

**CALE RICE**

YOLANDA OF  
CYPRUS

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**Yolanda of Cyprus**

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*Yolanda of Cyprus:*

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# Cale Young Rice

## Yolanda of Cyprus

### ACT I

### CHARACTERS

Renier Lusignan	<i>A Descendant of the Lusignan Kings of Cyprus</i>
Berengere	<i>His Wife</i>
Amaury	<i>His Son, Commander of Famagouste under the Venetians</i>
Yolanda	<i>The Ward of Berengere, betrothed to Amaury</i>
Camarin	<i>A Baron of Paphos, Guest in the Lusignan Castle</i>
Vittia Pisani	<i>A Venetian Lady, also a Guest</i>
Moro	<i>A Priest</i>
Hassan	<i>Warden of the Castle</i>
Hahil	<i>His Son, a Boy</i>
Tremitus	<i>A Piquarian</i>
Olympio	<i>A Greek Boy, serving Amaury</i>
Alessa	)
Maga	) <i>Berengere's Women</i>
Civa	)
Mauria	)
Smarda	<i>Slave To Vittia</i>
Pietro	<i>In Vittia's pay</i>
<i>Priests, Acolytes, etc.</i>	
<i>Time —The Sixteenth Century</i>	
<i>Place —The Island of Cyprus</i>	

## YOLANDA OF CYPRUS

*Scene: A dim Hall, of blended Gothic and Saracenic styles, in the Lusignan Castle, on the island of Cyprus near Famagouste. Around the walls, above faint frescoes portraying the deliverance of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, runs a frieze inlaid with the coats-of-arms of former Lusignan kings. On the left, and back, is a door hung with heavy damask, and in the wall opposite, another. Farther down on the right a few steps, whose railing supports a Greek vase with jasmine, lead through a chapel to the sleeping apartments. In the rear, on either side, are guled lattice windows, and in the centre an open grated door, looking upon a loggia, and, across the garden below, over the moonlit sea. Seats are placed about, and, forward, a divan with rich Turkish coverings. A table with a lighted cross-shaped candlestick is by the door, left; and a lectern with a book on it, to the front, right. As the curtain rises, the Women, except Civa, lean wearily on the divan, and Halil near is singing dreamily:*

Ah, the balm, the balm,  
And ah, the blessing  
Of the deep fall of night  
And of confessing.  
Of the sick soul made white  
Of all distressing:

Made white!..

Ah, balm of night

And, ah the blessing!

*[The music falls and all seem yielding to sleep. Suddenly there are hoof-beats and sounds at the gates below. Halil springs up.]*

*Halil.* Alessa! Maga! Voices at the gates!

[All start up.

Some one is come.

*Alessa.* Boy, Halil, who?

*Halil.* Up, up!

Perhaps lord Renier – No: I will learn.

[He runs to curtains and looks.

It is Olympio! Olympio!

From Famagouste and lord Amaury!

*Mauria.* Ah!

And comes he here?

*Halil.* As he were lord of skies!

To lady Yolanda, by my lute!

*Maga.* Where is she?

*Alessa.* I do not know; perhaps, her chamber.

*Mauria.* Stay:

His word may be of the Saracens.

*Halil (calling).* Oho!

*[He admits Olympio, who enters insolently down. All press round him gaily.]*

*Mauria.* Well, what, Olympio, from Famagouste?  
What tidings? tell us.

*Maga.* See, his sword!

*Olympio.* Stand off.

*Mauria.* The tidings, then, the tidings!

*Olympio.* None – for women.

*Mauria.* So-ho, my Cupid? None of the Saracens?  
Of the squadron huddling yesterday for haven  
At Keryneia?

*Olympio.* Who has told you?

*Mauria.* Who?

A hundred galleys westing up the wind,  
Scenting the shore, but timorous as hounds.  
A gale – and twenty down!

*Maga.* The rest are flown?

*Olympio.* Ask Zeus, or ask, to-morrow, lord Amaury,  
Or, if he comes, to-night. To lady Yolanda  
I'm sent and not to tattle, silly, here.

