

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

THE DEATH OF
WALLENSTEIN

Friedrich Schiller
The Death of Wallenstein

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The Death of Wallenstein:

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Friedrich Schiller

The Death of Wallenstein

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

WALLENSTEIN, Duke of Friedland, Generalissimo of the Imperial Forces in the Thirty Years' War.

DUCHESS OF FREIDLAND, Wife of Wallenstein.

THEKLA, her Daughter, Princess of Friedland.

THE COUNTESS TERZKY, Sister of the Duchess.

LADY NEUBRUNN.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, Lieutenant-General.

MAX. PICCOLOMINI, his Son, Colonel of a Regiment of Cuirassiers.

COUNT TERZKY, the Commander of several Regiments, and Brother-in-law of Wallenstein.

ILLO, Field-Marshal, Wallenstein's Confidant.

ISOLANI, General of the Croats.

BUTLER, an Irishman, Commander of a Regiment of Dragoons.

GORDON, Governor of Egra.

MAJOR GERALDIN.

CAPTAIN DEVEREUX.

CAPTAIN MACDONALD.

AN ADJUTANT.

NEUMANN, Captain of Cavalry, Aide-de-Camp to
TERZKY.

COLONEL WRANGEL, Envoy from the Swedes.

ROSENBURG, Master of Horse.

SWEDISH CAPTAIN.

SENI.

BURGOMASTER of Egra.

ANSPESSADE of the Cuirassiers.

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER. | Belonging

A PAGE. | to the Duke.

Cuirassiers, Dragoons, and Servants.

ACT I

SCENE I

A room fitted up for astrological labors, and provided with celestial charts, with globes, telescopes, quadrants, and other mathematical instruments. Seven colossal figures, representing the planets, each with a transparent star of different color on its head, stand in a semicircle in the background, so that Mars and Saturn are nearest the eye. The remainder of the scene and its disposition is given in the fourth scene of the second act. There must be a curtain over the figures, which may be dropped and conceal them on occasions.

[In the fifth scene of this act it must be dropped; but in the seventh scene it must be again drawn up wholly or in part.]

WALLENSTEIN at a black table, on which, a speculum astrologicum is described with chalk. SENI is taking observations through a window.

WALLENSTEIN

All well – and now let it be ended, Seni. Come,
The dawn commences, and Mars rules the hour;
We must give o'er the operation. Come,
We know enough.

SENI

Your highness must permit me
Just to contemplate Venus. She is now rising
Like as a sun so shines she in the east.

WALLENSTEIN

She is at present in her perigee,
And now shoots down her strongest influences.

[Contemplating the figure on the table.

Auspicious aspect! fateful in conjunction,
At length the mighty three corradiate;
And the two stars of blessing, Jupiter
And Venus, take between them the malignant
Slyly-malicious Mars, and thus compel
Into my service that old mischief-founder:

For long he viewed me hostilely, and ever
With beam oblique, or perpendicular,
Now in the Quartile, now in the Secundan,
Shot his red lightnings at my stars, disturbing
Their blessed influences and sweet aspects:
Now they have conquered the old enemy,
And bring him in the heavens a prisoner to me.

SENI (who has come down from the window)

And in a corner-house, your highness – think of that!
That makes each influence of double strength.

WALLENSTEIN

And sun and moon, too, in the Sextile aspect,
The soft light with the vehement – so I love it.
Sol is the heart, Luna the head of heaven,
Bold be the plan, fiery the execution.

SENI

And both the mighty Lumina by no
Maleficus affronted. Lo! Saturnus,
Innocuous, powerless, in cadente Domo.

WALLENSTEIN

The empire of Saturnus is gone by;
Lord of the secret birth of things is he;
Within the lap of earth, and in the depths
Of the imagination dominates;
And his are all things that eschew the light.
The time is o'er of brooding and contrivance,
For Jupiter, the lustrous, lordeth now,
And the dark work, complete of preparation,
He draws by force into the realm of light.
Now must we hasten on to action, ere
The scheme, and most auspicious posture
Parts o'er my head, and takes once more its flight,
For the heaven's journey still, and adjourn not.

[There are knocks at the door.

There's some one knocking there. See who it is.

TERZKY (from without)

Open, and let me in.

WALLENSTEIN

Ay – 'tis Terzky.

What is there of such urgency? We are busy.

TERZKY (from without)

Lay all aside at present, I entreat you;

It suffers no delaying.

WALLENSTEIN

Open, Seni!

**[While SENI opens the door for TERZKY,
WALLENSTEIN draws the curtain over the figures**

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN, COUNT TERZKY.

TERZKY (enters)

Hast thou already heard it? He is taken.
Gallas has given him up to the emperor.

[SENI draws off the black table, and exit.

WALLENSTEIN (to TERZKY)

Who has been taken? Who is given up?

TERZKY

The man who knows our secrets, who knows every
Negotiation with the Swede and Saxon,
Through whose hands all and everything has passed —

WALLENSTEIN (drawing back)

Nay, not Sesina? Say, no! I entreat thee.

TERZKY

All on his road for Regensburg to the Swede
He was plunged down upon by Gallas' agent,
Who had been long in ambush, lurking for him.
There must have been found on him my whole packet
To Thur, to Kinsky, to Oxenstiern, to Arnheim:
All this is in their hands; they have now an insight
Into the whole – our measures and our motives.

SCENE III

To them enters ILLO.

ILLO (to TERZKY)

Has he heard it?

TERZKY

He has heard it.

ILLO (to WALLENSTEIN)

Thinkest thou still
To make thy peace with the emperor, to regain
His confidence? E'en were it now thy wish
To abandon all thy plans, yet still they know
What thou hast wished: then forwards thou must press;
Retreat is now no longer in thy power.

TERZKY

They have documents against us, and in hands,
Which show beyond all power of contradiction —

WALLENSTEIN

Of my handwriting – no iota. Thee
I punish or thy lies.

ILLO

And thou believest,
That what this man, and what thy sister's husband,
Did in thy name, will not stand on thy reckoning?
His word must pass for thy word with the Swede,
And not with those that hate thee at Vienna?

TERZKY

In writing thou gavest nothing; but bethink thee,
How far thou venturedst by word of mouth
With this Sesina! And will he be silent?
If he can save himself by yielding up
Thy secret purposes, will he retain them?

ILLO

Thyself dost not conceive it possible;
And since they now have evidence authentic
How far thou hast already gone, speak! tell us,
What art thou waiting for? Thou canst no longer
Keep thy command; and beyond hope of rescue
Thou'rt lost if thou resign'st it.

WALLENSTEIN

In the army
Lies my security. The army will not

Abandon me. Whatever they may know,
The power is mine, and they must gulp it down
And if I give them caution for my fealty,
They must be satisfied, at least appear so.

