

# FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

DON CARLOS

# **Friedrich Schiller**

## **Don Carlos**

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*Don Carlos: A Play:*

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# **Friedrich Schiller**

## **Don Carlos: A Play**

### **DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

PHILIP THE SECOND, King of Spain.

DON CARLOS, Prince, Son of Philip.

ALEXANDER FARNESE, Prince of Parma.

MARQUIS DE POSA.

DUKE OF ALVA.

Grandeess of Spain:

COUNT LERMA, Colonel of the Body Guard,

DUKE OF FERIA, Knight of the Golden Fleece,

DUKE OF MEDINA SIDONIA, Admiral,

DON RAIMOND DE TAXIS, Postmaster-General,

DOMINGO, Confessor to the King.

GRAND INQUISITOR of Spain.

PRIOR of a Carthusian Convent.

PAGE of the Queen.

DON LOUIS MERCADO, Physician to the Queen.

ELIZABETH DE VALOIS, Queen of Spain.

INFANTA CLARA FARNESE, a Child three years of age.

DUCHESS D'OLIVAREZ, Principal Attendant on the

Queen.

Ladies Attendant on the Queen:

MARCHIONESS DE MONDECAR,

PRINCESS EBOLI,

COUNTESS FUENTES,

Several Ladies, Nobles, Pages, Officers of the Body-Guard,  
and mute Characters.

# ACT I

## SCENE I

The Royal Gardens in Aranjuez.  
CARLOS and DOMINGO.

### DOMINGO

Our pleasant sojourn in Aranjuez  
Is over now, and yet your highness quits  
These joyous scenes no happier than before.  
Our visit hath been fruitless. Oh, my prince,  
Break this mysterious and gloomy silence!  
Open your heart to your own father's heart!  
A monarch never can too dearly buy  
The peace of his own son – his only son.

[CARLOS looks on the ground in silence.

Is there one dearest wish that bounteous Heaven  
Hath e'er withheld from her most favored child?  
I stood beside, when in Toledo's walls

The lofty Charles received his vassals' homage,  
When conquered princes thronged to kiss his hand,  
And there at once six mighty kingdoms fell  
In fealty at his feet: I stood and marked  
The young, proud blood mount to his glowing cheek,  
I saw his bosom swell with high resolves,  
His eye, all radiant with triumphant pride,  
Flash through the assembled throng; and that same eye  
Confessed, "Now am I wholly satisfied!"

[CARLOS turns away.

This silent sorrow, which for eight long moons  
Hath hung its shadows, prince, upon your brow —  
The mystery of the court, the nation's grief —  
Hath cost your father many a sleepless night,  
And many a tear of anguish to your mother.

**CARLOS (turning hastily round)**

My mother! Grant, O heaven, I may forget  
How she became my mother!

## **DOMINGO**

Gracious prince!

**CARLOS (passing his hands  
thoughtfully over his brow)**

Alas! alas! a fruitful source of woe  
Have mothers been to me. My youngest act,  
When first these eyes beheld the light of day,  
Destroyed a mother.

## **DOMINGO**

Is it possible  
That this reproach disturbs your conscience, prince?



## CARLOS

And my new mother! Hath she not already  
Cost me my father's heart? Scarce loved at best.  
My claim to some small favor lay in this —  
I was his only child! 'Tis over! She  
Hath blest him with a daughter – and who knows  
What slumbering ills the future hath in store?

## DOMINGO

You jest, my prince. All Spain adores its queen.  
Shall it be thought that you, of all the world,  
Alone should view her with the eyes of hate —  
Gaze on her charms, and yet be coldly wise?  
How, prince? The loveliest lady of her time,  
A queen withal, and once your own betrothed?  
No, no, impossible – it cannot be!  
Where all men love, you surely cannot hate.  
Carlos could never so belie himself.  
I prithee, prince, take heed she do not learn  
That she hath lost her son's regard. The news  
Would pain her deeply.

CARLOS.

Ay, sir! think you so?

## DOMINGO

Your highness doubtless will remember how,  
At the late tournament in Saragossa,  
A lance's splinter struck our gracious sire.  
The queen, attended by her ladies, sat  
High in the centre gallery of the palace,  
And looked upon the fight. A cry arose,  
"The king! he bleeds!" Soon through the general din,  
A rising murmur strikes upon her ear.  
"The prince – the prince!" she cries, and forward rushed,  
As though to leap down from the balcony,  
When a voice answered, "No, the king himself!"  
"Then send for his physicians!" she replied,  
And straight regained her former self-composure.

[After a short pause.

But you seem wrapped in thought?

CARLOS.            In wonder, sir,  
That the king's merry confessor should own  
So rare a skill in the romancer's art.

[Austerely.

Yet have I heard it said that those  
Who watch men's looks and carry tales about,  
Have done more mischief in this world of ours  
Than the assassin's knife, or poisoned bowl.  
Your labor, Sir, hath been but ill-bestowed;  
Would you win thanks, go seek them of the king.

## **DOMINGO**

This caution, prince, is wise. Be circumspect  
With men – but not with every man alike.  
Repel not friends and hypocrites together;  
I mean you well, believe me!

CARLOS.                      Say you so?  
Let not my father mark it, then, or else  
Farewell your hopes forever of the purple.

DOMINGO (starts).

## **CARLOS**

How!

CARLOS. Even so! Hath he not promised you  
The earliest purple in the gift of Spain?

## **DOMINGO**

You mock me, prince!

CARLOS. Nay! Heaven forefend, that I  
Should mock that awful man whose fateful lips  
Can doom my father or to heaven or hell!

## **DOMINGO**

I dare not, prince, presume to penetrate  
The sacred mystery of your secret grief,  
Yet I implore your highness to remember  
That, for a conscience ill at ease, the church  
Hath opened an asylum, of which kings  
Hold not the key – where even crimes are purged  
Beneath the holy sacramental seal.  
You know my meaning, prince – I've said enough.

## CARLOS

No! be it, never said, I tempted so  
The keeper of that seal.

## DOMINGO

Prince, this mistrust —  
You wrong the most devoted of your servants.

## CARLOS

Then give me up at once without a thought  
Thou art a holy man — the world knows that —  
But, to speak plain, too zealous far for me.  
The road to Peter's chair is long and rough,  
And too much knowledge might encumber you.  
Go, tell this to the king, who sent thee hither!

## DOMINGO

Who sent me hither?

CARLOS.           Ay! Those were my words.  
Too well-too well, I know, that I'm betrayed,  
Slandered on every hand – that at this court  
A hundred eyes are hired to watch my steps.  
I know, that royal Philip to his slaves  
Hath sold his only son, and every wretch,  
Who takes account of each half-uttered word,  
Receives such princely guerdon as was ne'er  
Bestowed on deeds of honor, Oh, I know  
But hush! – no more of that! My heart will else  
O'erflow and I've already said too much.

## DOMINGO

The king is minded, ere the set of sun,  
To reach Madrid: I see the court is mustering.  
Have I permission, prince?

CARLOS.           I'll follow straight.

[Exit DOMINGO.]

## **CARLOS (after a short silence)**

O wretched Philip! wretched as thy son!  
Soon shall thy bosom bleed at every pore,  
Torn by suspicion's poisonous serpent fang.  
Thy fell sagacity full soon shall pierce  
The fatal secret it is bent to know,  
And thou wilt madden, when it breaks upon thee!

## SCENE II

CARLOS, MARQUIS OF POSA.

### CARLOS

Lo! Who comes here? 'Tis he! O ye kind heavens,  
My Roderigo!

MARQUIS.      Carlos!

CARLOS.            Can it be?  
And is it truly thou? O yes, it is!  
I press thee to my bosom, and I feel  
Thy throbbing heart beat wildly 'gainst mine own.  
And now all's well again. In this embrace  
My sick, sad heart is comforted. I hang  
Upon my Roderigo's neck!

MARQUIS.            Thy heart!  
Thy sick sad heart! And what is well again  
What needeth to be well? Thy words amaze me.



## CARLOS

What brings thee back so suddenly from Brussels?  
Whom must I thank for this most glad surprise?  
And dare I ask? Whom should I thank but thee,  
Thou gracious and all bounteous Providence?  
Forgive me, heaven! if joy hath crazed my brain.  
Thou knewest no angel watched at Carlos' side,  
And sent me this! And yet I ask who sent him.

## MARQUIS

Pardon, dear prince, if I can only meet  
With wonder these tumultuous ecstasies.  
Not thus I looked to find Don Philip's son.  
A hectic red burns on your pallid cheek,  
And your lips quiver with a feverish heat.  
What must I think, dear prince? No more I see  
The youth of lion heart, to whom I come  
The envoy of a brave and suffering people.  
For now I stand not here as Roderigo —  
Not as the playmate of the stripling Carlos —  
But, as the deputy of all mankind,  
I clasp thee thus: — 'tis Flanders that clings here

Around thy neck, appealing with my tears  
To thee for succor in her bitter need.  
This land is lost, this land so dear to thee,  
If Alva, bigotry's relentless tool,  
Advance on Brussels with his Spanish laws.  
This noble country's last faint hope depends  
On thee, loved scion of imperial Charles!  
And, should thy noble heart forget to beat  
In human nature's cause, Flanders is lost!