*[He starts off, but is arrested by laughter within. It is Civa who enters, holding up a parchment.]*

O! Only Civa.

*[Starts again with Halil.]*

*Civa.* How, Olympio!



Stay you, and hear! – May never virgin love him!

Gone as a thistle! (*turns*).

*Mauria*. Pouf! (*laughs*).

*Alessa* (*to Civa*). Now what have you?

*Civa*. Verses! found in the garden. Verses! verses!

On papyrus of Paphos. O, to read!

But you, *Alessa* – !

*Alessa* (*takes them*). In the garden?

*Civa*. By

The fountain cypress, at the marble feet

Of chaste *Diana*!

*Maga*. Where Sir *Camarin*

And oft our lady – !

*Civa*. *Maga*, will you prattle?

Read them to us, *Alessa*, read them, read.

They are of love!

*Maga*. No, sorrow.

*Civa*. O, as a nun

You ever sigh for sorrow! – They are of love!

Of princes bursting through enchanted bounds

To ladies prisoned in an ogre's keep!

Then of the bridals! – O, they are of love!

*Maga*. No, *Civa*, no! – of sorrow! see, her lips!

[*She points to Alessa, who, reading, has paled.*

See, see!

*Civa*. *Alessa*!

*Alessa.* Maga – Civa – Ah!

[She rends the parchment.

*Mauria.* What are you doing?

*Alessa.* They were writ to *her*!

*Mauria.* To her? to whom? what are you saying? Read!  
Read us the verses.

*Alessa.* No.

*Mauria.* Tell then his name  
Who writes them, and to whom.

*Alessa.* I will not.

*Mauria.* Then  
It is some guilt you hide! – And touching her  
You dote on – lady Yolanda!

*Alessa.* Shame!

*Mauria.* Some guilt  
Of one, then, in this castle! – See, her lips  
Betray it is.

*Maga.* No, Mauria! no! no! (*holds her*) hush!

[Forms appear without.

*Mauria.* O, loose me.

*Maga.* There, on the loggia! Hush, see —  
Our lady and Sir Camarin.

*Alessa* (*fearful*). It is...

They heard us, Maga?

*Maga.* No, but —

*Mauria* (to *Alessa*). So? that mouse?

*Alessa*. You know not, *Mauria*, what thing you say. —  
He is troubling her; be still.

[*Stepping out as Berengere enters.*

My lady?

*Berengere* (unwillingly). Yes.

It is time, now, for your lamps,  
And for your aves and o'erneeded sleep.  
But first I'd know if yet lord Renier —

[*Sees Alessa's face.*

Why are you pale?

*Alessa*. I?

*Berengere*. So – and strange.

*Alessa*. We have

But put away the distaff and the needle.

*Camarin enters.*

*Berengere*. The distaff and the needle – it may be.  
And yet you do not seem —

*Alessa*. My lady – ?

*Berengere*. Go.

And send me Hassan.

[*The women leave.*

*Camarin* – you saw?

They were not as their wont is.

*Camarin.* To your eyes,  
My Berengere, that apprehension haunts.  
They were as ever. Then be done with fear!

*Berengere.* I cannot.

*Camarin.* To the abyss with it. To-night  
Is ours – Renier tarries at Famagouste —  
Is ours for love and for a long delight!

*Berengere.* Whose end may be —

*Camarin.* Dawn and the dewy lark!  
And passing of all presage from you.

*Berengere (sits).* No:

For think, Yolanda's look when by the cypress  
We read the verses! And my dream that I  
Should with a cross – inscrutable is sleep! —  
Bring her deep bitterness.

*Camarin.* Dreams are a brood  
Born of the night and not of destiny.  
She guesses not our guilt, and Renier  
Clasps to his breast ambition as a bride —  
Ambition for Amaury.

*Berengere.* None can say.  
He's much with this Venetian, our guest,  
Though Venice gyves us more with tyranny  
Than would the Saracen.