ILLO

The army, duke, is thine now; for this moment
'Tis thine: but think with terror on the slow,
The quiet power of time. From open violence
The attachment of thy soldiery secures thee
To-day, to-morrow: but grant'st thou them a respite,
Unheard, unseen, they'll undermine that love
On which thou now dost feel so firm a footing,
With wily theft will draw away from thee
One after the other —

WALLENSTEIN

'Tis a cursed accident!
Oh! I will call it a most blessed one,
If it work on thee as it ought to do,
Hurry thee on to action – to decision.
The Swedish general?

WALLENSTEIN

He's arrived! Know'st
What his commission is —

ILLO

To thee alone
Will he intrust the purpose of his coming.

WALLENSTEIN

A cursed, cursed accident! Yes, yes,
Sesina knows too much, and won't be silent.

TERZKY

He's a Bohemian fugitive and rebel,
His neck is forfeit. Can he save himself
At thy cost, think you he will scruple it?
And if they put him to the torture, will he,
Will he, that dastardling, have strength enough —

WALLENSTEIN (lost in thought)

Their confidence is lost, irreparably!
And I may act which way I will, I shall
Be and remain forever in their thought
A traitor to my country. How sincerely
Soever I return back to my duty,
It will no longer help me —

ILLO

Ruin thee,
That it will do! Not thy fidelity,
Thy weakness will be deemed the sole occasion —

**WALLENSTEIN (pacing up
and down in extreme agitation)**

What! I must realize it now in earnest,
Because I toyed too freely with the thought!
Accursed he who dallies with a devil!
And must I – I must realize it now —
Now, while I have the power, it must take place!

ILLO

Now – now – ere they can ward and parry it!

**WALLENSTEIN (looking
at the paper of Signatures)**

I have the generals' word – a written promise!
Max. Piccolomini stands not here – how's that?

TERZRY

It was – he fancied —

ILLO

Mere self-willedness.
There needed no such thing 'twixt him and you.

WALLENSTEIN

He is quite right; there needed no such thing.
The regiments, too, deny to march for Flanders
Have sent me in a paper of remonstrance,
And openly resist the imperial orders.
The first step to revolt's already taken.

ILLO

Believe me, thou wilt find it far more easy
To lead them over to the enemy
Than to the Spaniard.

WALLENSTEIN

I will hear, however,
What the Swede has to say to me.

ILLO (eagerly to TERZKY)

Go, call him,
He stands without the door in waiting.

WALLENSTEIN

Stay!
Stay but a little. It hath taken me
All by surprise; it came too quick upon me;
'Tis wholly novel that an accident,
With its dark lordship, and blind agency,
Should force me on with it.

ILLO

First hear him only,
And then weigh it.

[Exeunt TERZKY and ILLO.]

SCENE IV

WALLENSTEIN (in soliloquy)

Is it possible?

Is't so? I can no longer what I would?

No longer draw back at my liking? I

Must do the deed, because I thought of it?

And fed this heart here with a dream?

Because I did not scowl temptation from my presence,

Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,

Commenced no movement, left all time uncertain,

And only kept the road, the access open?

By the great God of Heaven! it was not

My serious meaning, it was ne'er resolved.

I but amused myself with thinking of it.

The free-will tempted me, the power to do

Or not to do it. Was it criminal

To make the fancy minister to hope,

To fill the air with pretty toys of air,

And clutch fantastic sceptres moving toward me?

Was not the will kept free? Beheld I not

The road of duty close beside me – but

One little step, and once more I was in it!

Where am I? Whither have I been transported?

No road, no track behind me, but a wall,
Impenetrable, insurmountable,
Rises obedient to the spells I muttered
And meant not – my own doings tower behind me.

[Pauses and remains in deep thought.

A punishable man I seem, the guilt,
Try what I will, I cannot roll off from me;
The equivocal demeanor of my life
Bears witness on my prosecutor's party.
And even my purest acts from purest motives
Suspicion poisons with malicious gloss.
Were I that thing for which I pass, that traitor,
A goodly outside I had sure reserved,
Had drawn the coverings thick and double round me,
Been calm and chary of my utterance;
But being conscious of the innocence
Of my intent, my uncorrupted will,
I gave way to my humors, to my passion:
Bold were my words, because my deeds were not.
Now every planless measure, chance event,
The threat of rage, the vaunt of joy and triumph,
And all the May-games of a heart overflowing,
Will they connect, and weave them all together
Into one web of treason; all will be plan,
My eye ne'er absent from the far-off mark,
Step tracing step, each step a politic progress;
And out of all they'll fabricate a charge

So specious, that I must myself stand dumb.
I am caught in my own net, and only force,
Naught but a sudden rent can liberate me.

[Pauses again.

How else! since that the heart's unbiased instinct
Impelled me to the daring deed, which now
Necessity, self-preservation, orders.
Stern is the on-look of necessity,
Not without shudder may a human hand
Grasp the mysterious urn of destiny.
My deed was mine, remaining in my bosom;
Once suffered to escape from its safe corner
Within the heart, its nursery and birthplace,
Sent forth into the foreign, it belongs
Forever to those sly malicious powers
Whom never art of man conciliated.

[Paces in agitation through the chamber, then pauses, and,
after the pause, breaks out again into audible soliloquy.

What is thy enterprise? thy aim? thy object?
Hast honestly confessed it to thyself?
Power seated on a quiet throne thou'dst shake,
Power on an ancient, consecrated throne,
Strong in possession, founded in all custom;
Power by a thousand tough and stringy roots
Fixed to the people's pious nursery faith.

This, this will be no strife of strength with strength.
That feared I not. I brave each combatant,
Whom I can look on, fixing eye to eye,
Who, full himself of courage, kindles courage
In me too. 'Tis a foe invisible
The which I fear – a fearful enemy,
Which in the human heart opposes me,
By its coward fear alone made fearful to me.
Not that, which full of life, instinct with power,
Makes known its present being; that is not
The true, the perilously formidable.
O no! it is the common, the quite common,
The thing of an eternal yesterday.
Whatever was, and evermore returns,
Sterling to-morrow, for to-day 'twas sterling!
For of the wholly common is man made,
And custom is his nurse! Woe then to them
Who lay irreverent hands upon his old
House furniture, the dear inheritance
From his forefathers! For time consecrates;
And what is gray with age becomes religion.
Be in possession, and thou hast the right,
And sacred will the many guard it for thee!

[To the PAGE, – who here enters.

The Swedish officer? Well, let him enter.

[The PAGE exit, WALLENSTEIN fixes his eye in deep

thought on the door.

Yet, it is pure – as yet! – the crime has come
Not o'er this threshold yet – so slender is
The boundary that divideth life's two paths.

SCENE V

WALLENSTEIN and WRANGEL.

**WALLENSTEIN (after having
fixed a searching look on him)**

Your name is Wrangel?

WRANGEL

Gustave Wrangel, General
Of the Sudermanian Blues.