## **CARLOS**

Then it is lost.

## **MARQUIS**

What do I hear? Alas!

## **CARLOS**

Thou speakest of times that long have passed away.

I, too, have had my visions of a Carlos,  
Whose cheek would fire at freedom's glorious name,  
But he, alas! has long been in his grave.  
He, thou seest here, no longer is that Carlos,  
Who took his leave of thee in Alcala,  
Who in the fervor of a youthful heart,  
Resolved, at some no distant time, to wake  
The golden age in Spain! Oh, the conceit,  
Though but a child's, was yet divinely fair!  
Those dreams are past!

## MARQUIS

Said you, those dreams, my prince!  
And were they only dreams?

## CARLOS

Oh, let me weep,  
Upon thy bosom weep these burning tears,  
My only friend! Not one have I – not one —  
In the wide circuit of this earth, – not one  
Far as the sceptre of my sire extends,  
Far as the navies bear the flag of Spain,

There is no spot – none – none, where I dare yield  
An outlet to my tears, save only this.  
I charge thee, Roderigo! Oh, by all  
The hopes we both do entertain of heaven,  
Cast me not off from thee, my friend, my friend!

[POSA bends over him in silent emotion.

Look on me, Posa, as an orphan child,  
Found near the throne, and nurtured by thy love.  
Indeed, I know not what a father is.  
I am a monarch's son. Oh, were it so,  
As my heart tells me that it surely is,  
That thou from millions hast been chosen out  
To comprehend my being; if it be true,  
That all-creating nature has designed  
In me to reproduce a Roderigo,  
And on the morning of our life attuned  
Our souls' soft concords to the selfsame key;  
If one poor tear, which gives my heart relief,  
To thee were dearer than my father's favor —

## MARQUIS

Oh, it is dearer far than all the world!

## CARLOS

I'm fallen so low, have grown so poor withal,  
I must recall to thee our childhood's years, —  
Must ask thee payment of a debt incurred  
When thou and I were scarce to boyhood grown.  
Dost thou remember, how we grew together,  
Two daring youths, like brothers, side by side?  
I had no sorrow but to see myself  
Eclipsed by thy bright genius. So I vowed,  
Since I might never cope with thee in power,  
That I would love thee with excess of love.  
Then with a thousand shows of tenderness,  
And warm affection, I besieged thy heart,  
Which cold and proudly still repulsed them all.  
Oft have I stood, and — yet thou sawest it never  
Hot bitter tear-drops brimming in mine eyes,  
When I have marked thee, passing me unheeded,  
Fold to thy bosom youths of humbler birth.  
"Why only these?" in anguish, once I asked —  
"Am I not kind and good to thee as they?"  
But dropping on thy knees, thine answer came,  
With an unloving look of cold reserve,  
"This is my duty to the monarch's son!"

## MARQUIS

Oh, spare me, dearest prince, nor now recall  
Those boyish acts that make me blush for shame.

## CARLOS

I did not merit such disdain from thee —  
You might despise me, crush my heart, but never  
Alter my love. Three times didst thou repulse  
The prince, and thrice he came to thee again,  
To beg thy love, and force on thee his own.  
At length chance wrought what Carlos never could.  
Once we were playing, when thy shuttlecock  
Glanced off and struck my aunt, Bohemia's queen,  
Full in the face! She thought 'twas with intent,  
And all in tears complained unto the king.  
The palace youth were summoned on the spot,  
And charged to name the culprit. High in wrath  
The king vowed vengeance for the deed: "Although  
It were his son, yet still should he be made  
A dread example!" I looked around and marked  
Thee stand aloof, all trembling with dismay.  
Straight I stepped forth; before the royal feet

I flung myself, and cried, "'Twas I who did it;  
Now let thine anger fall upon thy son!"

## MARQUIS

Ah, wherefore, prince, remind me?

## CARLOS

Hear me further!  
Before the face of the assembled court,  
That stood, all pale with pity, round about,  
Thy Carlos was tied up, whipped like a slave;  
I looked on thee, and wept not. Blow rained on blow;  
I gnashed my teeth with pain, yet wept I not!  
My royal blood streamed 'neath the pitiless lash;  
I looked on thee, and wept not. Then you came,  
And fell half-choked with sobs before my feet:  
"Carlos," you cried, "my pride is overcome;  
I will repay thee when thou art a king."

## **MARQUIS (stretching forth his hand to CARLOS)**

Carlos, I'll keep my word; my boyhood's vow  
I now as man renew. I will repay thee.  
Some day, perchance, the hour may come —

## **CARLOS**

Now! now!  
The hour has come; thou canst repay me all.  
I have sore need of love. A fearful secret  
Burns in my breast; it must — it must be told.  
In thy pale looks my death-doom will I read.  
Listen; be petrified; but answer not.  
I love — I love — my mother!

## **MARQUIS**

O my God!



## CARLOS

Nay, no forbearance! spare me not! Speak! speak!  
Proclaim aloud, that on this earth's great round  
There is no misery to compare with mine.  
Speak! speak! – I know all – all that thou canst say  
The son doth love his mother. All the world's  
Established usages, the course of nature,  
Rome's fearful laws denounce my fatal passion.  
My suit conflicts with my own father's rights,  
I feel it all, and yet I love. This path  
Leads on to madness, or the scaffold. I  
Love without hope, love guiltily, love madly,  
With anguish, and with peril of my life;  
I see, I see it all, and yet I love.

## MARQUIS

The queen – does she know of your passion?

## CARLOS

Could I

Reveal it to her? She is Philip's wife —  
She is the queen, and this is Spanish ground,  
Watched by a jealous father, hemmed around  
By ceremonial forms, how, how could I  
Approach her unobserved? 'Tis now eight months,  
Eight maddening months, since the king summoned me  
Home from my studies, since I have been doomed  
To look on her, adore her day by day,  
And all the while be silent as the grave!  
Eight maddening months, Roderigo; think of this!  
This fire has seethed and raged within my breast!  
A thousand, thousand times, the dread confession  
Has mounted to my lips, yet evermore  
Shrunk, like a craven, back upon my heart.  
O Roderigo! for a few brief moments  
Alone with her!

## MARQUIS

Ah! and your father, prince!

## CARLOS

Unhappy me! Remind me not of him.  
Tell me of all the torturing pangs of conscience,  
But speak not, I implore you, of my father!

## MARQUIS

Then do you hate your father?

## CARLOS

No, oh, no!  
I do not hate my father; but the fear  
That guilty creatures feel, – a shuddering dread, —  
Comes o'er me ever at that terrible name.  
Am I to blame, if slavish nurture crushed  
Love's tender germ within my youthful heart?  
Six years I'd numbered, ere the fearful man,  
They told me was my father, met mine eyes.  
One morning 'twas, when with a stroke I saw him

Sign four death-warrants. After that I ne'er  
Beheld him, save when, for some childish fault,  
I was brought out for chastisement. O God!  
I feel my heart grow bitter at the thought.  
Let us away! away!

## MARQUIS

Nay, Carlos, nay,  
You must, you shall give all your sorrow vent,  
Let it have words! 'twill ease your o'erfraught heart.

## CARLOS

Oft have I struggled with myself, and oft  
At midnight, when my guards were sunk in sleep,  
With floods of burning tears I've sunk before  
The image of the ever-blessed Virgin,  
And craved a filial heart, but all in vain.  
I rose with prayer unheard. O Roderigo!  
Unfold this wondrous mystery of heaven,  
Why of a thousand fathers only this  
Should fall to me – and why to him this son,  
Of many thousand better? Nature could not

In her wide orb have found two opposites  
More diverse in their elements. How could  
She bind the two extremes of human kind —  
Myself and him – in one so holy bond?  
O dreadful fate! Why was it so decreed?  
Why should two men, in all things else apart,  
Concur so fearfully in one desire?  
Roderigo, here thou seest two hostile stars,  
That in the lapse of ages, only once,  
As they sweep onwards in their orb'd course,  
Touch with a crash that shakes them to the centre,  
Then rush apart forever and forever.

## MARQUIS

I feel a dire foreboding.

## CARLOS

So do I.  
Like hell's grim furies, dreams of dreadful shape  
Pursue me still. My better genius strives  
With the fell projects of a dark despair.  
My wilder'd subtle spirit crawls through maze

On maze of sophistries, until at length  
It gains a yawning precipice's brink.  
O Roderigo! should I e'er in him  
Forget the father – ah! thy deathlike look  
Tells me I'm understood – should I forget  
The father – what were then the king to me?

### **MARQUIS (after a pause)**

One thing, my Carlos, let me beg of you!  
Whate'er may be your plans, do nothing, – nothing, —  
Without your friend's advice. You promise this?

### **CARLOS**

All, all I promise that thy love can ask!  
I throw myself entirely upon thee!

### **MARQUIS**

The king, I hear, is going to Madrid.

The time is short. If with the queen you would  
Converse in private, it is only here,  
Here in Aranjuez, it can be done.  
The quiet of the place, the freer manners,  
All favor you.

## CARLOS

And such, too, was my hope;  
But it, alas! was vain.