*Camarin.* But through this lady  
Of the Pisani, powerful in Venice,

He hopes to lift again his dynasty  
Up from decay; and to restore this island,  
This verdure-dream of the seas, unto his house.  
'Tis clear, my Berengere!

*Berengere.* Then, *her* design?  
And, the requital that entices her?

[Rises.

Evil will come of it, to us some evil,  
Or to Yolanda and Amaury's love. —  
But, there; the women.

*Camarin.* And too brief their stay.  
What signal for to-night?

*Berengere.* Be in the garden.  
Over the threshold yonder I will wave  
The candle-sign, when all are passed to sleep.

*Camarin.* And with the beam I shall mount up to you  
Quicker than ecstasy.

*Berengere.* I am as a leaf  
Before the wind and raging of your love.  
Go — go.

*Camarin.* But to return unto your breast!

[*He leaves her by the divan.*

[*The women re-enter with silver lighted lamps; behind them are Hassan and the slave Smarda. They wait for Berengere, who has stood silent, to speak.*

*Berengere (looking up).* Ah, you are come; I had forgotten.  
And it is time for sleep. – Hassan, the gates:  
Close them.

*Hassan.* And chain them, lady?

*Berengere.* Wait no longer.

Lord Renier will not come.

*Hassan.* No word of him?

*Berengere.* None, though he yesterday left Nicosie  
With the priest Moro.

*Hassan.* Lady —

*Berengere.* Wait no longer.

Come, women, with your lamps and light the way.

[*The women go by the steps. Berengere follows.*]

*Hassan (staring after her).* The reason of this mood in her?  
the reason?

Something is vile. Lady Yolanda weeps

In secret; all for what? By God! the Paphian?

Or she of Venice? (*sees Smarda*). Now slave! Scythian!

Why do you linger?

*Smarda.* I am bidden – (*snarls*) by

My mistress.

*Hassan.* Spa! Thy mistress hath, I think,

Something of hell in her and has unpacked

A portion in this castle. Is it so?

*Smarda.* My lady is of Venice.

*Hassan.* Strike her, God.

Her smirk admits it.

*Smarda.* Touch me not!

*Hassan.* I'll wring

Your tongue out sudden, if it now has lies.

What of your lady and lord Renier?

*Smarda.* Off!

*Renier enters behind, with Moro.*

*Hassan.* Your lady and lord Renier, I say!

What do they purpose?

*Smarda.* Fool-born! look around.

*Hassan.* Not till —

*Smarda.* Lord Renier, help.

*Hassan.* What do you say?

[Turns, and stares amazed.

A fool I am ...

*Renier.* Where is my wife?

*Hassan.* Why, she ...

This slave stung me to pry.

*Renier.* Where is my wife?

*Hassan.* A moment since she left – the women with her.

She asked for your return.

*Renier.* And wherefore did?

*Hassan.* You jeer me.

*Renier.* Answer.

*Hassan.* Have you not been gone?

*Renier.* Not – overfar. Where is Yolanda? – Well?  
No matter; find my chamber till I come.  
Of my arrival, too, no word to any.

[*Hassan goes, confused.*]

You, Moro, have deferred me; now, I move.  
Whether it is suspicion eats in me,  
Mistrust and fret and doubt – of whom I say not,  
Or whether desire, and unsubduable,  
To see Amaury sceptred – I care not.

[*To Smarda.*]

Slave, to your lady who awaits me, say  
I'm here and now have chosen.

*Moro.* Do not!

*Renier.* Chosen.

[*Smarda goes.*]

None can be great who will not hush his heart  
To hold a sceptre, and Amaury must.  
He is Lusignan and his lineage  
Will drown in him Yolanda's loveliness.

*Moro.* It will not.

*Renier.* Then at least I shall uncover  
What this Venetian hints.

*Moro.* Sir?

*Renier.* I must know.

*Moro.* 'Tis of your wife? – Yolanda?



*Renier.* Name them not.

They've shut me from their souls.

*Moro.* My lord, not so;

But you repulse them.

*Renier.* When they pity. No,

Something has gone from me or never was

Within my breast. I love not – am unlovable.

Amaury is not so.