WALLENSTEIN

It was a Wrangel
Who injured me materially at Stralsund,
And by his brave resistance was the cause
Of the opposition which that seaport made.

WRANGEL

It was the doing of the element
With which you fought, my lord! and not my merit,
The Baltic Neptune did assert his freedom:
The sea and land, it seemed were not to serve
One and the same.

WALLENSTEIN

You plucked the admiral's hat from off my head.

WRANGEL

I come to place a diadem thereon.

**WALLENSTEIN (makes the motion for
him to take a seat, and seats himself)**

And where are your credentials
Come you provided with full powers, sir general?

WRANGEL

There are so many scruples yet to solve —

WALLENSTEIN (having read the credentials)

An able letter! Ay – he is a prudent,
Intelligent master whom you serve, sir general!
The chancellor writes me that he but fulfils
His late departed sovereign's own idea
In helping me to the Bohemian crown.

WRANGEL

He says the truth. Our great king, now in heaven,
Did ever deem most highly of your grace's
Pre-eminent sense and military genius;
And always the commanding intellect,
He said, should have command, and be the king.

WALLENSTEIN

Yes, he might say it safely. General Wrangel,

[Taking his hand affectionately.

Come, fair and open. Trust me, I was always
A Swede at heart. Eh! that did you experience
Both in Silesia and at Nuremberg;
I had you often in my power, and let you
Always slip out by some back door or other.
'Tis this for which the court can ne'er forgive me,
Which drives me to this present step: and since
Our interests so run in one direction,
E'en let us have a thorough confidence
Each in the other.

WRANGEL

Confidence will come
Has each but only first security.

WALLENSTEIN

The chancellor still, I see, does not quite trust me;
And, I confess – the game does not lie wholly
To my advantage. Without doubt he thinks,
If I can play false with the emperor,
Who is my sovereign, I can do the like
With the enemy, and that the one, too, were
Sooner to be forgiven me than the other.
Is not this your opinion, too, sir general?

WRANGEL

I have here a duty merely, no opinion.

WALLENSTEIN

The emperor hath urged me to the uttermost
I can no longer honorably serve him.
For my security, in self-defence,
I take this hard step, which my conscience blames.

WRANGEL

That I believe. So far would no one go
Who was not forced to it.

[After a pause.

What may have impelled
Your princely highness in this wise to act
Toward your sovereign lord and emperor,
Beseems not us to expound or criticise.
The Swede is fighting for his good old cause,
With his good sword and conscience. This concurrence,
This opportunity is in our favor,
And all advantages in war are lawful.
We take what offers without questioning;
And if all have its due and just proportions —

WALLENSTEIN

Of what then are ye doubting? Of my will?
Or of my power? I pledged me to the chancellor,
Would he trust me with sixteen thousand men,
That I would instantly go over to them
With eighteen thousand of the emperor's troops.

WRANGEL

Your grace is known to be a mighty war-chief,
To be a second Attila and Pyrrhus.
'Tis talked of still with fresh astonishment,
How some years past, beyond all human faith,
You called an army forth like a creation:
But yet —

WALLENSTEIN

But yet?

WRANGEL

But still the chancellor thinks
It might yet be an easier thing from nothing
To call forth sixty thousand men of battle,
Than to persuade one-sixtieth part of them —

WALLENSTEIN

What now? Out with it, friend?

WRANGEL

To break their oaths.

WALLENSTEIN

And he thinks so? He judges like a Swede,
And like a Protestant. You Lutherans
Fight for your Bible. You are interested
About the cause; and with your hearts you follow
Your banners. Among you whoe'er deserts
To the enemy hath broken covenant
With two lords at one time. We've no such fancies.

WRANGEL

Great God in heaven! Have then the people here
No house and home, no fireside, no altar?

WALLENSTEIN

I will explain that to you, how it stands:
The Austrian has a country, ay, and loves it,
And has good cause to love it – but this army
That calls itself the imperial, this that houses
Here in Bohemia, this has none – no country;
This is an outcast of all foreign lands,
Unclaimed by town or tribe, to whom belongs
Nothing except the universal sun.
And this Bohemian land for which we fight

Loves not the master whom the chance of war,
Not its own choice or will, hath given to it.
Men murmur at the oppression of their conscience,
And power hath only awed but not appeased them.
A glowing and avenging memory lives
Of cruel deeds committed on these plains;
How can the son forget that here his father
Was hunted by the bloodhound to the mass?
A people thus oppressed must still be feared,
Whether they suffer or avenge their wrongs.

WRANGEL

But then the nobles and the officers?
Such a desertion, such a felony,
It is without example, my lord duke,
In the world's history.

WALLENSTEIN

They are all mine —
Mine unconditionally – mine on all terms.
Not me, your own eyes you must trust.

[He gives him the paper containing the written oath.]

WRANGEL reads

it through, and, having read it, lays it on the table, –
remaining
silent.

So then;
Now comprehend you?

WRANGEL

Comprehend who can!
My lord duke, I will let the mask drop – yes!
I've full powers for a final settlement.
The Rhinegrave stands but four days' march from here
With fifteen thousand men, and only waits
For orders to proceed and join your army.
These orders I give out immediately
We're compromised.

WALLENSTEIN

What asks the chancellor?

WRANGEL (considerately)

Twelve regiments, every man a Swede – my head
The warranty – and all might prove at last
Only false play —

WALLENSTEIN (starting)

Sir Swede!

WRANGEL (calmly proceeding)

Am therefore forced
To insist thereon, that he do formally,
Irrevocably break with the emperor,
Else not a Swede is trusted to Duke Friedland.

WALLENSTEIN

Come, brief and open! What is the demand?

WRANGEL

That he forthwith disarm the Spanish regiments
Attached to the emperor, that he seize on Prague,
And to the Swedes give up that city, with
The strong pass Egra.

WALLENSTEIN

That is much indeed!
Prague! – Egra's granted – but – but Prague! 'Twon't do.
I give you every security
Which you may ask of me in common reason —
But Prague – Bohemia – these, sir general,
I can myself protect.

WRANGEL

We doubt it not.
But 'tis not the protection that is now
Our sole concern. We want security,
That we shall not expend our men and money
All to no purpose.

WALLENSTEIN

'Tis but reasonable.

WRANGEL

And till we are indemnified, so long
Stays Prague in pledge.

WALLENSTEIN

Then trust you us so little?

WRANGEL (rising)

The Swede, if he would treat well with the German,
Must keep a sharp lookout. We have been called
Over the Baltic, we have saved the empire
From ruin – with our best blood have we sealed
The liberty of faith and gospel truth.
But now already is the benefaction
No longer felt, the load alone is felt.
Ye look askance with evil eye upon us,
As foreigners, intruders in the empire,
And would fain send us with some paltry sum
Of money, home again to our old forests.
No, no! my lord duke! it never was
For Judas' pay, for chinking gold and silver,

That we did leave our king by the Great Stone.¹ No, not for

¹ A great stone near Luetzen, since called the Swede's Stone, the body of their great king having been found at the foot of it, after the battle in which he lost his life.

gold and silver have there bled

So many of our Swedish nobles – neither
Will we, with empty laurels for our payment,
Hoist sail for our own country. Citizens
Will we remain upon the soil, the which
Our monarch conquered for himself and died.