## MARQUIS

Not wholly so.  
I go to wait upon her. If she be  
The same in Spain she was in Henry's court,  
She will be frank at least. And if I can  
Read any hope for Carlos in her looks —  
Find her inclined to grant an interview —  
Get her attendant ladies sent away —

## **CARLOS**

Most of them are my friends – especially  
The Countess Mondecar, whom I have gained  
By service to her son, my page.

## **MARQUIS**

'Tis well;  
Be you at hand, and ready to appear,  
Whene'er I give the signal, prince.

## **CARLOS**

I will, —  
Be sure I will: – and all good speed attend thee!



## MARQUIS

I will not lose a moment; so, farewell.

**[Exeunt severally**

## SCENE III

The Queen's Residence in Aranjuez. The Pleasure Grounds, intersected by an avenue, terminated by the Queen's Palace.

The QUEEN, DUCHESS OF OLIVAREZ, PRINCESS OF EBOLI, and MARCHIONESS OF MONDECAR, all advancing from the avenue.

### QUEEN (to the MARCHIONESS)

I will have you beside me, Mondecar.  
The princess, with these merry eyes of hers,  
Has plagued me all the morning. See, she scarce  
Can hide the joy she feels to leave the country.

### EBOLI

'Twere idle to conceal, my queen, that I  
Shall be most glad to see Madrid once more.

## **MONDECAR**

And will your majesty not be so, too?  
Are you so grieved to quit Aranjuez?

## **QUEEN**

To quit – this lovely spot at least I am.  
This is my world. Its sweetness oft and oft  
Has twined itself around my inmost heart.  
Here, nature, simple, rustic nature greets me,  
The sweet companion of my early years —  
Here I indulge once more my childhood's sports,  
And my dear France's gales come blowing here.  
Blame not this partial fondness – all hearts yearn  
For their own native land.

## **EBOLI**

But then how lone,  
How dull and lifeless it is here! We might

As well be in La Trappe.

## QUEEN

I cannot see it.  
To me Madrid alone is lifeless. But  
What saith our duchess to it?

## OLIVAREZ

Why, methinks,  
Your majesty, since kings have ruled in Spain,  
It hath been still the custom for the court  
To pass the summer months alternately  
Here and at Pardo, – in Madrid, the winter.

## QUEEN

Well, I suppose it has! Duchess, you know  
I've long resigned all argument with you.

## **MONDECAR**

Next month Madrid will be all life and bustle.  
They're fitting up the Plaza Mayor now,  
And we shall have rare bull-fights; and, besides,  
A grand auto da fe is promised us.

## **QUEEN**

Promised? This from my gentle Mondecar!

## **MONDECAR**

Why not? 'Tis only heretics they burn!

## **QUEEN**

I hope my Eboli thinks otherwise!

## **EBOLI**

What, I? I beg your majesty may think me  
As good a Christian as the marchioness.

## **QUEEN**

Alas! I had forgotten where I am, —  
No more of this! We were speaking, I think,  
About the country? And methinks this month  
Has flown away with strange rapidity.  
I counted on much pleasure, very much,  
From our retirement here, and yet I have not  
Found that which I expected. Is it thus  
With all our hopes? And yet I cannot say  
One wish of mine is left ungratified.

## **OLIVAREZ**

You have not told us, Princess Eboli,

If there be hope for Gomez, – and if we may  
Expect ere long to greet you as his bride?

## QUEEN

True – thank you, duchess, for reminding me!

[Addressing the PRINCESS.

I have been asked to urge his suit with you.  
But can I do it? The man whom I reward  
With my sweet Eboli must be a man  
Of noble stamp indeed.

## OLIVAREZ

And such he is,  
A man of mark and fairest fame, – a man  
Whom our dear monarch signally has graced  
With his most royal favor.

## QUEEN

He's happy in  
Such high good fortune; but we fain would know,  
If he can love, and win return of love.  
This Eboli must answer.

**EBOLI (stands speechless and  
confused, her eyes bent on the ground;  
at last she falls at the QUEEN's feet)**

Gracious queen!  
Have pity on me! Let me – let me not, —  
For heaven's sake, let me not be sacrificed.

## QUEEN

Be sacrificed! I need no more. Arise!  
'Tis a hard fortune to be sacrificed.  
I do believe you. Rise. And is it long  
Since you rejected Gomez' suit?



## **EBOLI**

Some months —  
Before Prince Carlos came from Alcala.

**QUEEN (starts and looks at  
her with an inquisitive glance)**

Have you tried well the grounds of your refusal?

**EBOLI (with energy)**

It cannot be, my queen, no, never, never, —  
For a thousand reasons, never!

**QUEEN**

One's enough,  
You do not love him. That suffices me.  
Now let it pass.

[To her other ladies.

I have not seen the Infanta  
Yet this morning. Pray bring her, marchioness.

**OLIVAREZ (looking at the clock)**

It is not yet the hour, your majesty.

**QUEEN**

Not yet the hour for me to be a mother!  
That's somewhat hard. Forget not, then, to tell me  
When the right hour does come.

[A page enters and whispers to the first lady, who  
thereupon turns to the QUEEN.

**OLIVAREZ**

The Marquis Posa!  
May it please your majesty.

**QUEEN**

The Marquis Posa!

**OLIVAREZ**

He comes from France, and from the Netherlands,  
And craves the honor to present some letters  
Intrusted to him by your royal mother.

**QUEEN**

Is this allowed?

## **OLIVAREZ (hesitating)**

A case so unforeseen  
Is not provided for in my instructions.  
When a Castilian grandee, with despatches  
From foreign courts, shall in her garden find  
The Queen of Spain, and tender them —

## **QUEEN**

Enough! I'll venture, then, on mine own proper peril.

## **OLIVAREZ**

May I, your majesty, withdraw the while?

## QUEEN

E'en as you please, good duchess!

[Exit the DUCHESS, the QUEEN gives the PAGE a sign, who thereupon retires.]

## SCENE IV

The QUEEN, PRINCESS EBOLI, MARCHIONESS OF MONDECAR, and MARQUIS OF POSA.

### QUEEN

I bid you welcome, sir, to Spanish ground!

### MARQUIS

Ground which I never with so just a pride  
Hailed for the country of my sires as now.

### QUEEN (to the two ladies)

The Marquis Posa, ladies, who at Rheims  
Coped with my father in the lists, and made  
My colors thrice victorious; the first  
That made me feel how proud a thing it was

To be the Queen of Spain and Spanish men.

[Turning to the MARQUIS.

When we last parted in the Louvre, Sir,  
You scarcely dreamed that I should ever be  
Your hostess in Castile.

## MARQUIS

Most true, my liege!  
For at that time I never could have dreamed  
That France should lose to us the only thing  
We envied her possessing.

## QUEEN

How, proud Spaniard!  
The only thing! And you can venture this —  
This to a daughter of the house of Valois!

## MARQUIS

I venture now to say it, gracious queen,  
Since now you are our own.

## QUEEN

Your journey hither  
Has led you, as I hear, through France. What news  
Have you brought with you from my honored mother  
And from my dearest brothers?

## MARQUIS (handing letters)

I left your royal mother sick at heart,  
Bereft of every joy save only this,  
To know her daughter happy on the throne  
Of our imperial Spain.



## QUEEN

Could she be aught  
But happy in the dear remembrances  
Of relatives so kind – in the sweet thoughts  
Of the old time when – Sir, you've visited  
Full many a court in these your various travels,  
And seen strange lands and customs manifold;  
And now, they say, you mean to keep at home  
A greater prince in your retired domain  
Than is King Philip on his throne – a freer.  
You're a philosopher; but much I doubt  
If our Madrid will please you. We are so —  
So quiet in Madrid.

## MARQUIS

And that is more  
Than all the rest of Europe has to boast.

## QUEEN

I've heard as much. But all this world's concerns  
Are well-nigh blotted from my memory.

[To PRINCESS EBOLI.

Princess, methinks I see a hyacinth  
Yonder in bloom. Wilt bring it to me, sweet?

[The PRINCESS goes towards the palace, the QUEEN

softly to the MARQUIS.  
I'm much mistaken, sir, or your arrival  
Has made one heart more happy here at court.

## MARQUIS

I have found a sad one – one that in this world  
A ray of sunshine —

## **EBOLI**

As this gentleman  
Has seen so many countries, he, no doubt,  
Has much of note to tell us.

## **MARQUIS**

Doubtless, and  
To seek adventures is a knight's first duty —  
But his most sacred is to shield the fair.

## **MONDECAR**

From giants! But there are no giants now!

## **MARQUIS**

Power is a giant ever to the weak.

## QUEEN

The chevalier says well. There still are giants;  
But there are knights no more.

## MARQUIS

Not long ago,  
On my return from Naples, I became  
The witness of a very touching story,  
Which ties of friendship almost make my own  
Were I not fearful its recital might  
Fatigue your majesty —

## QUEEN

Have I a choice?  
The princess is not to be lightly balked.  
Proceed. I too, sir, love a story dearly.