And this Venetian Vittia Pisani —

*Moro.* Distrust her!

*Renier.* She has power.

*Moro.* But not truth.

And yesterday a holy relic scorned.

*Renier.* She loves Amaury. Wed to her he will

Be the elected Governor of Cyprus.

The throne, then, but a step.

*Moro.* But all too great.

And think; Yolanda is to him as heaven:

He will not yield her.

*Renier.* Then he must. And she,

The Venetian, has ways to it – a secret

To wrench her from his arms.

*Moro.* Sir, sir? – of what?

*Renier.* I know not, of some shame.

*Moro.* Shame!

*Renier.* Why do you clutch me?

*Moro.* I – am a priest – and shame —

*Renier.* You show suspicions.

[*Vittia enters unnoted.*

Of whom? – Of whom, and what?

*Vittia (lightly).* My lord, of women.

[*Renier starts and turns.*

So does the Holy Church instil him.

*Renier.* You

Come softly, lady of Venice.

*Vittia.* Streets of sea

In Venice teach us.

*Renier.* Of what women, then?

My wife? Yolanda?

*Vittia.* By the freedom due us,

What matters it? In Venice our lords know

That beauty has no master.

*Renier.* Has no... That,

That too has something hid.

*Vittia.* Suspicious lord!

Yet Berengere Lusignan is his wife!

And soon Yolanda – But for that I'm here.

You sent for me.

*Renier (sullen).* I sent.

*Vittia.* To say you've chosen?

And offer me irrevocable aid

To win Amaury?

*Renier.* All is vain in me  
Before the fever for it.

*Vittia.* Then, I shall.

It must be done. My want is unafraid.  
Hourly I am expecting out of Venice  
Letters of power.

And what to you I pledge is he shall be  
Ruler of Cyprus and these Mediterranean  
Blue seas that rock ever against its coast.  
That do I pledge ... but more.

*Renier.* Of rule?.. Then what?

*Vittia (going up to him).* Of shame withheld – dishonor  
unrevealed.

[As he recoils.

Hush! there are steps.

[The slave re-enters.

Smarda?

*Smarda (quickly).* My lady!

*Vittia.* Speak.

*Smarda.* I've erred; she's not asleep.

*Vittia.* Who? – Ah! Yolanda?

*Smarda.* Yes; she is coming!

*Renier.* Ha!

*Vittia.* My lord – !

*Renier.* I'll stay,

Stay and confront her.

*Vittia.* Ignorantly? No.

*Renier.* I'll question her.

*Vittia.* Blindly, and peril all?

*Renier.* I will return. You put me off, and off.

*[By the loggia, with Moro, he goes; the slave slips out. Yolanda enters, sadly, her gaze on the floor. She walks slowly, but becoming conscious starts, sees Vittia, and turns to withdraw.]*

*Vittia.* Your pardon —

*Yolanda.* I can serve you?

*Vittia.* If you seek

The women, they are gone.

*Yolanda.* I do not seek them.

*Vittia.* Nor me?

*Yolanda.* Nor any. — Yet I would I might

With seeking penetrate the labyrinth

Of your intent.

*Vittia.* I thank you. And you shall,

To-night — if you have love.

*Yolanda.* That thread were vain.

*Vittia.* I say, if you have love.

*Yolanda.* Of guile?

*Vittia.* Of her

You hold as mother, and who is Amaury's.

*Yolanda.* Were it so simple, all designs that ever  
Laired in you, would to my eyes have been as clear  
As shallows under Morpha's crystal wave.

*Vittia.* Unproven you speak so.

*Yolanda.* And proven would.

*Vittia.* If so, then – save her.

*Yolanda.* Who? What do you – ? (*stops*).

*Vittia (with irony).* Mean?

It is not clear?

*Yolanda.* Save her?

*Vittia.* The surety flies

Out of your cheek and dead upon your heart:

Yet you are innocent – oh innocent! —

O'er what abyss she hangs!

*Yolanda.* O'er no abyss.

*Vittia.* But to her lord is constant!

*Yolanda (desperate).* She is constant.

