But, O valiant Sigismund,  
Seeing that the moment cometh  
For thy vengeance, since heaven wishes  
Thee to-day to burst the portals  
Of thy narrow rustic cell,  
Where so long immured, thy body  
Was to feeling a wild beast,  
Was to sufferance what the rock is,  
And that 'gainst thy sire and country  
Thou hast gallantly revolted,  
And ta'en arms, I come to assist thee,  
Intermingling the bright corselet  
Of Minerva with the trappings  
Of Diana, thus enrobing  
Silken stuff and shining steel  
In a rare but rich adornment.

On, then, on, undaunted champion!  
To us both it is important  
To prevent and bring to nought  
This engagement and betrothal;  
First to me, that he, my husband,  
Should not falsely wed another,  
Then to thee, that their two staffs  
Being united, their joined forces  
Should with overwhelming power  
Leave our doubtful victory hopeless.  
Woman, I come here to urge thee  
To repair my injured honour,  
And as man I come to rouse thee  
Crown and sceptre to recover.  
Woman I would wake thy pity  
Since here at thy feet I throw me,  
And as man, my sword and person  
In thy service I devote thee.  
But remember, if to-day  
As a woman thou should'st court me,  
I, as man, will give thee death  
In the laudable upholding,



Of my honour, since I am  
In this strife of love, this contest,  
Woman my complaints to tell thee,  
And a man to guard my honour.

SIGISMUND [aside]. Heavens! if it is true I  
dream,  
Memory then suspend thy office,  
For 'tis vain to hope remembrance  
Could retain so many objects.  
Help me, God! or teach me how  
All these numerous doubts to conquer,  
Or to cease to think of any!--  
Whoe'er tried such painful problems?  
If 'twas but a dream, my grandeur,  
How then is it, at this moment,  
That this woman can refer me  
To some facts that are notorious?  
Then 'twas truth, and not a dream;  
But if it was truth (another  
And no less confusion,) how  
Can my life be called in proper

Speech a dream? So like to dreams  
Are then all the world's chief glories,  
That the true are oft rejected  
As the false, the false too often  
Are mistaken for the true?  
Is there then 'twixt one and the other  
Such slight difference, that a question  
May arise at any moment  
Which is true or which is false?  
Are the original and the copy  
So alike, that which is which  
Oft the doubtful mind must ponder?  
If 'tis so, and if must vanish,  
As the shades of night at morning,  
All of majesty and power,  
All of grandeur and of glory,  
Let us learn at least to turn  
To our profit the brief moment  
That is given us, since our joy  
Lasteth while our dream lasts only.  
In my power Rosaura stands,  
Thou, my heart, her charms adoreth,

Let us seize then the occasion;  
Let love trample in its boldness  
All the laws on which relying  
She here at my feet has thrown her.  
'Tis a dream; and since 'tis so,  
Let us dream of joys, the sorrows  
Will come soon enough hereafter.  
But with mine own words just spoken,  
Let me now confute myself!  
If it is a dream that mocks me,  
Who for human vanities  
Would forego celestial glory?  
What past bliss is not a dream?  
Who has had his happy fortunes  
Who hath said not to himself  
As his memory ran o'er them,  
"All I saw, beyond a doubt  
Was a dream." If this exposeth  
My delusion, if I know  
That desire is but the glowing  
Of a flame that turns to ashes  
At the softest wind that bloweth;

Let us seek then the eternal,  
The true fame that ne'er repositeth,  
Where the bliss is not a dream,  
Nor the crown a fleeting glory.  
Without honour is Rosaura.

But it is a prince's province  
To give honour, not to take it:  
Then, by Heaven! it is her honour  
That for her I must win back,  
Ere this kingdom I can conquer.  
Let us fly then this temptation.

[To the Soldiers.

'Tis too strong: To arms! March onward!  
For to-day I must give battle,  
Ere descending night, the golden  
Sunbeams of expiring day  
Buries in the dark green ocean.

ROSAURA. Dost thou thus, my lord, with-  
draw thee?

What! without a word being spoken?  
Does my pain deserve no pity?