WALLENSTEIN

Help to keep down the common enemy,
And the fair border land must needs be yours.

WRANGEL

But when the common enemy lies vanquished,
Who knits together our new friendship then?
We know, Duke Friedland! though perhaps the Swede
Ought not to have known it, that you carry on
Secret negotiations with the Saxons.
Who is our warranty that we are not
The sacrifices in those articles
Which 'tis thought needful to conceal from us?

WALLENSTEIN (rises)

Think you of something better, Gustave Wrangel!
Of Prague no more.

WRANGEL

Here my commission ends.

WALLENSTEIN

Surrender up to you my capital!
Far liever would I force about, and step
Back to my emperor.

WRANGEL

If time yet permits —

WALLENSTEIN

That lies with me, even now, at any hour.

WRANGEL

Some days ago, perhaps. To-day, no longer;
No longer since Sesina's been a prisoner.

[WALLENSTEIN is struck, and silenced.

My lord duke, hear me – we believe that you
At present do mean honorably by us.
Since yesterday we're sure of that – and now
This paper warrants for the troops, there's nothing
Stands in the way of our full confidence.
Prague shall not part us. Hear! The chancellor
Contents himself with Alstadt; to your grace
He gives up Ratschin and the narrow side.
But Egra above all must open to us,
Ere we can think of any junction.

WALLENSTEIN

You,
You therefore must I trust, and not you me?
I will consider of your proposition.

WRANGEL

I must entreat that your consideration
Occupy not too long a time. Already
Has this negotiation, my lord duke!
Crept on into the second year. If nothing
Is settled this time, will the chancellor
Consider it as broken off forever?

WALLENSTEIN

Ye press me hard. A measure such as this
Ought to be thought of.

WRANGEL

Ay! but think of this too,
That sudden action only can procure it.
Success – think first of this, your highness.

[Exit WRANGEL.]

SCENE VI

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY, and ILLO (re-enter).

ILLO

Is't all right?

TERZKY

Are you compromised?

ILLO

This Swede
Went smiling from you. Yes! you're compromised.

WALLENSTEIN

As yet is nothing settled; and (well weighed)
I feel myself inclined to leave it so.

TERZKY

How? What is that?

WALLENSTEIN

Come on me what will come,
The doing evil to avoid an evil
Cannot be good!

TERZKY

Nay, but bethink you, duke.

WALLENSTEIN

To live upon the mercy of these Swedes!
Of these proud-hearted Swedes! – I could not bear it.

ILLO

Goest thou as fugitive, as mendicant?
Bringest thou not more to them than thou receivest?

WALLENSTEIN

How fared it with the brave and royal Bourbon
Who sold himself unto his country's foes,
And pierced the bosom of his father-land?
Curses were his reward, and men's abhorrence
Avenge'd the unnatural and revolting deed.

ILLO

Is that thy case?

WALLENSTEIN

True faith, I tell thee,
Must ever be the dearest friend of man
His nature prompts him to assert its rights.
The enmity of sects, the rage of parties,
Long-cherished envy, jealousy, unite;
And all the struggling elements of evil
Suspend their conflict, and together league
In one alliance 'gainst their common foe —
The savage beast that breaks into the fold,
Where men repose in confidence and peace.
For vain were man's own prudence to protect him.
'Tis only in the forehead nature plants
The watchful eye; the back, without defence,
Must find its shield in man's fidelity.

TERZKY

Think not more meanly off thyself than do
Thy foes, who stretch their hands with joy to greet thee.
Less scrupulous far was the imperial Charles,
The powerful head of this illustrious house;
With open arms he gave the Bourbon welcome;
For still by policy the world is ruled.

SCENE VII

To these enter the COUNTESS TERZKY.

WALLENSTEIN

Who sent for you? There is no business here
For women.

COUNTESS

I am come to bid you joy.

WALLENSTEIN

Use thy authority, Terzky; bid her go.

COUNTESS

Come I perhaps too early? I hope not.

WALLENSTEIN

Set not this tongue upon me, I entreat you:
You know it is the weapon that destroys me.
I am routed, if a woman but attack me:
I cannot traffic in the trade of words
With that unreasoning sex.

COUNTESS

I had already
Given the Bohemians a king.

WALLENSTEIN (sarcastically)

They have one,
In consequence, no doubt.

COUNTESS (to the others)

Ha! what new scruple?

TERZKY

The duke will not.

COUNTESS

He will not what he must!

ILLO

It lies with you now. Try. For I am silenced
When folks begin to talk to me of conscience
And of fidelity.

COUNTESS

How? then, when all
Lay in the far-off distance, when the road
Stretched out before thine eyes interminably,
Then hadst thou courage and resolve; and now,
Now that the dream is being realized,
The purpose ripe, the issue ascertained,
Dost thou begin to play the dastard now?
Planned merely, 'tis a common felony;
Accomplished, an immortal undertaking:
And with success comes pardon hand in hand,
For all event is God's arbitrament.

SERVANT (enters)

The Colonel Piccolomini.

COUNTESS (hastily)

– Must wait.

WALLENSTEIN

I cannot see him now. Another time.

SERVANT

But for two minutes he entreats an audience
Of the most urgent nature is his business.

WALLENSTEIN

Who knows what he may bring us! I will hear him.

COUNTESS (laughs)

Urgent for him, no doubt? but thou may'st wait.

WALLENSTEIN

What is it?

COUNTESS

Thou shalt be informed hereafter.
First let the Swede and thee be compromised.

[Exit SERVANT.]

WALLENSTEIN

If there were yet a choice! if yet some milder
Way of escape were possible – I still
Will choose it, and avoid the last extreme.

COUNTESS

Desirest thou nothing further? Such a way
Lies still before thee. Send this Wrangel off.
Forget thou thy old hopes, cast far away
All thy past life; determine to commence
A new one. Virtue hath her heroes too,
As well as fame and fortune. To Vienna
Hence – to the emperor – kneel before the throne;
Take a full coffer with thee – say aloud,
Thou didst but wish to prove thy fealty;
Thy whole intention but to dupe the Swede.

ILLO

For that too 'tis too late. They know too much;
He would but bear his own head to the block.