## MARQUIS

Two noble houses in Mirandola,  
Weary of jealousies and deadly feuds,  
Transmitted down from Guelphs and Ghibellines,  
Through centuries of hate, from sire to son,  
Resolved to ratify a lasting peace  
By the sweet ministry of nuptial ties.  
Fernando, nephew of the great Pietro,  
And fair Matilda, old Colonna's child,  
Were chosen to cement this holy bond.  
Nature had never for each other formed  
Two fairer hearts. And never had the world  
Approved a wiser or a happier choice.  
Still had the youth adored his lovely bride  
In the dull limner's portraiture alone.  
How thrilled his heart, then, in the hope to find  
The truth of all that e'en his fondest dreams  
Had scarcely dared to credit in her picture!  
In Padua, where his studies held him bound;  
Fernando panted for the joyful hour,  
When he might murmur at Matilda's feet  
The first pure homage of his fervent love.

[The QUEEN grows more attentive; the MARQUIS

continues, after a short pause, addressing himself chiefly to  
**PRINCESS EBOLI.**

Meanwhile the sudden death of Pietro's wife  
Had left him free to wed. With the hot glow  
Of youthful blood the hoary lover drinks  
The fame that reached him of Matilda's charms.  
He comes – he sees – he loves! The new desire  
Stifles the voice of nature in his heart.  
The uncle woos his nephew's destined bride,  
And at the altar consecrates his theft.

## **QUEEN**

And what did then Fernando?

## **MARQUIS**

On the wings  
Of Jove, unconscious of the fearful change,  
Delirious with the promised joy, he speeds  
Back to Mirandola. His flying steed  
By starlight gains the gate. Tumultuous sounds

Of music, dance, and jocund revelry  
Ring from the walls of the illumined palace.  
With faltering steps he mounts the stair; and now  
Behold him in the crowded nuptial hall,  
Unrecognized! Amid the reeling guests  
Pietro sat. An angel at his side —  
An angel, whom he knows, and who to him  
Even in his dreams, seemed ne'er so beautiful.  
A single glance revealed what once was his —  
Revealed what now was lost to him forever.

## **EBOLI**

O poor Fernando!

## **QUEEN**

Surely, sir, your tale  
Is ended? Nay, it must be.

**MARQUIS**

No, not quite.

**QUEEN**

Did you not say Fernando was your friend?

**MARQUIS**

I have no dearer in the world.

**EBOLI**

But pray  
Proceed, sir, with your story.



## MARQUIS

Nay, the rest  
Is very sad – and to recall it sets  
My sorrow fresh abroad. Spare me the sequel.

[A general silence.

## QUEEN (turning to the PRINCESS EBOLI)

Surely the time is come to see my daughter,  
I prithee, princess, bring her to me now!

[The PRINCESS withdraws. The MARQUIS beckons a Page. The QUEEN opens the letters, and appears surprised. The MARQUIS talks with MARCHIONESS MONDECAR. The QUEEN having read the letters, turns to the MARQUIS with a penetrating look.

## QUEEN

You have not spoken of Matilda! She

Haply was ignorant of Fernando's grief?

## **MARQUIS**

Matilda's heart has no one fathomed yet —  
Great souls endure in silence.

## **QUEEN**

You look around you. Who is it you seek?

## **MARQUIS**

Just then the thought came over me, how one,  
Whose name I dare not mention, would rejoice,  
Stood he where I do now.

## **QUEEN**

And who's to blame,  
That he does not?

## **MARQUIS (interrupting her eagerly)**

My liege! And dare I venture  
To interpret thee, as fain I would? He'd find  
Forgiveness, then, if now he should appear.

## **QUEEN (alarmed)**

Now, marquis, now? What do you mean by this?

## **MARQUIS**

Might he, then, hope?

## **QUEEN**

You terrify me, marquis.  
Surely he will not —

## **MARQUIS**

He is here already.

## SCENE V

The QUEEN, CARLOS, MARQUIS POSA,  
MARCHIONESS MONDECAR.

The two latter go towards the avenue.

**CARLOS (on his knees before the QUEEN)**

At length 'tis come – the happy moment's come,  
And Charles may touch this all-beloved hand.

**QUEEN**

What headlong folly's this? And dare you break  
Into my presence thus? Arise, rash man!  
We are observed; my suite are close at hand.

**CARLOS**

I will not rise. Here will I kneel forever,

Here will I lie enchanted at your feet,  
And grow to the dear ground you tread on?

## QUEEN

Madman! To what rude boldness my indulgence leads!  
Know you, it is the queen, your mother, sir,  
Whom you address in such presumptuous strain?  
Know, that myself will to the king report  
This bold intrusion —

## CARLOS

And that I must die!  
Let them come here, and drag me to the scaffold!  
A moment spent in paradise like this  
Is not too dearly purchased by a life.

## QUEEN

But then your queen?

## **CARLOS (rising)**

O God, I'll go, I'll go!  
Can I refuse to bend to that appeal?  
I am your very plaything. Mother, mother,  
A sign, a transient glance, one broken word  
From those dear lips can bid me live or die.  
What would you more? Is there beneath the sun  
One thing I would not haste to sacrifice  
To meet your lightest wish?

## **QUEEN**

Then fly!

## **CARLOS**

God!

## QUEEN

With tears I do conjure you, Carlos, fly!  
I ask no more. O fly! before my court,  
My guards, detecting us alone together,  
Bear the dread tidings to your father's ear.

## CARLOS

I bide my doom, or be it life or death.  
Have I staked every hope on this one moment,  
Which gives thee to me thus at length alone,  
That idle fears should balk me of my purpose?  
No, queen! The world may round its axis roll  
A hundred thousand times, ere chance again  
Yield to my prayers a moment such as this.

## QUEEN

It never shall to all eternity.  
Unhappy man! What would you ask of me?



## **CARLOS**

Heaven is my witness, queen, how I have struggled,  
Struggled as mortal never did before,  
But all in vain! My manhood fails – I yield.

## **QUEEN**

No more of this – for my sake – for my peace.

## **CARLOS**

You were mine own, – in face of all the world, —  
Affianced to me by two mighty crowns,  
By heaven and nature plighted as my bride,  
But Philip, cruel Philip, stole you from me!

**QUEEN**

He is your father?

**CARLOS**

And he is your husband!

**QUEEN**

And gives to you for an inheritance,  
The mightiest monarchy in all the world.

**CARLOS**

And you, as mother!

## QUEEN

Mighty heavens! You rave!

## CARLOS

And is he even conscious of his treasure?  
Hath he a heart to feel and value yours?  
I'll not complain – no, no, I will forget,  
How happy, past all utterance, I might  
Have been with you, – if he were only so.  
But he is not – there, there, the anguish lies!  
He is not, and he never – never can be.  
Oh, you have robbed me of my paradise,  
Only to blast it in King Philip's arms!

## QUEEN

Horrible thought!

## CARLOS

Oh, yes, right well I know  
Who 'twas that knit this ill-starred marriage up.  
I know how Philip loves, and how he wooed.  
What are you in this kingdom – tell me, what?  
Regent, belike! Oh, no! If such you were,  
How could fell Alvas act their murderous deeds,  
Or Flanders bleed a martyr for her faith?  
Are you even Philip's wife? Impossible, —  
Beyond belief. A wife doth still possess  
Her husband's heart. To whom doth his belong?  
If ever, perchance, in some hot feverish mood,  
He yields to gentler impulse, begs he not  
Forgiveness of his sceptre and gray hairs?

## QUEEN

Who told you that my lot, at Philip's side  
Was one for men to pity?

## CARLOS

My own heart!  
Which feels, with burning pangs, how at my side  
It had been to be envied.

## QUEEN

Thou vain man!  
What if my heart should tell me the reverse?  
How, sir, if Philip's watchful tenderness,  
The looks that silently proclaim his love,  
Touched me more deeply than his haughty son's  
Presumptuous eloquence? What, if an old man's  
Matured esteem —

## CARLOS

That makes a difference! Then,  
Why then, forgiveness! – I'd no thought of this;  
I had no thought that you could love the king.

**QUEEN**

To honor him's my pleasure and my wish.

**CARLOS**

Then you have never loved?

**QUEEN**

Singular question!

**CARLOS**

Then you have never loved?

**QUEEN**

I love no longer!

**CARLOS**

Because your heart forbids it, or your oath?

**QUEEN**

Leave me; nor never touch this theme again.

**CARLOS**

Because your oath forbids it, or your heart?

## **QUEEN**

Because my duty – but, alas, alas!  
To what avails this scrutiny of fate,  
Which we must both obey?

## **CARLOS**

Must – must obey?

## **QUEEN**

What means this solemn tone?

## **CARLOS**

Thus much it means  
That Carlos is not one to yield to must



Where he hath power to will! It means, besides,  
'That Carlos is not minded to live on,  
The most unhappy man in all his realm,  
When it would only cost the overthrow  
Of Spanish laws to be the happiest.

## QUEEN

Do I interpret rightly? Still you hope?  
Dare you hope on, when all is lost forever?

## CARLOS

I look on naught as lost – except the dead.

## QUEEN

For me – your mother, do you dare to hope?

[She fixes a penetrating look on him, then continues with  
dignity and earnestness.

And yet why not? A new elected monarch  
Can do far more – make bonfires of the laws  
His father left – o'erthrow his monuments —  
Nay, more than this – for what shall hinder him? —  
Drag from his tomb, in the Escorial,  
The sacred corpse of his departed sire,  
Make it a public spectacle, and scatter  
Forth to the winds his desecrated dust.  
And then, at last, to fill the measure up —

## **CARLOS**

Merciful heavens, finish not the picture!