Does my grief so little move thee?  
Can it be, my lord, thou wilt not  
Deign to hear, to look upon me?  
Dost thou even avert thy face?

SIGISMUND. Ah, Rosaura, 'tis thy honour  
That requires this harshness now,  
If my pity I would show thee.  
Yes, my voice does not respond,  
'Tis my honour that respondeth;  
True I speak not, for I wish  
That my actions should speak for me;  
Thee I do not look on, no,  
For, alas! it is of moment,  
That he must not see thy beauty  
Who is pledged to see thy honour.  
[Exit followed by the Soldiers.]

ROSAURA. What enigmas, O ye skies!  
After many a sigh and tear,  
Thus in doubt to leave me here  
With equivocal replies!

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XI.

CLARIN and ROSAURA.

CLARIN. Madam, is it visiting hour?

ROSAURA. Welcome, Clarin, where have you been?

CLARIN. Only four stout walls between  
In an old enchanted tower;  
Death was on the cards for me,  
But amid the sudden strife  
Ere the last trump came, my life  
Won the trick and I got free.  
I ne'er hoped to sound again.

ROSAURA. Why?

CLARIN. Because alone I know  
Who you are: And this being so,  
Learn, Clotaldo is . . . . This strain  
Puts me out.

[Drums are heard.]

ROSAURA. What can it be?

CLARIN. From the citadel at hand,  
Leagured round, an armed band  
As to certain victory  
Sallies forth with flags unfurled.

ROSAURA. 'Gainst Prince Sigismund! and I,  
Coward that I am, not by  
To surprise and awe the world,  
When with so much cruelty  
Each on each the two hosts spring!

[Exit.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XII.

CLARIN; and Soldiers within.

Voices of some. Live, long live our victor King!

Voices of others. Live, long live our liberty!

CLARIN. Live, long live the two, I say!

Me it matters not a pin,

Which doth lose or which doth win,

If I can keep out of the way!--

So aside here I will go,

Acting like a prudent hero,

Even as the Emperor Nero



Took things coolly long ago.  
Or if care I cannot shun,  
Let it 'bout mine ownself be;  
Yes, here hidden I can see  
All the fighting and the fun;  
What a cosy place I spy  
Mid the rock there! so secure,  
Death can't find me out I'm sure,  
Then a fig for death I say!  
[Conceals himself, drums beat and the sound of  
arms is heard.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XIII.

BASILIOUS, CLOTALDO, ASTOLFO, flying. --  
CLARIN concealed.

BASILIOUS. Hapless king! disastrous reign!  
Outraged father! guilty son!

CLOTALDO. See thy vanquished forces run  
In a panic o'er the plain!

ASTOLFO. And the rebel conqueror's stay,  
Proud, defiant.

BASILIOUS. 'Tis decreed  
Those are loyal who succeed,  
Rebels those who lose the day.  
Let us then, Clotaldo, flee,  
Since the victory he hath won,  
From a proud and cruel son.

[Shots are fired within, and CLARIN falls  
wounded from his hiding-place.]

CLARIN. Heaven protect me!

ASTOLFO. Who can be

This last victim of the fight,  
Who is struck down in the retreat,  
Falls here bleeding at our feet?

CLARIN. I am an unlucky wight,  
Who to shun Death's fearful face  
Found the thing I would forget:  
Flying from him, him I've met.  
For there is no secret place  
Hid from death; and therefore I  
This conclusion hold as clear,  
He 'scapes best who goes more near,  
He dies first who first doth fly.  
Then return, return and be  
In the bloody conflict lost;  
Where the battle rages most,  
There is more security  
Than in hills how desolate,  
Since no safety can there be  
'Gainst the force of destiny,  
And the inclemency of fate;  
Therefore 'tis in vain thou flyest

From the death thou draw'st more nigh,  
Oh, take heed for thou must die  
If it is God's will thou diest!  
[Falls within.