COUNTESS

I fear not that. They have not evidence
To attain him legally, and they avoid
The avowal of an arbitrary power.
They'll let the duke resign without disturbance.
I see how all will end. The King of Hungary
Makes his appearance, and 'twill of itself
Be understood, and then the duke retires.
There will not want a formal declaration.
The young king will administer the oath
To the whole army; and so all returns
To the old position. On some morrow morning
The duke departs; and now 'tis stir and bustle
Within his castles. He will hunt and build;
Superintend his horses' pedigrees,
Creates himself a court, gives golden keys,
And introduceth strictest ceremony
In fine proportions, and nice etiquette;
Keeps open table with high cheer: in brief,
Commenceth mighty king – in miniature.
And while he prudently demeans himself,
And gives himself no actual importance,

He will be let appear whate'er he likes:
And who dares doubt, that Friedland will appear
A mighty prince to his last dying hour?
Well now, what then? Duke Friedland is as others,
A fire-new noble, whom the war hath raised
To price and currency, a Jonah's gourd,
An over-night creation of court-favor,
Which, with an undistinguishable ease,
Makes baron or makes prince.

WALLENSTEIN (in extreme agitation)

Take her away.
Let in the young Count Piccolomini.

COUNTESS

Art thou in earnest? I entreat thee!
Canst thou consent to bear thyself to thy own grave,
So ignominiously to be dried up?
Thy life, that arrogated such an height
To end in such a nothing! To be nothing,
When one was always nothing, is an evil
That asks no stretch of patience, a light evil;

But to become a nothing, having been —

WALLENSTEIN (starts up in violent agitation)

Show me a way out of this stifling crowd,
Ye powers of aidance! Show me such a way
As I am capable of going. I
Am no tongue-hero, no fine virtue-prattler;
I cannot warm by thinking; cannot say
To the good luck that turns her back upon me
Magnanimously: "Go; I need thee not."
Cease I to work, I am annihilated.
Dangers nor sacrifices will I shun,
If so I may avoid the last extreme;
But ere I sink down into nothingness,
Leave off so little, who began so great,
Ere that the world confuses me with those
Poor wretches, whom a day creates and crumbles,
This age and after ages² speak my name
With hate and dread; and Friedland be redemption
For each accursed deed.

² Could I have hazarded such a Germanism as the use of the word afterworld for posterity, – "Es spreche Welt und Nachwelt meinen Namen" – might have been rendered with more literal fidelity: Let world and afterworld speak out my name, etc.

COUNTESS

What is there here, then,
So against nature? Help me to perceive it!
Oh, let not superstition's nightly goblins
Subdue thy clear, bright spirit! Art thou bid
To murder? with abhorred, accursed poniard,
To violate the breasts that nourished thee?
That were against our nature, that might aptly

**Make thy flesh shudder, and thy whole heart
sicken.³ Yet not a few, and for a meaner object,**

Have ventured even this, ay, and performed it.
What is there in thy case so black and monstrous?
Thou art accused of treason – whether with
Or without justice is not now the question —
Thou art lost if thou dost not avail thee quickly
Of the power which thou possessest – Friedland! Duke!
Tell me where lives that thing so meek and tame,
That doth not all his living faculties

³ I have not ventured to affront the fastidious delicacy of our age with a literal translation of this line,werthDie Eingeweide schaudernd aufzuregen.

Put forth in preservation of his life?
What deed so daring, which necessity
And desperation will not sanctify?

WALLENSTEIN

Once was this Ferdinand so gracious to me;
He loved me; he esteemed me; I was placed
The nearest to his heart. Full many a time
We like familiar friends, both at one table,
Have banqueted together – he and I;
And the young kings themselves held me the basin
Wherewith to wash me – and is't come to this?

COUNTESS

So faithfully preservest thou each small favor,
And hast no memory for contumelies?
Must I remind thee, how at Regensburg
This man repaid thy faithful services?
All ranks and all conditions in the empire
Thou hadst wronged to make him great, – hadst loaded on
thee,
On thee, the hate, the curse of the whole world.

No friend existed for thee in all Germany,
And why? because thou hadst existed only
For the emperor. To the emperor alone
Clung Friedland in that storm which gathered round him
At Regensburg in the Diet – and he dropped thee!
He let thee fall! he let thee fall a victim
To the Bavarian, to that insolent!
Deposed, stripped bare of all thy dignity
And power, amid the taunting of thy foe
Thou wert let drop into obscurity.
Say not, the restoration of thy honor
Has made atonement for that first injustice.
No honest good-will was it that replaced thee;
The law of hard necessity replaced thee,
Which they had fain opposed, but that they could not.

WALLENSTEIN

Not to their good wishes, that is certain,
Nor yet to his affection I'm indebted
For this high office; and if I abuse it,
I shall therein abuse no confidence.

COUNTESS

Affection! confidence! – they needed thee.
Necessity, impetuous remonstrant!
Who not with empty names, or shows of proxy,
Is served, who'll have the thing and not the symbol,
Ever seeks out the greatest and the best,
And at the rudder places him, e'en though
She had been forced to take him from the rabble —
She, this necessity, it was that placed thee
In this high office; it was she that gave thee
Thy letters-patent of inauguration.
For, to the uttermost moment that they can,
This race still help themselves at cheapest rate
With slavish souls, with puppets! At the approach
Of extreme peril, when a hollow image
Is found a hollow image and no more,
Then falls the power into the mighty hands
Of nature, of the spirit-giant born,
Who listens only to himself, knows nothing
Of stipulations, duties, reverences,
And, like the emancipated force of fire,
Unmastered scorches, ere it reaches them,
Their fine-spun webs, their artificial policy.

WALLENSTEIN

'Tis true! they saw me always as I am —
Always! I did not cheat them in the bargain.
I never held it worth my pains to hide
The bold all-grasping habit of my soul.

COUNTESS

Nay rather – thou hast ever shown thyself
A formidable man, without restraint;
Hast exercised the full prerogatives
Of thy impetuous nature, which had been
Once granted to thee. Therefore, duke, not thou,
Who hast still remained consistent with thyself,
But they are in the wrong, who, fearing thee,
Intrusted such a power in hands they feared.
For, by the laws of spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself:
Self-contradiction is the only wrong.
Wert thou another being, then, when thou
Eight years ago pursuedst thy march with fire,
And sword, and desolation, through the circles

Of Germany, the universal scourge,
Didst mock all ordinances of the empire,
The fearful rights of strength alone exertedst,
Trampledst to earth each rank, each magistracy,
All to extend thy Sultan's domination?
Then was the time to break thee in, to curb
Thy haughty will, to teach thee ordinance.
But no, the emperor felt no touch of conscience;
What served him pleased him, and without a murmur
He stamped his broad seal on these lawless deeds.
What at that time was right, because thou didst it
For him, to-day is all at once become
Opprobrious, foul, because it is directed
Against him. O most flimsy superstition!

WALLENSTEIN (rising)

I never saw it in this light before,
'Tis even so. The emperor perpetrated
Deeds through my arm, deeds most unorderly.
And even this prince's mantle, which I wear,
I owe to what were services to him,
But most high misdemeanors 'gainst the empire.