## **QUEEN**

End all by wedding with his mother.

## **CARLOS**

Oh!  
Accursed son!

[He remains for some time paralyzed and speechless.

Yes, now 'tis out, 'tis out!  
I see it clear as day. Oh, would it had  
Been veiled from me in everlasting darkness!  
Yes, thou art gone from me – gone – gone forever.  
The die is cast; and thou art lost to me.  
Oh, in that thought lies hell; and a hell, too,  
Lies in the other thought, to call thee mine.  
Oh, misery! I can bear my fate no longer,  
My very heart-strings strain as they would burst.

## QUEEN

Alas, alas! dear Charles, I feel it all,  
The nameless pang that rages in your breast;  
Your pangs are infinite, as is your love,  
And infinite as both will be the glory  
Of overmastering both. Up, be a man,  
Wrestle with them boldly. The prize is worthy  
Of a young warrior's high, heroic heart;  
Worthy of him in whom the virtues flow  
Of a long ancestry of mighty kings.

Courage! my noble prince! Great Charles's grandson  
Begins the contest with undaunted heart,  
Where sons of meaner men would yield at once.

## CARLOS

Too late, too late! O God, it is too late!

## QUEEN

Too late to be a man! O Carlos, Carlos!  
How nobly shows our virtue when the heart  
Breaks in its exercise! The hand of Heaven  
Has set you up on high, – far higher, prince,  
Than millions of your brethren. All she took  
From others she bestowed with partial hand  
On thee, her favorite; and millions ask,  
What was your merit, thus before your birth  
To be endowed so far above mankind?  
Up, then, and justify the ways of Heaven;  
Deserve to take the lead of all the world,  
And make a sacrifice ne'er made before.

## CARLOS

I will, I will; I have a giant's strength  
To win your favor; but to lose you, none.

## QUEEN

Confess, my Carlos, I have harshly read thee;  
It is but spoken, and waywardness, and pride,  
Attract you thus so madly to your mother!  
The heart you lavish on myself belongs  
To the great empire you one day shall rule.  
Look that you sport not with your sacred trust!  
Love is your high vocation; until now  
It hath been wrongly bent upon your mother:  
Oh, lead it back upon your future realms,  
And so, instead of the fell stings of conscience,  
Enjoy the bliss of being more than man.  
Elizabeth has been your earliest love,  
Your second must be Spain. How gladly, Carlos,  
Will I give place to this more worthy choice!

**CARLOS (overpowered by  
emotion, throws himself at her feet)**

How great thou art, my angel! Yes, I'll do  
All, all thou canst desire. So let it be.

[He rises.

Here in the sight of heaven I stand and swear —  
I swear to thee, eternal – no, great Heaven! —  
Eternal silence only, – not oblivion!

**QUEEN**

How can I ask from you what I myself  
Am not disposed to grant?

**MARQUIS (hastening from the alley)**

The king!

**QUEEN**

Oh God!

**MARQUIS**

Away, away! fly from these precincts, prince!

**QUEEN**

His jealousy is dreadful – should he see you —

**CARLOS**

I'll stay.

## QUEEN

And who will be the victim then?

**CARLOS (seizing the MARQUIS by the arm)**

Away, away! Come, Roderigo, come!

[Goes and returns.

What may I hope to carry hence with me?

## QUEEN

Your mother's friendship.

## CARLOS

Friendship! Mother!



# QUEEN

And

These tears with it – they're from the Netherlands.

[She gives him some letters. Exit CARLOS with the MARQUIS.

The QUEEN looks restlessly round in search of her ladies, who are nowhere to be seen. As she is about to retire up, the KING enters.

## SCENE VI

The KING, the QUEEN, DUKE ALVA, COUNT LERMA, DOMINGO, LADIES, GRANDEES, who remain at a little distance.

**KING**

How, madam, alone; not even one of all  
Your ladies in attendance? Strange! Where are they?

**QUEEN**

My gracious lord!

**KING**

Why thus alone, I say?

[To his attendants.

I'll take a strict account of this neglect.  
'Tis not to be forgiven. Who has the charge  
Of waiting on your majesty to-day?

## QUEEN

Oh, be not angry! Good, my lord, 'tis I  
Myself that am to blame – at my request  
The Princess Eboli went hence but now.

## KING

At your request!

## QUEEN

To call the nurse to me,  
With the Infanta, whom I longed to see.

## KING

And was your retinue dismissed for that?  
This only clears the lady first in waiting.  
Where was the second?

**MONDECAR (who has returned and  
mixed with the other ladies, steps forward)**

Your majesty, I feel  
I am to blame for this.

## KING

You are, and so  
I give you ten years to reflect upon it,  
At a most tranquil distance from Madrid.

[The MARCHIONESS steps back weeping. General silence.]

The bystanders all look in confusion towards the QUEEN.

## QUEEN

What weep you for, dear marchioness?

[To the KING.

If I

Have erred, my gracious liege, the crown I wear,  
And which I never sought, should save my blushes  
Is there a law in this your kingdom, sire,  
To summon monarch's daughters to the bar?  
Does force alone restrain your Spanish ladies?  
Or need they stronger safeguard than their virtue?  
Now pardon me, my liege; 'tis not my wont  
To send my ladies, who have served me still  
With smiling cheerfulness, away in tears.

## Here, Mondecar

[She takes off her girdle and presents it to the  
MARCHIONESS.

You have displeased the king,

Not me. Take this remembrance of my favor,  
And of this hour. I'd have you quit the kingdom.  
You have only erred in Spain. In my dear France,  
All men are glad to wipe such tears away.  
And must I ever be reminded thus?  
In my dear France it had been otherwise.

[Leaning on the MARCHIONESS and covering her face.

## KING

Can a reproach, that in my love had birth,  
Afflict you so? A word so trouble you,  
Which the most anxious tenderness did prompt?

[He turns towards the GEANDEES.

Here stand the assembled vassals of my throne.  
Did ever sleep descend upon these eyes,  
Till at the close of the returning day  
I've pondered, how the hearts of all my subjects  
Were beating 'neath the furthest cope of heaven?  
And should I feel more anxious for my throne  
Than for the partner of my bosom? No!  
My sword and Alva can protect my people,  
My eye alone assures thy love.

## QUEEN

My liege,  
If that I have offended —

## KING

I am called  
The richest monarch in the Christian world;  
The sun in my dominions never sets.  
All this another hath possessed before,  
And many another will possess hereafter.  
That is mine own. All that the monarch hath  
Belongs to chance – Elizabeth to Philip.  
This is the point in which I feel I'm mortal.

## QUEEN

What fear you, sire?

## KING

Should these gray hairs not fear?  
But the same instant that my fear begins  
It dies away forever.

[To the grandees.

I run over  
The nobles of my court and miss the foremost.  
Where is my son, Don Carlos?

[No one answers.

He begins  
To give me cause of fear. He shuns my presence  
Since he came back from school at Alcala.  
His blood is hot. Why is his look so cold?  
His bearing all so stately and reserved?  
Be watchful, duke, I charge you.

## ALVA



So I am:  
Long as a heart against this corslet beats,  
So long may Philip slumber undisturbed;  
And as God's cherub guards the gates of heaven  
So doth Duke Alva guard your royal throne.

## LERMA

Dare I, in all humility, presume  
To oppose the judgment of earth's wisest king?  
Too deeply I revere his gracious sire  
To judge the son so harshly. I fear much  
From his hot blood, but nothing from his heart.

## KING

Lerma, your speech is fair to soothe the father,  
But Alva here will be the monarch's shield —  
No more of this.

[Turning to his suite.

Now speed we to Madrid,  
Our royal duties summon us. The plague

Of heresy is rife among my people;  
Rebellion stalks within my Netherlands —  
The times are imminent. We must arrest  
These erring spirits by some dread example.  
The solemn oath which every Christian king  
Hath sworn to keep I will redeem to-morrow.  
'Twill be a day of doom unparalleled.  
Our court is bidden to the festival.

[He leads off the QUEEN, the rest follow.]

## SCENE VII

DON CARLOS (with letters in his hand), and  
MARQUIS POSA enter from opposite sides.

### CARLOS

I am resolved – Flanders shall yet be saved:  
So runs her suit, and that's enough for me!

### MARQUIS

There's not another moment to be lost:  
'Tis said Duke Alva in the cabinet  
Is named already as the governor.

### CARLOS

Betimes to-morrow will I see the king  
And ask this office for myself. It is

The first request I ever made to him,  
And he can scarce refuse. My presence here  
Has long been irksome to him. He will grasp  
This fair pretence my absence to secure.  
And shall I confess to thee, Roderigo?  
My hopes go further. Face to face with him,  
'Tis possible the pleading of a son  
May reinstate him in his father's favor.  
He ne'er hath heard the voice of nature speak;  
Then let me try for once, my Roderigo,  
What power she hath when breathing from my lips.

## MARQUIS

Now do I hear my Carlos' voice once more;  
Now are you all yourself again!

## SCENE VIII

The preceding. COUNT LERMA.

**COUNT**

Your grace,  
His majesty has left Aranjuez;  
And I am bidden —

**CARLOS**

Very well, my lord —  
I shall overtake the king —

**MARQUIS (affecting to take leave with ceremony)**

Your highness, then,  
Has nothing further to intrust to me?