*Vittia.* And to his bed is true!

*Yolanda.* True.

*Vittia.* And this baron

Of Paphos – Camarin – is but her *friend*,

And deeply yours – as oft you feign to shield her!

*Yolanda.* He is no more.

*Vittia.* Your heart belies your lips,

Knows better than believing what you say.

*Yolanda.* Were, were he then ... (*struggles*) lord Renier knows

it not!

And never must. I have misled his thought  
From her to me. The danger thus may pass,  
The open shame.

Sir Camarin departed, her release  
From the remorse and fettering will seem  
Sweet as a vista into fairyland.  
For none e'er will betray her.

*Vittia.* None?

*Yolanda.* Your tone ...!

(*Realising.*) The still insinuation! You would do it!  
This is the beast then of the labyrinth!  
And this your heart is!

*Vittia.* No, not ever: no.

But *now*, if you deny me.

*Yolanda.* Speak as a woman,  
If there is womanhood in you to speak.  
The name of Berengere Lusignan must  
Go clean unto the years, fair and unsullied.  
Nor must the bloody leap  
Of death fall on her from lord Renier's sword,  
A death too ready if he but suspect.  
No, she is holy!

And holy are my lips  
Remembering that they may call her mother!  
All the bright world I breathe because of her,

Laughter and roses, day-song of the sea,  
Not bitterness and loneliness and blight!  
All the bright world,  
Of voices, dear as waking to the dead —  
Voices of love and tender earthly hopes —  
O, all the beauty I was once forbid!  
For O! —

She lifted me, a lonely convent weed,  
A cloister thing unvisited of dew,  
Withering and untended and afar  
From the remembered ruin of my home,  
And here has planted me in happiness.  
Then, for her, all I am!

*Vittia.* Or – hope to be?

*Yolanda.* The price, say, of your silence. – I am weary.

*Vittia.* And would be rid of me.

*Yolanda.* The price, the price.

*Vittia.* It is (*low and ashamed*) that you renounce Amaury's  
love.

[A pause.]

*Yolanda.* Amaury's love... You then would rend me there  
Where not Eternity could heal the wound  
Though all the River of God might be for balm!  
Cruelty like to this you could not do?

[Waits a moment.]

A swallow on the battlements to-day  
Fell from the hawk: you soothed and set it free.  
This, then, you would not – !

*Vittia.* Yes.

*Yolanda.* You cannot!

*Vittia.* Yes.

*Yolanda* (*wrung for a moment then calm*).

I had forgotten, you are of Venice – Venice  
Whose burdening is vast upon this land.  
Good-night.

*Vittia.* And you despise me!

*Yolanda.* More I loathe

That love of him has led your thought so low.

[Is going.

*Vittia.* Stay! If you leave and do not choose at once —

[Sounds are heard at the gates.

Who's that?.. (*starts*). Amaury?.. You've expected him?

[The chains fall.

Your purpose, then! Is it now to renounce  
And force him from you or to have me breathe  
To Renier Lusignan the one word  
That will transmute his wrong to madness?  
Say it! For centuries have stained these walls  
But never a wife; never —



*Enter Berengere.*

*Yolanda.* Mother?..

*Berengere.* Amaury

Has spurred to us, Yolanda, from his post,  
And is below. But ... what has befallen?

[Looks from one to the other.

*Yolanda.* He comes here, mother?

*Berengere.* At once.

*Yolanda (in dread).* Ah!

*Berengere.* Child?..

*Vittia (to Yolanda).* To-night  
Must be the end.

*Yolanda.* Go, go.

*Berengere (as Vittia passes out).* What thing is this?

*Yolanda.* Mother, I cannot have him – here – Amaury!  
Defer him but a little – till to-morrow.

I cannot see him now.

*Berengere.* This is o'erstrange.

*Yolanda.* Help me to think. Go to him, go, and say  
Some woman thing – that I am ill – that I  
Am at confession – penance – that – Ah, say  
But anything!

*Berengere.* Yolanda!

*Yolanda.* Say... No use.  
Too late.