COUNTESS

Then betwixt thee and him (confess it, Friedland!)
The point can be no more of right and duty,
Only of power and the opportunity.
That opportunity, lo! it comes yonder
Approaching with swift steeds; then with a swing
Throw thyself up into the chariot-seat,
Seize with firm hand the reins ere thy opponent
Anticipate thee, and himself make conquest
Of the now empty seat. The moment comes;
It is already here, when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, "Now's the time!" The starry courses
Hast thou thy life-long measured to no purpose?
The quadrant and the circle, were they playthings?
[Pointing to the different objects in the room.
The zodiacs, the rolling orbs of heaven,
Hast pictured on these walls and all around thee.
In dumb, foreboding symbols hast thou placed
These seven presiding lords of destiny —
For toys? Is all this preparation nothing?
Is there no marrow in this hollow art,
That even to thyself it doth avail

Nothing, and has no influence over thee
In the great moment of decision?

**WALLENSTEIN (during this last speech
walks up and down with inward struggles,
laboring with passion; stops suddenly, stands
still, then interrupting the COUNTESS)**

Send Wrangel to me – I will instantly
Despatch three couriers —

ILLO (hurrying out)

God in heaven be praised!

WALLENSTEIN

It is his evil genius and mine.
Our evil genius! It chastises him
Through me, the instrument of his ambition;

And I expect no less, than that revenge
E'en now is whetting for my breast the poinard.
Who sows the serpent's teeth let him not hope
To reap a joyous harvest. Every crime
Has, in the moment of its perpetration,
Its own avenging angel – dark misgiving,
An ominous sinking at the inmost heart.
He can no longer trust me. Then no longer
Can I retreat – so come that which must come.
Still destiny preserves its due relations,
The heart within us is its absolute
Vicegerent. [To TERZKY.

Go, conduct you Gustave Wrangel
To my state cabinet. Myself will speak to
The couriers. And despatch immediately
A servant for Octavio Piccolomini.

[To the COUNTESS, who cannot conceal her triumph.

No exultation! woman, triumph not!
For jealous are the powers of destiny,
Joy premature, and shouts ere victory,
Encroach upon their rights and privileges.
We sow the seed, and they the growth determine.

[While he is making his exit the curtain drops.

ACT II

SCENE I

SCENE as in the preceding Act.

WALLENSTEIN, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

WALLENSTEIN (coming forward in conversation)

He sends me word from Linz that he lies sick;
But I have sure intelligence that he
Secretes himself at Frauenberg with Gallas.
Secure them both, and send them to me hither.
Remember, thou takest on thee the command
Of those same Spanish regiments, – constantly
Make preparation, and be never ready;
And if they urge thee to draw out against me,
Still answer yes, and stand as thou went fettered.
I know, that it is doing thee a service
To keep thee out of action in this business.
Thou lovest to linger on in fair appearances;
Steps of extremity are not thy province,
Therefore have I sought out this part for thee.

Thou wilt this time be of most service to me
By thy inertness. The meantime, if fortune
Declare itself on my side, thou wilt know
What is to do.

[Enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI.]

Now go, Octavio.
This night must thou be off, take my own horses
Him here I keep with me – make short farewell —
Trust me, I think we all shall meet again
In joy and thriving fortunes.

OCTAVIO (to his son)

I shall see you
Yet ere I go.

SCENE II

WALLENSTEIN, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. (advances to him)

My general!

WALLENSTEIN

That I am no longer, if
Thou stylest thyself the emperor's officer.

MAX

Then thou wilt leave the army, general?

WALLENSTEIN

I have renounced the service of the emperor.

MAX

And thou wilt leave the army?

WALLENSTEIN

Rather hope I
To bind it nearer still and faster to me.

[He seats himself.]

Yes, Max., I have delayed to open it to thee,
Even till the hour of acting 'gins to strike.
Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily
The absolute right, yea, and a joy it is
To exercise the single apprehension
Where the sums square in proof;

But where it happens, that of two sure evils
One must be taken, where the heart not wholly
Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,
There 'tis a blessing to have no election,
And blank necessity is grace and favor.
This is now present: do not look behind thee, —
It can no more avail thee. Look thou forwards!
Think not! judge not! prepare thyself to act!
The court – it hath determined on my ruin,
Therefore I will be beforehand with them.
We'll join the Swedes – right gallant fellows are they,
And our good friends.

[He stops himself, expecting PICCOLOMINI's answer.

I have taken thee by surprise. Answer me not:
I grant thee time to recollect thyself.

[He rises, retires to the back of the stage. MAX. remains for a long time motionless, in a trance of excessive anguish.

At his first motion WALLENSTEIN returns, and places himself before him.

MAX

My general, this day thou makest me
Of age to speak in my own right and person,

For till this day I have been spared the trouble
To find out my own road. Thee have I followed
With most implicit, unconditional faith,
Sure of the right path if I followed thee.
To-day, for the first time, dost thou refer
Me to myself, and forcest me to make
Election between thee and my own heart.

WALLENSTEIN

Soft cradled thee thy fortune till to-day;
Thy duties thou couldst exercise in sport,
Indulge all lovely instincts, act forever
With undivided heart. It can remain
No longer thus. Like enemies, the roads
Start from each other. Duties strive with duties,
Thou must needs choose thy party in the war
Which is now kindling 'twixt thy friend and him
Who is thy emperor.

MAX

War! is that the name?
War is as frightful as heaven's pestilence,

Yet it is good, is it heaven's will as that is.
Is that a good war, which against the emperor
Thou wagest with the emperor's own army?
O God of heaven! what a change is this.
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who like the fixed star of the pole
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean?
O! what a rent thou makest in my heart!
The ingrained instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obedience,
Must I pluck life asunder from thy name?
Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me —
It always was as a god looking upon me!
Duke Wallenstein, its power has not departed;
The senses still are in thy bonds, although
Bleeding, the soul hath freed itself.

WALLENSTEIN

Max., hear me.

MAX

Oh, do it not, I pray thee, do it not!

There is a pure and noble soul within thee,
Knows not of this unblest unlucky doing.
Thy will is chaste, it is thy fancy only
Which hath polluted thee – and innocence,
It will not let itself be driven away
From that world-awing aspect. Thou wilt not,
Thou canst not end in this. It would reduce
All human creatures to disloyalty
Against the nobleness of their own nature.
'Twill justify the vulgar misbelief,
Which holdeth nothing noble in free will,
And trusts itself to impotence alone,
Made powerful only in an unknown power.

WALLENSTEIN

The world will judge me harshly, I expect it.
Already have I said to my own self
All thou canst say to me. Who but avoids
The extreme, can he by going round avoid it?
But here there is no choice. Yes, I must use
Or suffer violence – so stands the case,
There remains nothing possible but that.