## CARLOS

Nothing. A pleasant journey to Madrid!  
You may, hereafter, tell me more of Flanders.

[To LERMA, who is waiting for him.

Proceed, my lord! I'll follow thee anon.

# SCENE IX

DON CARLOS, MARQUIS POSA.

## CARLOS

I understood thy hint, and thank thee for it.  
A stranger's presence can alone excuse  
This forced and measured tone. Are we not brothers?  
In future, let this puppet-play of rank  
Be banished from our friendship. Think that we  
Had met at some gay masking festival,  
Thou in the habit of a slave, and I  
Robed, for a jest, in the imperial purple.  
Throughout the revel we respect the cheat,  
And play our parts with sportive earnestness,  
Tripping it gayly with the merry throng;  
But should thy Carlos beckon through his mask,  
Thou'dst press his hand in silence as he passed,  
And we should be as one.

## MARQUIS

The dream's divine!

But are you sure that it will last forever?  
Is Carlos, then, so certain of himself  
As to despise the charms of boundless sway?  
A day will come – an all-important day —  
When this heroic mind – I warn you now —  
Will sink o'erwhelmed by too severe a test.  
Don Philip dies; and Carlos mounts the throne,  
The mightiest throne in Christendom. How vast  
The gulf that yawns betwixt mankind and him —  
A god to-day, who yesterday was man!  
Steeled to all human weakness – to the voice  
Of heavenly duty deaf. Humanity —  
To-day a word of import in his ear —  
Barters itself, and grovels 'mid the throng  
Of gaping parasites; his sympathy  
For human woe is turned to cold neglect,  
His virtue sunk in loose voluptuous joys.  
Peru supplies him riches for his folly,  
His court engenders devils for his vices.  
Lulled in this heaven the work of crafty slaves,  
He sleeps a charmed sleep; and while his dream  
Endures his godhead lasts. And woe to him  
Who'd break in pity this lethargic trance!  
What could Roderigo do? Friendship is true,  
And bold as true. But her bright flashing beams  
Were much too fierce for sickly majesty:  
You would not brook a subject's stern appeal,  
Nor I a monarch's pride!



## CARLOS

Tearful and true,  
Thy portraiture of monarchs. Yes – thou'rt right,  
But 'tis their lusts that thus corrupt their hearts,  
And hurry them to vice. I still am pure.  
A youth scarce numbering three-and-twenty years.  
What thousands waste in riotous delights,  
Without remorse – the mind's more precious part —  
The bloom and strength of manhood – I have kept,  
Hoarding their treasures for the future king.  
What could unseat my Posa from my heart,  
If woman fail to do it?

## MARQUIS

I, myself!  
Say, could I love you, Carlos, warm as now,  
If I must fear you?

## **CARLOS**

That will never be.  
What need hast thou of me? What cause hast thou  
To stoop thy knee, a suppliant at the throne?  
Does gold allure thee? Thou'rt a richer subject  
Than I shall be a king! Dost covet honors?  
E'en in thy youth, fame's brimming chalice stood  
Full in thy grasp – thou flung'st the toy away.  
Which of us, then, must be the other's debtor,  
And which the creditor? Thou standest mute.  
Dost tremble for the trial? Art thou, then,  
Uncertain of thyself?

## **MARQUIS**

Carlos, I yield!  
Here is my hand.

## **CARLOS**

Is it mine own?

**MARQUIS**

Forever —  
In the most pregnant meaning of the word!

**CARLOS**

And wilt thou prove hereafter to the king  
As true and warm as to the prince to-day?

**MARQUIS**

I swear!

**CARLOS**

And when round my unguarded heart  
The serpent flattery winds its subtle coil,  
Should e'er these eyes of mine forget the tears  
They once were wont to shed; or should these ears  
Be closed to mercy's plea, – say, wilt thou, then,  
The fearless guardian of my virtue, throw  
Thine iron grasp upon me, and call up  
My genius by its mighty name?

## MARQUIS

I will.

## CARLOS

And now one other favor let me beg.  
Do call me thou! Long have I envied this  
Dear privilege of friendship to thine equals.  
The brother's thou beguiles my ear, my heart,  
With sweet suggestions of equality.  
Nay, no reply: – I guess what thou wouldst say —  
To thee this seems a trifle – but to me,  
A monarch's son, 'tis much. Say, wilt thou be  
A brother to me?

## **MARQUIS**

Yes; thy brother, yes!

## **CARLOS**

Now to the king – my fears are at an end.  
Thus, arm-in-arm with thee, I dare defy  
The universal world into the lists.

**[Exeunt**

# **ACT II**

## **SCENE I**

The royal palace at Madrid.

KING PHILIP under a canopy; DUKE ALVA at some distance, with his head covered; CARLOS.

### **CARLOS**

The kingdom takes precedence – willingly  
Doth Carlos to the minister give place —  
He speaks for Spain; I am but of the household.

[Bows and steps backward.]

### **KING**

The duke remains – the Infanta may proceed.

## **CARLOS (turning to ALVA)**

Then must I put it to your honor, sir,  
To yield my father for a while to me.  
A son, you know, may to a father's ear  
Unbosom much, in fulness of his heart,  
That not befits a stranger's ear. The king  
Shall not be taken from you, sir – I seek  
The father only for one little hour.

## **KING**

Here stands his friend.

## **CARLOS**

And have I e'er deserved  
To think the duke should be a friend of mine?

## KING

Or tried to make him one? I scarce can love  
Those sons who choose more wisely than their fathers.

## CARLOS

And can Duke Alva's knightly spirit brook  
To look on such a scene? Now, as I live,  
I would not play the busy meddler's part,  
Who thrusts himself, unasked, 'twixt sire and son,  
And there intrudes without a blush, condemned  
By his own conscious insignificance,  
No, not, by heaven, to win a diadem!

**KING (rising, with an angry look at the Prince)**

Retire, my lord!

[ALVA goes to the principal door, through which CARLOS had entered, the KING points to the other.]



No, to the cabinet,  
Until I call you.

## SCENE II

KING PHILIP. DON CARLOS.

**CARLOS** (as soon as the **DUKE** has left the apartment, advances to the **KING**, throws himself at his feet, and then, with great emotion)

My father once again!  
Thanks, endless thanks, for this unwonted favor!  
Your hand, my father! O delightful day!  
The rapture of this kiss has long been strange  
To your poor Carlos. Wherefore have I been  
Shut from my father's heart? What have I done?

**KING**

Carlos, thou art a novice in these arts —  
Forbear, I like them not —

## **CARLOS (rising)**

And is it so?

I hear your courtiers in those words, my father!  
All is not well, by heaven, all is not true,  
That a priest says, and a priest's creatures plot.  
I am not wicked, father; ardent blood  
Is all my failing; — all my crime is youth; —  
Wicked I am not — no, in truth, not wicked; —  
Though many an impulse wild assails my heart,  
Yet is it still untainted.

## **KING**

Ay, 'tis pure —  
I know it — like thy prayers —

## **CARLOS**

Now, then, or never!  
We are, for once, alone — the barrier

Of courtly form, that severed sire and son  
Has fallen! Now a golden ray of hope  
Illumes my soul – a sweet presentment  
Pervades my heart – and heaven itself inclines,  
With choirs of joyous angels, to the earth,  
And full of soft emotion, the thrice blest  
Looks down upon this great, this glorious scene!  
Pardon, my father!

[He falls on his knees before him.]

**KING**

Rise, and leave me.

**CARLOS**

Father!

**KING (tearing himself from him)**

This trifling grows too bold.

**CARLOS**

A son's devotion  
Too bold! Alas!

**KING**

And, to crown all, in tears!  
Degraded boy! Away, and quit my sight!

**CARLOS**

Now, then, or never! – pardon, O my father!

**KING**

Away, and leave my sight! Return to me

Disgraced, defeated, from the battle-field,  
Thy sire shall meet thee with extended arms:  
But thus in tears, I spurn thee from my feet.  
A coward's guilt alone should wash its stains  
In such ignoble streams. The man who weeps  
Without a blush will ne'er want cause for tears!

## CARLOS

Who is this man? By what mistake of nature  
Has he thus strayed amongst mankind? A tear  
Is man's unerring, lasting attribute.  
Whose eye is dry was ne'er of woman born!  
Oh, teach the eye that ne'er hath overflowed,  
The timely science of a tear – thou'lt need  
The moist relief in some dark hour of woe.

## KING

Think'st thou to shake thy father's strong mistrust  
With specious words?

## CARLOS

Mistrust! Then I'll remove it.  
Here will I hang upon my father's breast,  
Strain at his heart with vigor, till each shred  
Of that mistrust, which, with a rock's endurance,  
Clings firmly round it, piecemeal fall away.  
And who are they who drive me from the king —  
My father's favor? What requital hath  
A monk to give a father for a son?  
What compensation can the duke supply  
For a deserted and a childless age?  
Would'st thou be loved? Here in this bosom springs  
A fresher, purer fountain, than e'er flowed  
From those dark, stagnant, muddy reservoirs,  
Which Philip's gold must first unlock.

## KING

No more,  
Presuming boy! For know the hearts thou slanderest  
Are the approved, true servants of my choice.  
'Tis meet that thou do honor to them.

