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#3 in our series by Benjamin Disraeli

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COUNT ALARCOS ***

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COUNT ALARCOS:

A TRAGEDY

by Benjamin Disraeli

As there is no historical authority for the events of the celebrated Ballad on which this Tragedy is founded, I have fixed upon the thirteenth century for the period of their occurrence. At that time the kingdom of Castille had recently obtained that supremacy in Spain which led, in a subsequent age, to the political integrity of the country. Burgos, its capital, was a magnificent city; and then also arose that masterpiece of Christian architecture, its famous Cathedral.

This state of comparative refinement and civilisation permitted the introduction of more complicated motives than the rude manners of the Ballad would have authorised; while the picturesque features of the Castillian middle ages still flourished in full force; the factions of a powerful nobility, renowned for their turbulence, strong passions, enormous crimes, profound superstition.

[Delta]

London: May, 1839

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE KING OF CASTILLE.

COUNT ALARCOS, a Prince of the Blood.

COUNT OF SIDONIA.

COUNT OF LEON.

PRIOR OF BURGOS.

ORAN, a Moor.

FERDINAND, a PAGE.

GUZMAN JACA, a BRAVO.

GRAUS, the Keeper of a Posada.

SOLISA, Infanta of Castille, only child of the King.

FLORIMONDE, Countess Alarcos.

FLIX, a Hostess.

Courtiers, Pages, Chamberlains, Bravos, and Priests.

Time -- the 13th Century.

Scene -- Burgos, the capital of Castille, and its vicinity.

ACT I

SCENE 1

A Street in Burgos; the Cathedral in the distance.

[Enter Two Courtiers.]

I:1:1 1ST COURT.

The Prince of Hungary dismissed?

I:1:2 2ND COURT.

Indeed

So runs the rumour.

I:1:3 1ST COURT.

Why the spousal note

Still floats upon the air!

I:1:4 2ND COURT.

Myself this morn

Beheld the Infanta's entrance, as she threw,

Proud as some hitless barb, her haughty glance

On our assembled chiefs.

I:1:5 1ST COURT.

The Prince was there?

I:1:6 2ND COURT.

Most royally; nor seemed a man more fit

To claim a kingdom for a dower. He looked

Our Gadian Hercules, as the advancing peers

Their homage paid. I followed in the train

Of Count Alarcos, with whose ancient house

My fortunes long have mingled.

I:1:7 1ST COURT.

'Tis the same,

But just returned?

I:1:8 2ND COURT.

Long banished from the Court;

And only favoured since the Queen's decease,

His ancient foe.

I:1:9 1ST COURT.

A very potent Lord?

I:1:10 2ND COURT.

Near to the throne; too near perchance for peace.

You're young at Burgos, or indeed 'twere vain

To sing Alarcos' praise, the brightest knight

That ever waved a lance in Old Castille.

I:1:11 1ST COURT.

You followed in his train?

I:1:12 2ND COURT.

And as we passed,
Alarcos bowing to the lowest earth,
The Infanta swooned; and pale as yon niched saint,
From off the throned step, her seat of place,
Fell in a wild and senseless agony.

I:1:13 1ST COURT.

Sancta Maria! and the King --

I:1:14 2ND COURT.

Uprose
And bore her from her maidens, then broke up
The hurried Court; indeed I know no more,
For like a turning tide the crowd pressed on,
And scarcely could I gain the grateful air.
Yet on the Prado's walk came smiling by
The Bishop of Ossuna; as he passed
He clutched my cloak, and whispered in my ear,
'The match is off.'

[Enter PAGE.]

I:1:15 1ST COURT.

Hush! hush! a passenger.

I:1:16 PAGE.

Most noble Cavaliers, I pray, inform me
Where the great Count Alarcos holds his quarter.

I:1:17 2ND COURT.

In the chief square. His banner tells the roof;
Your pleasure with the Count, my gentle youth?

I:1:18 PAGE.

I were a sorry messenger to tell
My mission to the first who asks its aim.

I:1:19 2ND COURT.

The Count Alarcos is my friend and chief.

I:1:20 PAGE.

Then better reason I should trusty be,
For you can be a witness to my trust.

I:1:21 1ST COURT.

A forward youth!

I:1:22 2ND COURT.
A page is ever pert

I:1:23 PAGE.
Ay! ever pert is youth that baffles age.

[Exit PAGE.]

I:1:24 1ST COURT.
The Count is married?