MAX

Oh, that is never possible for thee!
'Tis the last desperate resource of those
Cheap souls, to whom their honor, their good name,
Is their poor saving, their last worthless keep,
Which, having staked and lost, they staked themselves
In the mad rage of gaming. Thou art rich
And glorious; with an unpolluted heart
Thou canst make conquest of whate'er seems highest!
But he who once hath acted infamy
Does nothing more in this world.

WALLENSTEIN (grasps his hand)

Calmly, Max.!

Much that is great and excellent will we
Perform together yet. And if we only
Stand on the height with dignity, 'tis soon
Forgotten, Max., by what road we ascended.
Believe me, many a crown shines spotless now,
That yet was deeply sullied in the winning.
To the evil spirit doth the earth belong,
Not to the good. All that the powers divine

Send from above are universal blessings
Their light rejoices us, their air refreshes,
But never yet was man enriched by them:
In their eternal realm no property
Is to be struggled for – all there is general.
The jewel, the all-valued gold we win
From the deceiving powers, depraved in nature,
That dwell beneath the day and blessed sunlight.
Not without sacrifices are they rendered
Propitious, and there lives no soul on earth
That e'er retired unsullied from their service.

MAX

Whate'er is human to the human being
Do I allow – and to the vehement
And striving spirit readily I pardon
The excess of action; but to thee, my general!
Above all others make I large concession.
For thou must move a world and be the master —
He kills thee who condemns thee to inaction.
So be it then! maintain thee in thy post
By violence. Resist the emperor,
And if it must be force with force repel;
I will not praise it, yet I can forgive it.
But not – not to the traitor – yes! the word

Is spoken out —
Not to the traitor can I yield a pardon.
That is no mere excess! that is no error
Of human nature – that is wholly different,
Oh, that is black, black as the pit of hell!

[WALLENSTEIN betrays a sudden agitation.

Thou canst not hear it named, and wilt thou do it?
O turn back to thy duty. That thou canst,
I hold it certain. Send me to Vienna;
I'll make thy peace for thee with the emperor.
He knows thee not. But I do know thee. He
Shall see thee, duke! with my unclouded eye,
And I bring back his confidence to thee.

WALLENSTEIN

It is too late! Thou knowest not what has happened.

MAX

Were it too late, and were things gone so far,
That a crime only could prevent thy fall,

Then – fall! fall honorably, even as thou stoodest,
Lose the command. Go from the stage of war!
Thou canst with splendor do it – do it too
With innocence. Thou hast lived much for others,
At length live thou for thy own self. I follow thee.
My destiny I never part from thine.

WALLENSTEIN

It is too late! Even now, while thou art losing
Thy words, one after another, are the mile-stones
Left fast behind by my post couriers,
Who bear the order on to Prague and Egra.

[MAX. stands as convulsed, with a gesture and countenance
expressing the most intense anguish.

Yield thyself to it. We act as we are forced.
I cannot give assent to my own shame
And ruin. Thou – no – thou canst not forsake me!
So let us do, what must be done, with dignity,
With a firm step. What am I doing worse
Than did famed Caesar at the Rubicon,
When he the legions led against his country,
The which his country had delivered to him?
Had he thrown down the sword, he had been lost.

As I were, if I but disarmed myself.
I trace out something in me of this spirit.
Give me his luck, that other thing I'll bear.

[MAX. quits him abruptly. WALLENSTEIN startled and overpowered, continues looking after him, and is still in this posture when TERZKY enters.

SCENE III

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY.

TERZKY

Max. Piccolomini just left you?

WALLENSTEIN

Where is Wrangel?

TERZKY

He is already gone.

WALLENSTEIN

In such a hurry?

TERZKY

It is as if the earth had swallowed him.
He had scarce left thee, when I went to seek him.
I wished some words with him – but he was gone.
How, when, and where, could no one tell me.
Nay, I half believe it was the devil himself;
A human creature could not so at once
Have vanished.

ILLO (enters)

Is it true that thou wilt send
Octavio?

TERZKY

How, Octavio! Whither send him?

WALLENSTEIN

He goes to Frauenberg, and will lead hither
The Spanish and Italian regiments.

ILLO

No!
Nay, heaven forbid!

WALLENSTEIN

And why should heaven forbid?

ILLO

Him! – that deceiver! Wouldst thou trust to him
The soldiery? Him wilt thou let slip from thee,
Now in the very instant that decides us —

TERZKY

Thou wilt not do this! No! I pray thee, no!

WALLENSTEIN

Ye are whimsical.

ILLO

O but for this time, duke,
Yield to our warning! Let him not depart.

WALLENSTEIN

And why should I not trust him only this time,
Who have always trusted him? What, then, has happened
That I should lose my good opinion of him?
In complaisance to your whims, not my own,
I must, forsooth, give up a rooted judgment.
Think not I am a woman. Having trusted him
E'en till to-day, to-day too will I trust him.

TERZKY

Must it be he – he only? Send another.

WALLENSTEIN

It must be he, whom I myself have chosen;
He is well fitted for the business.
Therefore I gave it him.

ILLO

Because he's an Italian —
Therefore is he well fitted for the business!

WALLENSTEIN

I know you love them not, nor sire nor son,
Because that I esteem them, love them, visibly
Esteem them, love them more than you and others,
E'en as they merit. Therefore are they eye-blights,
Thorns in your footpath. But your jealousies,
In what affect they me or my concerns?
Are they the worse to me because you hate them?
Love or hate one another as you will,
I leave to each man his own moods and likings;
Yet know the worth of each of you to me.

ILLO

Von Questenberg, while he was here, was always

Lurking about with this Octavio.

WALLENSTEIN

It happened with my knowledge and permission.

ILLO

I know that secret messengers came to him
From Gallas —

WALLENSTEIN

That's not true.

ILLO

O thou art blind,

With thy deep-seeing eyes!

WALLENSTEIN

Thou wilt not shake
My faith for me; my faith, which founds itself
On the profoundest science. If 'tis false,
Then the whole science of the stars is false;
For know, I have a pledge from Fate itself,
That he is the most faithful of my friends.

ILLO

Hast thou a pledge that this pledge is not false?