BASILIUUS. Oh, take heed for thou must die  
If it is God's will thou diest!--  
With what eloquence, O heaven!  
Does this body that here lieth,  
Through the red mouth of a wound  
To profoundest thoughts entice us  
From our ignorance and our error!  
The red current as it glideth  
Is a bloody tongue that teaches  
All man's diligence is idle,  
When against a greater power,  
And a higher cause it striveth.  
Thus with me, 'gainst strife and murder  
When I thought I had provided,  
I but brought upon my country  
All the ills I would have hindered.

CLOTALDO. Though, my lord, fate knoweth well

Every path, and quickly findeth  
Whom it seeks; yet still it strikes me  
'Tis not christian-like to say  
'Gainst its rage that nought suffices.  
That is wrong, a prudent man  
Even o'er fate victorious rises;  
And if thou art not preserved  
From the ills that have surprised thee,  
From worse ills thyself preserve.

ASTOLFO. Sire, Clotaldo doth address thee  
As a cautious, prudent man,  
Whose experience time hath ripened.  
I as a bold youth would speak:  
Yonder, having lost its rider,  
I behold a noble steed  
Wandering reinless and unbridled,  
Mount and fly with him while I  
Guard the open path behind thee.

BASILIOUS. If it is God's will I die,  
Or if Death for me here lieth  
As in ambush, face to face  
I will meet it and defy it.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCENE XIV.

SIGISMUND, ESTRELLA, ROSAURA, Soldiers,  
Attendants, BASILIOUS,  
ASTOLFO, and CLOTALDO.

A SOLDIER. 'Mid the thickets of the mountain,  
'Neath these dark boughs so united,  
The King hides.

SIGISMUND. Pursue him then,  
Leave no single shrub unrifled,

Nothing must escape your search,  
Not a plant, and not a pine tree.

CLOTALDO. Fly, my lord!

BASILIUUS. And wherefore fly?

ASTOLFO. Come!

BASILIUUS. Astolfo, I'm decided.

CLOTALDO. What to do?

BASILIUUS. To try, Clotaldo,  
One sole remedy that surviveth.

[To SIGISMUND.

If 'tis me thou'rt seeking, Prince,  
At thy feet behold me lying.

[Kneeling.

Let thy carpet be these hairs  
Which the snows of age have whitened.  
Tread upon my neck, and trample

On my crown; in base defilement  
Treat me with all disrespect;  
Let thy deadliest vengeance strike me  
Through my honour; as thy slave  
Make me serve thee, and in spite of  
All precautions let fate be,  
Let heaven keep the word it plighted.

SIGISMUND. Princes of the Court of Poland,  
Who such numerous surprises  
Have astonished seen, attend,  
For it is your prince invites ye.  
That which heaven has once determined,  
That which God's eternal finger  
Has upon the azure tablets  
Of the sky sublimely written,  
Those transparent sheets of sapphire  
Superscribed with golden ciphers  
Ne'er deceive, and never lie;  
The deceiver and the liar  
Is he who to use them badly  
In a wrongful sense defines them.



Thus, my father, who is present,  
To protect him from the wildness  
Of my nature, made of me  
A fierce brute, a human wild-beast;  
So that I, who from my birth,  
From the noble blood that trickles  
Through my veins, my generous nature,  
And my liberal condition,  
Might have proved a docile child,  
And so grew, it was sufficient  
By so strange an education,  
By so wild a course of living,  
To have made my manners wild;--  
What a method to refine them!  
If to any man 'twas said,  
"It is fated that some wild-beast  
will destroy you," would it be  
Wise to wake a sleeping tiger  
As the remedy of the ill?  
If 'twere said, "this sword here hidden  
In its sheath, which thou dost wear,  
Is the one foredoomed to kill thee,"

Vain precaution it would be  
To preserve the threatened victim.  
Bare to point it at his breast.  
If 'twere said, "these waves that ripple  
Calmly here for thee will build  
Foam-white sepulchres of silver,"  
Wrong it were to trust the sea  
When its haughty breast is lifted  
Into mountain heights of snow,  
Into hills of curling crystal.  
Well, this very thing has happened  
Unto him, who feared a wild-beast,  
And awoke him while he slept;  
Or who drew a sharp sword hidden  
Naked forth, or dared the sea  
When 'twas roused by raging whirlwinds  
And though my fierce nature (hear me)  
Was as 'twere the sleeping tiger,  
A sheathed sword my innate rage  
And my wrath a quiet ripple,  
Fate should not be forced by means  
So unjust and so vindictive,