*Berengere.* His step?

*Yolanda.* Oh, unmistakable;  
Along the corridor. Go!

[The curtains are thrown back.

*Amaury (at the threshold).* My Yolanda!

[*Hastens down and takes her, passive, in his arms.*

*Berengere goes.*

My, my Yolanda!..

[Kisses her.

To touch you is as triumph to the blood,  
Is as the boon of battle to the strong!

*Yolanda.* Amaury, no; release me and say why  
You come: The Saracens – ?

*Amaury.* Not of them now!

[Bends back her head.

But of some tribute incense to this beauty,  
Dear as the wind wafts from undying shrines  
Of mystery and myrrh!

I'd have the eloquence of quickened moons  
Pouring upon the midnight magically,  
To say all I have yearned,

Now, with your head pillowed upon my breast!  
Slow sullen speech, come to my soldier lips,  
Rough with command, and impotent of softness!

Come to my lips! or fill so full my eyes  
That the unutterable shall seem as sweet  
To my Yolanda. But ... how, how now? tears?

[Lifts her face.

*Yolanda.* Amaury —

*Amaury.* What have I done? Too pronely pressed  
You to this coat of steel?

*Yolanda.* No, no.

*Amaury.* My words,  
Or silence, then?

*Yolanda.* Amaury, no, but sweet,  
Sweet as the roses of Damascus crusht,  
Your silence is! and sweeter than the dream  
Of April nightingale on Troados,  
Or gushing by the springs of Chitria,  
Your every word of love! Yet – yet – ah, fold me,  
Within your arms oblivion and hold me,  
Fast to your being press me, and there bless me  
With breathèd power of your manhood's might.  
*Amaury!*..

*Amaury.* This I cannot understand.

*Yolanda (freeing herself).* Nothing – a folly – groundless  
frailty.

*Amaury.* You've been again at some old tale of sorrow,

[Goes to the lectern.

Pining along the pages of a book —  
This, telling of that Italy madonna  
Whose days were sad – I have forgotten how.  
Is it not so?

*Yolanda.* No, no. The tears of women  
Come as the air and sighing of the night,  
We know not whence or why.

*Amaury.* Often, perhaps.  
I am not skilled to tell. But never these!  
They are of trouble known.

*Yolanda.* Yet now forget them.

*Amaury.* It will not leave my heart that somehow – how  
I cannot fathom – Camarin —

*Yolanda (lightly, to stop him).* No farther!

*Amaury.* That Camarin of Paphos is their cause. —  
Tell me —

*Yolanda.* Yes, that I love thee!

*Amaury.* Tell me —

*Yolanda.* Love thee!

As sea the sky! and as the sky the wind!  
And as the wind the forest! As the forest —  
What does the forest love, Amaury? I  
Can think of nothing!

*Amaury.* Tell me then you have  
Never a moment of you yielded to him,  
That never he has touched too long this hand —

Till evermore he must, even as I —  
Nor once into your eyes too deep has gazed!  
You falter? darken?

*Yolanda.* Would he ne'er had come  
Into these halls! that it were beautiful,  
Holy to hate him as the Lost can hate.

*Amaury.* But 'tis not?

*Yolanda.* God shall judge him.

*Amaury.* And not you?

*Yolanda.* Though he is weak, there is within him —

*Amaury.* That

Which women trust? and you?

[*Berengere enters. He turns to her.*

Mother?

*Berengere.* A runner,  
A soldier of your troop within the forts  
Has come with word.

*Amaury (starting).* Mother!

*Berengere.* It is ill news?

I've seen that battle-light in you before.  
'Tis of the Saracens? you ride to-night  
Into their peril?

*Amaury.* Come, the word, the word!

*Berengere.* Only this token.

*Amaury.* The spur? the spur? (*Takes it.*) They then  
Are landing!

*Yolanda.* How, Amaury; tell your meaning!

*Amaury.* The galleys of the Saracens have found  
Anchor and land to-night near Keryneia.

My troops are ready and await me —

So I must speed.

*Yolanda (with strange terror*

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