WALLENSTEIN

There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great Soul of the world
Than is man's custom, and possesses freely
The power of questioning his destiny:

And such a moment 'twas, when in the night
Before the action in the plains of Luetzen,
Leaning against a tree, thoughts crowding thoughts,
I looked out far upon the ominous plain.
My whole life, past and future, in this moment
Before my mind's eye glided in procession,
And to the destiny of the next morning
The spirit, filled with anxious presentiment,
Did knit the most removed futurity.
Then said I also to myself, "So many
Dost thou command. They follow all thy stars,
And as on some great number set their all
Upon thy single head, and only man
The vessel of thy fortune. Yet a day
Will come, when destiny shall once more scatter
All these in many a several direction:
Few be they who will stand out faithful to thee."
I yearned to know which one was faithfulest
Of all, my camp included. Great destiny,
Give me a sign! And he shall be the man,
Who, on the approaching morning, comes the first
To meet me with a token of his love:
And thinking this, I fell into a slumber,
Then midmost in the battle was I led
In spirit. Great the pressure and the tumult!
Then was my horse killed under me: I sank;
And over me away, all unconcernedly,
Drove horse and rider – and thus trod to pieces
I lay, and panted like a dying man;

Then seized me suddenly a savior arm;
It was Octavio's – I woke at once,
'Twas broad day, and Octavio stood before me.
"My brother," said he, "do not ride to-day
The dapple, as you're wont; but mount the horse
Which I have chosen for thee. Do it, brother!
In love to me. A strong dream warned me so."
It was the swiftness of this horse that snatched me
From the hot pursuit of Bannier's dragoons.
My cousin rode the dapple on that day,
And never more saw I or horse or rider.

ILLO

That was a chance.

WALLENSTEIN (significantly)

There's no such thing as chance
And what to us seems merest accident
Springs from the deepest source of destiny.
In brief, 'tis signed and sealed that this Octavio
Is my good angel – and now no word more.

[He is retiring.

TERZKY

This is my comfort – Max. remains our hostage.

ILLO

And he shall never stir from here alive.

WALLENSTEIN (stops and turns himself round)

Are ye not like the women, who forever
Only recur to their first word, although
One had been talking reason by the hour!
Know, that the human being's thoughts and deeds
Are not like ocean billows, blindly moved.
The inner world, his microcosmus, is
The deep shaft, out of which they spring eternally.
They grow by certain laws, like the tree's fruit —
No juggling chance can metamorphose them.
Have I the human kernel first examined?

Then I know, too, the future will and action.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV

Chamber in the residence of Piccolomini: OCTAVIO
PICCOLOMINI (attired for travelling), an ADJUTANT.

OCTAVIO

Is the detachment here?

ADJUTANT

It waits below.

OCTAVIO

And are the soldiers trusty, adjutant?
Say, from what regiment hast thou chosen them?

ADJUTANT

From Tiefenbach's.

OCTAVIO

That regiment is loyal,
Keep them in silence in the inner court,
Unseen by all, and when the signal peals
Then close the doors, keep watch upon the house.
And all ye meet be instantly arrested.

[Exit ADJUTANT.]

I hope indeed I shall not need their service,
So certain feel I of my well-laid plans;
But when an empire's safety is at stake
'Twere better too much caution than too little.

SCENE V

A chamber in PICCOLOMINI's dwelling-house:
OCTAVIO, PICCOLOMINI, ISOLANI, entering.

ISOLANI

Here am I – well! who comes yet of the others?

OCTAVIO (with an air of mystery)

But, first, a word with you, Count Isolani.

ISOLANI (assuming the same air of mystery)

Will it explode, ha? Is the duke about
To make the attempt? In me, friend, you may place
Full confidence – nay, put me to the proof.

OCTAVIO

That may happen.

ISOLANI

Noble brother, I am
Not one of those men who in words are valiant,
And when it comes to action skulk away.
The duke has acted towards me as a friend:
God knows it is so; and I owe him all;
He may rely on my fidelity.

OCTAVIO

That will be seen hereafter.

ISOLANI

Be on your guard,
All think not as I think; and there are many
Who still hold with the court – yes, and they say
That these stolen signatures bind them to nothing.

OCTAVIO

Indeed! Pray name to me the chiefs that think so;

ISOLANI

Plague upon them! all the Germans think so
Esterhazy, Kaunitz, Deodati, too,
Insist upon obedience to the court.

OCTAVIO

I am rejoiced to hear it.

ISOLANI

You rejoice?

OCTAVIO

That the emperor has yet such gallant servants,
And loving friends.

ISOLANI

Nay, jeer not, I entreat you.
They are no such worthless fellows, I assure you.

OCTAVIO

I am assured already. God forbid
That I should jest! In very serious earnest,
I am rejoiced to see an honest cause
So strong.

ISOLANI

The devil! – what! – why, what means this?
Are you not, then – For what, then, am I here?

OCTAVIO

That you may make full declaration, whether
You will be called the friend or enemy
Of the emperor.

ISOLANI (with an air of defiance)

That declaration, friend,
I'll make to him in whom a right is placed
To put that question to me.

OCTAVIO

Whether, count,
That right is mine, this paper may instruct you.

ISOLANI (stammering)

Why, – why – what! this is the emperor's hand and seal

[Reads.

"Whereas the officers collectively
Throughout our army will obey the orders
Of the Lieutenant-General Piccolomini,
As from ourselves." – Hem! – Yes! so! – Yes! yes!

I – I give you joy, lieutenant-general!

OCTAVIO

And you submit to the order?

ISOLANI

I —

But you have taken me so by surprise
Time for reflection one must have —

OCTAVIO

Two minutes.

ISOLANI

My God! But then the case is —

OCTAVIO

Plain and simple.

You must declare you, whether you determine
To act a treason 'gainst your lord and sovereign,
Or whether you will serve him faithfully.

ISOLANI

Treason! My God! But who talks then of treason?

OCTAVIO

That is the case. The prince-duke is a traitor —
Means to lead over to the enemy
The emperor's army. Now, count! brief and full —
Say, will you break your oath to the emperor?
Sell yourself to the enemy? Say, will you?

ISOLANI

What mean you? I – I break my oath, d'ye say,
To his imperial majesty?
Did I say so! When, when have I said that?

OCTAVIO

You have not said it yet – not yet. This instant
I wait to hear, count, whether you will say it.

ISOLANI

Ay! that delights me now, that you yourself
Bear witness for me that I never said so.

OCTAVIO

And you renounce the duke then?

ISOLANI

If he's planning
Treason – why, treason breaks all bonds asunder.

OCTAVIO

And are determined, too, to fight against him?

ISOLANI

He has done me service – but if he's a villain,
Perdition seize him! All scores are rubbed off.

OCTAVIO

I am rejoiced that you are so well disposed.
This night break off in the utmost secrecy
With all the light-armed troops – it must appear
As came the order from the duke himself.
At Frauenberg's the place of rendezvous;
There will Count Gallas give you further orders.

ISOLANI

It shall be done. But you'll remember me
With the emperor – how well disposed you found me.

OCTAVIO

I will not fail to mention it honorably.

[Exit ISOLANI. A SERVANT enters.]

What, Colonel Butler! Show him up.

ISOLANI (returning)

Forgive me too my bearish ways, old father!
Lord God! how should I know, then, what a great
Person I had before me.

OCTAVIO

No excuses!

ISOLANI

I am a merry lad, and if at time
A rash word might escape me 'gainst the court
Amidst my wine, – you know no harm was meant.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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