I:1:25 2ND COURT.
To a beauteous lady;
And blessed with a fair race. A happy man
Indeed is Count Alarcos.

[A trumpet sounds.]

I:1:26 1ST COURT.
Prithee, see;
Passes he now?

I:1:27 2ND COURT.
Long since. Yon banner tells
The Count Sidonia. Let us on, and view
The passage of his pomp. His Moorish steeds,
They say, are very choice.

[Exeunt Two Courtiers.]

SCENE 2.

A Chamber in the Palace of Alarcos. The COUNTESS seated and working at her tapestry; the COUNT pacing the Chamber.

I:2:1 COUN.
You are disturbed, Alarcos?

I:2:2 ALAR.
'Tis the stir
And tumult of this morn. I am not used
To Courts.

I:2:3 COUN.
I know not why, it is a name
That makes me tremble.

I:2:4 ALAR.

Tremble, Florimonde,
Why should you tremble?

I:2:5 COUN.
Sooth I cannot say.
Methinks the Court but little suits my kind;
I love our quiet home.

I:2:6 ALAR.
This is our home,

I:2:7 COUN.
When you are here.

I:2:8 ALAR.
I will be always here.

I:2:9 COUN.
Thou canst not, sweet Alarcos. Happy hours,
When we were parted but to hear thy horn
Sound in our native woods!

I:2:10 ALAR.
Why, this is humour!
We're courtiers now; and we must smile and smirk.

I:2:11 COUN.
Methinks your tongue is gayer than your glance.
The King, I hope, was gracious?

I:2:12 ALAR.
Were he not,
My frown's as prompt as his. He was most gracious.

I:2:13 COUN.
Something has chafed thee?

I:2:14 ALAR.
What should chafe me, child,
And when should hearts be light, if mine be dull?
Is not mine exile over? Is it nought
To breathe in the same house where we were born,
And sleep where slept our fathers? Should that chafe?

I:2:15 COUN.
Yet didst then leave my side this very morn,
And with a vow this day should ever count
Amid thy life most happy; when we meet
Thy brow is clouded.

I:2:16 ALAR.
Joy is sometimes grave,
And deepest when 'tis calm. And I am joyful

If it be joy, this long forbidden hall
Once more to pace, and feel each fearless step
Tread on a baffled foe.

I:2:17 COUN.
Hast thou still foes

I:2:18 ALAR.
I trust so; I should not be what I am,
Still less what I will be, if hate did not
Pursue me as my shadow. Ah! fair wife,
Thou knowest not Burgos. Thou hast yet to fathom
The depths of thy new world.

I:2:19 COUN.
I do recoil
As from some unknown woo, from this same world.
I thought we came for peace.

I:2:20 ALAR.
Peace dwells within
No lordly roof in Burgos. We have come
For triumph.

I:2:21 COUN.
So I share thy lot, Alarcos,
All feelings are the same.

I:2:22 ALAR.
My Florimonde,
I took thee from a fair and pleasant home
In a soft land, where, like the air they live in,
Men's hearts are mild. This proud and fierce Castille
Resembles not thy gentle Aquitaine,
More than the eagle may a dove, and yet
It is my country. Danger in its bounds
Weighs more than foreign safety. But why speak
Of what exists not?

I:2:23 COUN.
And I hope may never!

I:2:24 ALAR.
And if it come, what then? This chance shall find me
Not unprepared.

I:2:25 COUN.
But why should there be danger?
And why should'st thou, the foremost prince of Spain,
Fear or make foes? Thou standest in no light
Would fall on other shoulders; thou hast no height
To climb, and nought to gain. Thou art complete;
The King alone above thee, and thy friend.

1:2:26 ALAR.

So I would deem. I did not speak of fear.

1:2:27 COUN.

Of danger?

1:2:28 ALAR.

That's delight, when it may lead
To mighty ends. Ah, Florimonde! thou art too pure;
Unsoiled in the rough and miry paths
Of ibis same trampling world; unskilled in heats
Of fierce and emulous spirits. There's a rapture
In the strife of factions, that a woman's soul
Can never reach. Men smiled on me to-day
Would gladly dig my grave; and yet I smiled,
And gave them coin as ready as their own,
And not less base.

1:2:29 COUN.

And can there be such men,
And canst thou live with them?

1:2:30 ALAR.

Ay! and they saw
Me ride this morning in my state again;
The people cried 'Alarcos and Castille!'
The shout will dull their feasts.

1:2:31 COUN.