## CARLOS

Never!

I know my worth – all that your Alva dares —  
That, and much more, can Carlos. What cares he,  
A hireling! for the welfare of the realm  
That never can be his? What careth he  
If Philip's hair grow gray with hoary age?  
Your Carlos would have loved you: – Oh, I dread  
To think that you the royal throne must fill  
Deserted and alone.

**KING (seemingly struck by this idea,  
stands in deep thought; after a pause)**

I am alone!

**CARLOS (approaching him with eagerness)**

You have been so till now. Hate me no more,  
And I will love you dearly as a son:



But hate me now no longer! Oh, how sweet,  
Divinely sweet it is to feel our being  
Reflected in another's beauteous soul;  
To see our joys gladden another's cheek,  
Our pains bring anguish to another's bosom,  
Our sorrows fill another's eye with tears!  
How sweet, how glorious is it, hand in hand,  
With a dear child, in inmost soul beloved,  
To tread once more the rosy paths of youth,  
And dream life's fond illusions o'er again!  
How proud to live through endless centuries  
Immortal in the virtues of a son;  
How sweet to plant what his dear hand shall reap;  
To gather what will yield him rich return,  
And guess how high his thanks will one day rise!  
My father of this early paradise  
Your monks most wisely speak not.

## **KING (not without emotion)**

Oh, my son,  
Thou hast condemned thyself in painting thus  
A bliss this heart hath ne'er enjoyed from thee.

## CARLOS

The Omniscient be my judge! You till this hour  
Have still debarred me from your heart, and all  
Participation in your royal cares.

The heir of Spain has been a very stranger  
In Spanish land – a prisoner in the realm  
Where he must one day rule. Say, was this just,  
Or kind? And often have I blushed for shame,  
And stood with eyes abashed, to learn perchance  
From foreign envoys, or the general rumor,  
Thy courtly doings at Aranjuez.

## KING

Thy blood flows far too hotly in thy veins.  
Thou would'st but ruin all.

## CARLOS

But try me, father.

'Tis true my blood flows hotly in my veins.  
Full three-and-twenty years I now have lived,  
And naught achieved for immortality.  
I am aroused – I feel my inward powers —  
My title to the throne arouses me  
From slumber, like an angry creditor;  
And all the misspent hours of early youth,  
Like debts of honor, clamor in mine ears.  
It comes at length, the glorious moment comes  
That claims full interest on the intrusted talent.  
The annals of the world, ancestral fame,  
And glory's echoing trumpet urge me on.  
Now is the blessed hour at length arrived  
That opens wide to me the list of honor.  
My king, my father! dare I utter now  
The suit which led me hither?

## **KING**

Still a suit?  
Unfold it.

## **CARLOS**

The rebellion in Brabant  
Increases to a height – the traitor's madness  
By stern, but prudent, vigor must be met.  
The duke, to quell the wild enthusiasm,  
Invested with the sovereign's power, will lead  
An army into Flanders. Oh, how full  
Of glory is such office! and how suited  
To open wide the temple of renown  
To me, your son! To my hand, then, O king,  
Intrust the army; in thy Flemish lands  
I am well loved, and I will freely gage  
My life for their fidelity and truth.

## **KING**

Thou speakest like a dreamer. This high office  
Demands a man – and not a stripling's arm.

## **CARLOS**

It but demands a human being, father:  
And that is what Duke Alva ne'er hath been.

## KING

Terror alone can tie rebellion's hands:  
Humanity were madness. Thy soft soul  
Is tender, son: they'll tremble at the duke.  
Desist from thy request.

## CARLOS

Despatch me, sire,  
To Flanders with the army – dare rely  
E'en on my tender soul. The name of prince,  
The royal name emblazoned on my standard,  
Conquers where Alva's butchers but dismay.  
Here on my knees I crave it – this the first  
Petition of my life. Trust Flanders to me.

**KING (contemplating CARLOS with a piercing look)**

Trust my best army to thy thirst for rule,  
And put a dagger in my murderer's hand!

## CARLOS

Great God! and is this all – is this the fruit  
Of a momentous hour so long desired!

[After some thought, in a milder tone.

Oh, speak to me more kindly – send me not  
Thus comfortless away – dismiss me not  
With this afflicting answer, oh, my father!  
Use me more tenderly, indeed, I need it.  
This is the last resource of wild despair —  
It conquers every power of firm resolve  
To beat it as a man – this deep contempt —  
My every suit denied: Let me away —  
Unheard and foiled in all my fondest hopes,  
I take my leave. Now Alva and Domingo  
May proudly sit in triumph where your son  
Lies weeping in the dust. Your crowd of courtiers,  
And your long train of cringing, trembling nobles,  
Your tribe of sallow monks, so deadly pale,  
All witnessed how you granted me this audience.  
Let me not be disgraced. Oh, strike me not  
With this most deadly wound – nor lay me bare  
To sneering insolence of menial taunts!

"That strangers riot on your bounty, whilst  
Carlos, your son, may supplicate in vain."  
And as a pledge that you would have me honored,  
Despatch me straight to Flanders with the army.

## **KING**

Urge thy request no farther – as thou wouldst  
Avoid the king's displeasure.

## **CARLOS**

I must brave  
My king's displeasure, and prefer my suit  
Once more, it is the last. Trust Flanders to me!  
I must away from Spain. To linger here  
Is to draw breath beneath the headsman's axe:  
The air lies heavy on me in Madrid  
Like murder on a guilty soul – a change,  
An instant change of clime alone can cure me.  
If you would save my life, despatch me straight  
Without delay to Flanders.

## **KING (with affected coldness)**

Invalids,  
Like thee, my son – need not be tended close,  
And ever watched by the physician's eye —  
Thou stayest in Spain – the duke will go to Flanders.

## **CARLOS (wildly)**

Assist me, ye good angels!

## **KING (starting)**

Hold, what mean  
Those looks so wild?

## **CARLOS**



Father, do you abide  
Immovably by this determination?

**KING**

It was the king's.

**CARLOS**

Then my commission's done.

[Exit in violent emotion.]

## SCENE III

King, sunk in gloomy contemplation, walks a few steps up and down; Alva approaches with embarrassment.

**KING**

Hold yourself ready to depart for Brussels  
Upon a moment's notice.

**ALVA**

All is prepared, my liege.

**KING**

And your credentials  
Lie ready sealed within my cabinet, —  
Meanwhile obtain an audience of the queen,  
And bid the prince farewell.

## ALVA

As I came in  
I met him with a look of frenzy wild  
Quitting the chamber; and your majesty  
Is strangely moved, methinks, and bears the marks  
Of deep excitement – can it be the theme  
Of your discourse —

## KING

Concerned the Duke of Alva.

[The KING keeps his eye steadfastly fixed on him.

I'm pleased that Carlos hates my councillors,  
But I'm disturbed that he despises them.

[ALVA, coloring deeply, is about to speak.

No answer now: propitiate the prince.

**ALVA**

Sire!

**KING**

Tell me who it was that warned me first  
Of my son's dark designs? I listened then  
To you, and not to him. I will have proof.  
And for the future, mark me, Carlos stands  
Nearer the throne – now duke – you may retire.

[The KING retires into his cabinet. Exit DUKE by another door.]

## **SCENE IV**

The antechamber to the QUEEN'S apartments. DON CARLOS enters in conversation with a PAGE. The attendants retire at his approach.

### **CARLOS**

For me this letter? And a key! How's this?  
And both delivered with such mystery!  
Come nearer, boy: – from whom didst thou receive them?

### **PAGE (mysteriously)**

It seemed to me the lady would be guessed  
Rather than be described.

### **CARLOS (starting)**

The lady, what!

Who art thou, boy?

[Looking earnestly at the PAGE.

**PAGE**

A page that serves the queen.

**CARLOS (affrighted, putting  
his hand to the PAGE's mouth)**

Hold, on your life! I know enough: no more.

[He tears open the letter hastily, and retires to read it; meanwhile DUKE ALVA comes, and passing the Prince, goes unperceived by him into the QUEEN'S apartment, CARLOS trembles violently and changes color; when he has read the letter he remains a long time speechless, his eyes steadfastly fixed on it; at last he turns to the PAGE.

She gave you this herself?

**PAGE**

With her own hands.

**CARLOS**

She gave this letter to you then herself?  
Deceive me not: I ne'er have seen her writing,  
And I must credit thee, if thou canst swear it;  
But if thy tale be false, confess it straight,  
Nor put this fraud on me.

**PAGE**

This fraud, on whom?

**CARLOS (looking once more at the letter,  
then at the PAGE with doubt and earnestness)**

Your parents – are they living? and your father —  
Serves he the king? Is he a Spaniard born?

**PAGE**

He fell a colonel on St. Quentin's field,  
Served in the cavalry of Savoy's duke —  
His name Alonzo, Count of Henarez.

**CARLOS (taking his hand,  
and looking fixedly in his eyes)**

The king gave you this letter?



## **PAGE (with emotion)**

Gracious prince,  
Have I deserved these doubts?

## **CARLOS (reading the letter)**

"This key unlocks  
The back apartments in the queen's pavilion,  
The furthest room lies next a cabinet  
Wherein no listener's foot dare penetrate;  
Here may the voice of love without restraint  
Confess those tender feelings, which till now  
The heart with silent looks alone hath spoken.  
The timid lover gains an audience here,  
And sweet reward repays his secret sorrow."