For they but excite it more;  
And thus he who would be victor  
O'er his fortune, must succeed  
By wise prudence and self-strictness.  
Not before an evil cometh  
Can it rightly be resisted  
Even by him who hath foreseen it,  
For although (the fact's admitted)  
By an humble resignation  
It is possible to diminish  
Its effects, it first must happen,  
And by no means can be hindered.  
Let it serve as an example  
This strange sight, this most surprising  
Spectacle, this fear, this horror,  
This great prodigy; for none higher  
E'er was worked than this we see,  
After years of vain contriving,  
Prostrate at my feet a father,  
And a mighty king submitted.  
This the sentence of high heaven  
Which he did his best to hinder

He could not prevent. Can I,  
Who in valour and in science,  
Who in years am so inferior,  
It avert? My lord, forgive me,  
[To the King.

Rise, sir, let me clasp thy hand;  
For since heaven has now apprized thee  
That thy mode of counteracting  
Its decree was wrong, a willing  
Sacrifice to thy revenge  
Let my prostrate neck be given.

BASILIOUS. Son, this noble act of thine  
In my heart of hearts reviveth  
All my love, thou'rt there reborn.  
Thou art Prince; the bay that bindeth  
Heroes' brows, the palm, be thine,  
Let the crown thine own deeds give thee.

ALL. Long live Sigismund our King!

SIGISMUND. Though my sword must wait a little  
Ere great victories it can gain,  
I to-day will win the highest,  
The most glorious, o'er myself.--  
Give, Astolfo, give your plighted  
Hand here to Rosaura, since  
It is due and I require it.

ASTOLFO. Though 'tis true I owe the debt,  
Still 'tis needful to consider  
That she knows not who she is;  
It were infamous, a stigma  
On my name to wed a woman . . . .

CLOTALDO. Stay, Astolfo, do not finish;  
For Rosaura is as noble  
As yourself. My sword will right her  
In the field against the world:  
She's my daughter, that's sufficient.

ASTOLFO. What do you say?

CLOTALDO. Until I saw her  
To a noble spouse united,  
I her birth would not reveal.  
It were now a long recital,  
But the sum is, she's my child.

ASTOLFO. That being so, the word I've  
plighted  
I will keep.

SIGISMUND. And that Estrella  
May not now be left afflicted,  
Seeing she has lost a prince  
Of such valour and distinction,  
I propose from mine own hand  
As a husband one to give her,  
Who, if he does not exceed  
Him in worth, perhaps may rival.  
Give to me thy hand.

ESTRELLA. I gain

By an honour so distinguished.

SIGISMUND. To Clotaldo, who so truly  
Served my father, I can give him  
But these open arms wherein  
He will find what'er he wishes.

A SOLDIER. If thou honorest those who serve  
thee,  
Thus, to me the first beginner  
Of the tumult through the land,  
Who from out the tower, thy prison,  
Drew thee forth, what wilt thou give?

SIGISMUND. Just that tower: and that you  
issue  
Never from it until death,  
I will have you guarded strictly;  
For the traitor is not needed  
Once the treason is committed.

BASILIUUS. So much wisdom makes one wonder.

ASTOLFO. What a change in his condition!

ROSAURA. How discreet! how calm! how prudent!

SIGISMUND. Why this wonder, these surprises,

If my teacher was a dream,  
And amid my new aspirings  
I am fearful I may wake,  
And once more a prisoner find me  
In my cell? But should I not,  
Even to dream it is sufficient:  
For I thus have come to know  
That at last all human blisses  
Pass and vanish as a dream,  
And the time that may be given me  
I henceforth would turn to gain:  
Asking for our faults forgiveness,



Since to generous, noble hearts  
It is natural to forgive them.