There was a time
Thou didst look back as on a turbulent dream
On this same life.

1:2:32 ALAR.

I was an exile then.
This stirring Burgos has revived my vein.
Yea, as I glanced from off the Citadel
This very morn, and at my feet outspread
Its amphitheatre of solemn towers
And groves of golden pinnacles, and marked
Turrets of friends and foes; or traced the range,
Spread since my exile, of our city's walls
Washed by the swift Arlanzon: all around
The flash of lances, blaze of banners, rush
Of hurrying horsemen, and the haughty blast
Of the soul-stirring trumpet, I renounced
My old philosophy, and gazed as gazes
The falcon on his quarry!

1:2:33 COUN.

Jesu grant
The lure will bear no harm!

[A trumpet sounds.]

I:2:34 ALAR.
Whose note is that?
I hear the tramp of horsemen in the court;
We have some guests.

I:2:35 COUN.
Indeed!

[Enter the COUNT OF SIDONIA and the COUNT OF LEON.]

I:2:36 ALAR.
My noble friends,
My Countess greets ye!

I:2:37 SIDO.
And indeed we pay
To her our homage.

I:2:38 LEON.
Proud our city boasts
So fair a presence.

I:2:39 COUN.
Count Alarcos' friends
Are ever welcome here.

I:2:40 ALAR.
No common wife.
Who welcomes with a smile her husband's friends.

I:2:41 SIDO.
Indeed a treasure! When I marry, Count,
I'll claim your counsel.

I:2:42 COUN.
'Tis not then your lot?

I:2:43 SIDO.
Not yet, sweet dame; tho' sooth to say, full often
I dream such things may be.

I:2:44 COUN.
Your friend is free?

I:2:45 LEON.
And values freedom: with a rosy chain
I still should feel a captive.

I:2:46 SIDO.
Noble Leon

Is proof against the gentle passion, lady,
And will ere long, my rapier for a gage,
Marry a scold.

I:2:47 LEON.
In Burgos now, methinks,
Marriage is scarce the mode. Our princess frowns,
It seems, upon her suitors.

I:2:48 SIDO.
Is it true
The match is off?

I:2:49 LEON.
'Tis said.

I:2:50 COUN.
The match is off
You did not tell me this strange news, Alarcos.

I:2:51 SIDO.
Did he not tell you how --

I:2:52 ALAR.
In truth, good sirs,
My wife and I are somewhat strangers here,
And things that are of moment to the minds
That long have dwelt on them, to us are nought.

[To the Countess.]

There was a sort of scene to-day at Court;
The Princess fainted: we were all dismissed,
Somewhat abruptly; but, in truth, I deem
These rumours have no source but in the tongues
Of curious idlers.

I:2:53 SIDO.
Faith, I hold them true.
Indeed they're very rife.

I:2:54 LEON.
Poor man, methinks
His is a lot forlorn, at once to lose
A mistress and a crown!

I:2:55 COUN.
Yet both may bring
Sorrow and cares. But little joy, I ween,
Dwells with a royal bride, too apt to claim
The homage she should yield.

I:2:56 SIDO.

I would all wives
Hold with your Countess in this pleasing creed.

I:2:57 ALAR.
She has her way: it is a cunning wench
That knows to wheedle. Burgos still maintains
Its fame for noble fabrics. Since my time
The city's spread.

I:2:58 SIDO.
Ah! you're a traveller, Count.
And yet we have not lagged.

I:2:59 COUN.
The Infanta, sirs,
Was it a kind of swoon?

I:2:60 ALAR.
Old Lara lives
Still in his ancient quarter?

I:2:61 LEON.
With the rats
That share his palace. You spoke, Madam?

I:2:62 COUN.
She
Has dainty health, perhaps?

I:2:63 LEON.
All ladies have.
And yet as little of the fainting mood
As one could fix on --

I:2:64 ALAR.
Mendola left treasure?

I:2:65 SIDO.
Wedges of gold, a chamber of sequins
Sealed up for ages, flocks of Barbary sheep
Might ransom princes, tapestry so rare
The King straight purchased, covering for the price
Each piece with pistoles.

I:2:66 COUN.
Is she very fair

I:2:67 LEON.
As future queens must ever be, and yet
Her face might charm uncrowned.

I:2:68 COUN.
It grieves me much

To hear the Prince departs. 'Tis not the first
Among her suitors

I:2:69 ALAR.
Your good uncle lives --
Nunez de Leon?