[As if awakening from a reverie.

I am not in a dream, do not rave,  
This is my right hand, this my sword – and these  
Are written words. 'Tis true – it is no dream.  
I am beloved, I feel I am beloved.

[Unable to contain himself, he rushes hastily through the room, and raises his arms to heaven.

## **PAGE**

Follow me, prince, and I will lead the way.

## **CARLOS**

Then let me first collect my scattered thoughts.  
The alarm of joy still trembles in my bosom.  
Did I e'er lift my fondest hopes so high,  
Or trust my fancy to so bold a flight?  
Show me the man can learn thus suddenly  
To be a god. I am not what I was.  
I feel another heaven – another sun  
That was not here before. She loves – she loves me!

**PAGE** (leading him forward).

But this is not the place: prince! you forget.

# CARLOS

The king! My father!

[His arms sink, he casts a timid look around, then collecting himself.

This is dreadful! Yes,  
You're right, my friend. I thank you: I was not  
Just then myself. To be compelled to silence,  
And bury in my heart this mighty bliss,  
Is terrible!

[Taking the PAGE by the hand, and leading him aside.

Now here! What thou hast seen,  
And what not seen, must be within thy breast  
Entombed as in the grave. So now depart;  
I shall not need thy guidance; they must not  
Surprise us here! Now go.

[The PAGE is about to depart.

Yet hold, a word!

[The PAGE returns. CARLOS lays his hand on his shoulder,

and looks him steadily in the face.

A direful secret hast thou in thy keeping,  
Which, like a poison of terrific power,  
Shivers the cup that holds it into atoms.  
Guard every look of thine, nor let thy head  
Guess at thy bosom's secret. Be thou like  
The senseless speaking-trumpet that receives  
And echoes back the voice, but hears it not.  
Thou art a boy! Be ever so; continue  
The pranks of youth. My correspondent chose  
Her messenger of love with prudent skill!  
The king will ne'er suspect a serpent here.

## **PAGE**

And I, my prince, shall feel right proud to know  
I am one secret richer than the king.

## **CARLOS**

Vain, foolish boy! 'tis this should make thee tremble.  
Approach me ever with a cold respect:  
Ne'er be induced by idle pride to boast

How gracious is the prince! No deadlier sin  
Canst thou commit, my son, than pleasing me.  
Whate'er thou hast in future for my ear,  
Give not to words; intrust not to thy lips,  
Ne'er on that common high road of the thoughts  
Permit thy news to travel. Speak with an eye,  
A finger; I will answer with a look.  
The very air, the light, are Philip's creatures,  
And the deaf walls around are in his pay.  
Some one approaches; fly, we'll meet again.

[The QUEEN'S chamber opens, and DUKE ALVA comes out.

## **PAGE**

Be careful, prince, to find the right apartment.

[Exit.

## **CARLOS**

It is the duke! Fear not, I'll find the way.

# SCENE V

DON CARLOS. DUDE OF ALVA.

**ALVA (meeting him)**

Two words, most gracious prince.

**CARLOS**

Some other time.

[Going.]

**ALVA**

The place is not the fittest, I confess;  
Perhaps your royal highness may be pleased  
To grant me audience in your private chamber.

**CARLOS**

For what? And why not here? Only be brief.

**ALVA**

The special object which has brought me hither,  
Is to return your highness lowly thanks  
For your good services.

**CARLOS**

Thanks to me —  
For what? Duke Alva's thanks!

**ALVA**

You scarce had left

His majesty, ere I received in form  
Instructions to depart for Brussels.

## **CARLOS**

What!  
For Brussels!

## **ALVA**

And to what, most gracious prince,  
Must I ascribe this favor, but to you —  
Your intercession with the king?

## **CARLOS**

Ob, no!  
Not in the least to me; but, duke, you travel,  
So Heaven be with your grace!



**ALVA**

And is this all?  
It seems, indeed, most strange! And has your highness  
No further orders, then, to send to Flanders?

**CARLOS**

What should I have?

**ALVA**

Not long ago, it seemed,  
The country's fate required your presence.

**CARLOS**

How?

But yes, you're right, – it was so formerly;  
But now this change is better as it is.

## ALVA

I am amazed —

## CARLOS

You are an able general,  
No one doubts that – envy herself must own it.  
For me, I'm but a youth – so thought the king.

## CARLOS

The king was right, quite right. I see it now  
Myself, and am content – and so no more.  
God speed your journey, as you see, just now  
My hands are full, and weighty business presses.  
The rest to-morrow, or whene'er you will,  
Or when you come from Brussels.

## **ALVA**

What is this?

## **CARLOS**

The season favors, and your route will lie  
Through Milan, Lorraine, Burgundy, and on  
To Germany! What, Germany? Ay, true,  
In Germany it was – they know you there.  
'Tis April now, May, June, – in July, then,  
Just so! or, at the latest, soon in August, —  
You will arrive in Brussels, and no doubt  
We soon shall hear of your victorious deeds.  
You know the way to win our high esteem,  
And earn the crown of fame.

## **ALVA (significantly)**

Indeed! condemned

By my own conscious insignificance!

## CARLOS

You're sensitive, my lord, and with some cause,  
I own it was not fair to use a weapon  
Against your grace you were unskilled to wield.

## ALVA

Unskilled!

## CARLOS

'Tis pity I've no leisure now  
To fight this worthy battle fairly out  
But at some other time, we —

## ALVA

Prince, we both  
Miscalculate – but still in opposite ways.  
You, for example, overrate your age  
By twenty years, whilst on the other hand,  
I, by as many, underrate it —

## CARLOS

Well

## ALVA

And this suggests the thought, how many nights  
Beside this lovely Lusitanian bride —  
Your mother – would the king right gladly give  
To buy an arm like this, to aid his crown.  
Full well he knows, far easier is the task  
To make a monarch than a monarchy;  
Far easier too, to stock the world with kings

Than frame an empire for a king to rule.

## CARLOS

Most true, Duke Alva, yet —

## ALVA

And how much blood,  
Your subjects' dearest blood, must flow in streams  
Before two drops could make a king of you.

## CARLOS

Most true, by heaven! and in two words comprised,  
All that the pride of merit has to urge  
Against the pride of fortune. But the moral —  
Now, Duke Alva!

## ALVA

Woe to the nursling babe  
Of royalty that mocks the careful hand  
Which fosters it! How calmly it may sleep  
On the soft cushion of our victories!  
The monarch's crown is bright with sparkling gems,  
But no eye sees the wounds that purchased them.  
This sword has given our laws to distant realms,  
Has blazed before the banner of the cross,  
And in these quarters of the globe has traced  
Ensanguined furrows for the seed of faith.  
God was the judge in heaven, and I on earth.

## CARLOS

God, or the devil – it little matters which;  
Yours was his chosen arm – that stands confessed.  
And now no more of this. Some thoughts there are  
Whereof the memory pains me. I respect  
My father's choice, – my father needs an Alva!  
But that he needs him is not just the point  
I envy in him: a great man you are,  
This may be true, and I well nigh believe it,

Only I fear your mission is begun  
Some thousand years too soon. Alva, methinks,  
Were just the man to suit the end of time.  
Then when the giant insolence of vice  
Shall have exhausted Heaven's enduring patience,  
And the rich waving harvest of misdeeds  
Stand in full ear, and asks a matchless reaper,  
Then should you fill the post. O God! my paradise!  
My Flanders! But of this I must not think.  
'Tis said you carry with you a full store  
Of sentences of death already signed.  
This shows a prudent foresight! No more need  
To fear your foes' designs, or secret plots:  
Oh, father! ill indeed I've understood thee.  
Calling thee harsh, to save me from a post,  
Where Alva's self alone can fitly shine!  
'Twas an unerring token of your love.

## ALVA

These words deserve —

## CARLOS



What!

**ALVA**

But your birth protects you.

**CARLOS (seizing his sword)**

That calls for blood! Duke, draw your sword!

**ALVA (slightinglly)**

On whom?

**CARLOS. (pressing upon him)**

Draw, or I run you through.

**ALVA**

Then be it so.

[They fight.

## SCENE VI

The QUEEN, DON CARLOS, DUKE ALVA.

**QUEEN (coming from her room alarmed)**

How! naked swords?

[To the PRINCE in an indignant and commanding tone.

Prince Carlos!

**CARLOS (agitated at the QUEEN's look,  
drops his arm, stands motionless, then  
rushes to the DUKE, and embraces him)**

Pardon, duke!

Your pardon, sir! Forget, forgive it all!

[Throws himself in silence at the QUEEN'S feet, then rising suddenly, departs in confusion.

## ALVA

By heaven, 'tis strange!

**QUEEN (remains a few moments as if  
in doubt, then retiring to her apartment)**

A word with you, Duke ALVA.

[Exit, followed by the DUKE.]

## SCENE VII

The PRINCESS EBOLI's apartment.

The PRINCESS in a simple, but elegant dress, playing on the lute.

The QUEEN's PAGE enters.

**PRINCESS (starting up suddenly)**

He comes!

**PAGE (abruptly)**

Are you alone? I wonder much

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