I:2:70 LEON.
To my cost, Alarcos;
He owes me much.

I:2:71 SIDO.
Some promises his heir
Would wish fulfilled.

I:2:72 COUN.
In Gascony, they said,
Navarre had sought her hand.

I:2:73 LEON.
He loitered here
But could not pluck the fruit: it was too high.
Sidonia threw him in a tilt one day.
The Infanta has her fancies; unhorsed knights
Count not among them.

[Enter a CHAMBERLAIN who whispers COUNT ALARCOS.]

I:2:74 ALAR.
Urgent, and me alone
Will commune with! A Page! Kind guests, your pardon,
I'll find you here anon. My Florimonde,
Our friends will not desert you, like your spouse.

[Exit ALARCOS.]

I:2:75 COUN.
My Lords, will see our gardens?

I:2:76 SIDO.
We are favoured.
We wait upon your steps.

I:2:77 LEON.
And feel that roses
Will spring beneath them.

I:2:78 COUN.
You are an adept, sir,
In our gay science.

I:2:79 LEON.
Faith, I stole it, lady,

From a loose Troubadour Sidonia keeps
To write his sonnets.

[Exeunt omnes.]

SCENE 3

A Chamber.

[Enter ALARCOS and PAGE.]

I:3:1 PAGE.
Will you wait here, my Lord?

I:3:2 ALAR.
I will, sir Page.

[Exit PAGE.]

The Bishop of Ossuna: what would he?
He scents the prosperous ever. Ay! they'll cluster
Round this new hive. But I'll not house them yet.
Marry, I know them all; but me they know,
As mountains might the leaping stream that meets
The ocean as a river. Time and exile
Change our life's course, but is its flow less deep
Because it is more calm? I've seen to-day
Might stir its pools. What if my phantom flung
A shade on their bright path? 'Tis closed to me
Although the goal's a crown. She loved me once;
Now swoons, and now the match is off. She's true.
But I have clipped the heart that once could soar
High as her own! Dreams, dreams! And yet entranced,
Unto the fair phantasma that is fled,
My struggling fancy clings; for there are hours
When memory with her signet stamps the brain
With an undying mint; and these were such,
When high Ambition and enraptured Love,
Twin Genii of my daring destiny,
Bore on my sweeping life with their full wing,
Like an angelic host:

[In the distance enter a lady veiled.]

Is this their priest?
Burgos unchanged I see.

[Advancing towards her.]

A needless veil
To one prophetic of thy charms, fair lady.
And yet they fall on an ungracious eye.

[Withdraws the veil.]

Solisa!

I:3:3 SOL.
Yes! Solisa; once again
O say Solisa! let that long lost voice
Breathe with a name too faithful!

I:3:4 ALAR.
Oh! what tones,
What mazing sight is this! The spellbound forms
Of my first youth rise up from the abyss
Of opening time. I listen to a voice
That bursts the sepulchre of buried hope
Like an immortal trumpet.

I:3:5 SOL.
Thou hast granted,
Mary, my prayers!

I:3:6 ALAR.
Solisa, my Solisa!

I:3:7 SOL.
Thine, thine, Alarcos. But thou: whose art thou?

I:3:8 ALAR.
Within this chamber is my memory bound;
I have no thought, no consciousness beyond
Its precious walls.

I:3:9 SOL.
Thus did he look, thus speak,
When to my heart he clung, and I to him
Breathed my first love -- and last.

I:3:10 ALAR.
Alas! alas!
Woe to thy Mother, maiden.

I:3:11 SOL.
She has found
That which I oft have prayed for.

I:3:12 ALAR.
But not found
A doom more dark than ours.

I:3:13 SOL.
I sent for thee,
To tell thee why I sent for thee; yet why,
Alas! I know not. Was it but to look
Alone upon the face that once was mine?
This morn it was so grave. O! was it woe,
Or but indifference, that inspired that brow
That seemed so cold and stately? Was it hate?
O! tell me anything, but that to thee
I am a thing of nothingness.

I:3:14 ALAR.
O spare!
Spare me such words of torture.

I:3:15 SOL.
Could I feel
Thou didst not hate me, that my image brought
At least a gentle, if not tender thoughts,
I'd be content. I cannot live to think,
After the past, that we should meet again
And change cold looks. We are not strangers, say
At least we are not strangers?

I:3:16 ALAR.
Gentle Princess --

I:3:17 SOL.
Call me Solisa; tho' we meet no more
Call me Solisa now.

I:3:18 ALAR.
Thy happiness --

I:3:19 SOL.
O! no, no, no, not happiness, at least
Not from those lips.

I:3:20 ALAR.
Indeed it is a name
That ill becomes them.

I:3:21 SOL.
Yet they say, thou'rt happy,
And bright with all prosperity, and I
Felt solace in that thought.

I:3:22 ALAR.
Prosperity!
Men call them prosperous whom they deem enjoy
That which they envy; but there's no success
Save in one master-wish fulfilled, and mine

Is lost for ever.

I:3:23 SOL.
Why was it? O, why
Didst thou forget me?

I:3:24 ALAR.
Never, lady, never --
But ah! the past, the irrevocable past --
We can but meet to mourn.

I:3:25 SOL.
No, not to mourn
I came to bless thee, came to tell to thee
I hoped that thou wert happy.

I:3:26 ALAR.
Come to mourn.
I'll find delight in my unbridled grief:
Yes! let me fling away at last this mask,
And gaze upon my woe.

I:3:27 SOL.
O, it was rash,
Indeed 'twas rash, Alarcos; what, sweet sir,
What, after all our vows, to hold me false,
And place this bar between us! I'll not think
Thou ever loved'st me as thou did'st profess,
And that's the bitter drop.

I:3:28 ALAR.
Indeed, indeed --

I:3:29 SOL.
I could bear much, I could bear all, but this
My faith in thy past love, it was so deep,
So pure, so sacred, 'twas my only solace;
I fed upon it in my secret heart,
And now e'en that is gone.

I:3:30 ALAR.
Doubt not the past,
'Tis sanctified. It is the green fresh spot
In my life's desert.

I:3:31 SOL.
There is none to thee
As I have been? Speak, speak, Alarcos, tell me
Is't true? Or, in this shipwreck of my soul,
Do I cling wildly to some perishing hope
That sinks like me?

I:3:32 ALAR.

The May-burst of the heart
Can bloom but once; and mine has fled, not faded.
That thought gave fancied solace, ah, 'twas fancy,
For now I feel my doom.

I:3:33 SOL.
Thou hast no doom
But what is splendid as thyself. Alas!
Weak woman, when she stakes her heart, must play
Ever a fatal chance. It is her all,
And when 'tis lost, she's bankrupt; but proud man
Shuffles the cards again, and wins to-morrow
What pays his present forfeit.

I:3:34 ALAR.
But alas!
What have I won?

I:3:35 SOL.
A country and a wife.

I:3:36 ALAR.
A wife!

I:3:37 SOL.
A wife, and very fair, they say.
She should be fair, who could induce thee break
Such vows as thine. O! I am very weak.
Why came I here? Was it indeed to see
If thou could'st look on me?

I:3:38 ALAR.
My own Solisa.

I:3:39 SOL.
Call me not thine; why, what am I to thee
That thou should'st call me thine?

I:3:40 ALAR.
Indeed, sweet lady,
Thou lookest on a man as bruised in spirit,
As broken-hearted, and subdued in soul,
As any breathing wretch that deems the day
Can bring no darker morrow. Pity me!
And if kind words may not subdue those lips
So scornful in their beauty, be they touched
At least by Mercy's accents! Was't a crime,
I could not dare believe that royal heart
Retained an exile's image? that forlorn,
Harassed, worn out, surrounded by strange aspects
And stranger manners, in those formal ties
Custom points out, I sought some refuge, found
At least companionship, and, grant 'twas weak,

Shrunk from the sharp endurance of the doom
That waits on exile, utter loneliness!

I:3:41 SOL.
His utter loneliness!

I:3:42 ALAR.
And met thy name,
Most beauteous lady, prithee think of this,
Only to hear the princes of the world
Were thy hot suitors, and that one would soon
Be happier than Alarcos.

I:3:43 SOL.
False, most false,
They told thee false.

I:3:44 ALAR.
At least, then, pity me,
Solisa!

I:3:45 SOL.
Ah! Solisa, that sweet voice,
Why should I pity thee? 'Tis not my office.
Go, go to her that cheered thy loneliness,
Thy utter loneliness. And had I none?
Had I no pangs of solitude? Exile!
O! there were moments I'd have gladly given
My crown for banishment. A wounded heart
Beats freer in a desert; 'tis the air
Of palaces that chokes it.

I:3:46 ALAR.
Fate has crossed,
Not falsehood, our sweet loves. Our lofty passion
Is tainted with no vileness. Memory bears
Convulsion, not contempt; no palling sting
That waits on base affections. It is something
To have loved thee; and in that thought I find
My sense exalted; wretched though I be.

I:3:47 SOL.
Is he so wretched? Yet he is less forlorn
Than when he sought, what I would never seek,
A partner in his woe! I'll ne'er believe it;
Thou art not wretched. Why, thou hast a friend,
A sweet companion in thy grief to soothe
Thy loneliness, and feed on thy bright smiles,
Thrill with thine accents, with impassioned reverence
Enclasp thine hand, and with enchained eyes
Gaze on thy glorious presence. O, Alarcos!
Art thou not worshipped now? What, can it be,
That there is one, who walks in Paradise,

Nor feels the air immortal?

I:3:48 ALAR.
Let my curse
Descend upon the hour I left thy walls,
My father's town!

I:3:49 SOL.
My blessing on thy curse!
Thou hast returned, thou hast returned, Alarcos?

I:3:50 ALAR.
To despair.

I:3:51 SOL.
Yet 'tis not the hour he quitted
Our city's wall, it is the tie that binds him
Within those walls my lips would more denounce,
But ah, that tie is dear!

I:3:52 ALAR.
Accursed be
The wiles that parted us; accursed be
The ties that sever us

I:3:53 SOL.
Thou'rt mine.

I:3:54 ALAR.
For ever.
Thou unpolluted passion of my youth,
My first, my only, my enduring love!

[They embrace.]

[Enter FERDINAND, the PAGE.]

I:3:55 PAGE.
Lady, a message from thy royal father;
He comes --

I:3:56 SOL.

[Springing from the arms of Alarcos.]

My father! word of fear! Why now
To cloud my light? I had forgotten fate;
But he recalls it. O my bright Alarcos!
My love must fly. Nay, not one word of care;
Love only from those lips. Yet, ere we part,
Seal our sweet faith renewed.

I:3:57 ALAR.

And never broken.

[Exit Alarcos.]

I:3:58 SOL.

Why has he gone? Why did I bid him go?
And let this jewel I so daring plucked
Slip in the waves again? I'm sure there's time
To call him back, and say farewell once more.
I'll say farewell no more; it was a word
Ever harsh music when the morrow brought
Welcomes renewed of love, No more farewells.
O when will he be mine! I cannot wait,
I cannot tarry, now I know he loves me;
Each hour, each instant that I see him not,
Is usurpation of my right. O joy!
Am I the same Solisa, that this morn
Breathed forth her orison with humbler spirit
Than the surrounding acolytes? Thou'st smiled,
Sweet Virgin, on my prayers. Twice fifty tapers
Shall burn before thy shrine. Guard over me
O! mother of my soul, and let me prosper
In my great enterprise! O hope! O love!
O sharp remembrance of long baffled joy!
Inspire me now.

SCENE 4.

The KING; the INFANTA.

I:4:1 KING.

I see my daughter?

I:4:2 SOL.

Sir, your duteous child.

I:4:3 KING.

Art thou indeed my child? I had some doubt
I was a father.

I:4:4 SOL.

These are bitter words.

I:4:5 KING.

Even as thy conduct.

I:4:6 SOL.

Then it would appear

My conduct and my life are but the same.

I:4:7 KING.

I thought thou wert the Infanta of Castille,
Heir to our realm, the paragon of Spain
The Princess for whose smiles crowned Christendom
Sends forth its sceptred rivals. Is that bitter?
Or bitter is it with such privilege,
And standing on life's vantage ground, to cross
A nation's hope, that on thy nice career
Has gaged its heart?

I:4:8 SOL.

Have I no heart to gage?
A sacrificial virgin, must I bind
My life to the altar, to redeem a state,
Or heal some doomed People?

I:4:9 KING.

Is it so?
Is this an office alien to thy sex?
Or what thy youth repudiates? We but ask
What nature sanctions.

I:4:10 SOL.

Nature sanctions Love;
Your charter is more liberal. Let that pass.
I am no stranger to my duty, sir,
And read it thus. The blood that shares my sceptre
Should be august as mine. A woman loses
In love what she may gain in rank, who tops
Her husband's place; though throned, I would exchange
An equal glance. His name should be a spell

- To rally soldiers. Politic he should be;
And skilled in climes and tongues; that stranger knights
Should bruit on, high Castillian courtesies.
Such chief might please a state?

I:4:11 KING.

Fortunate realm!

I:4:12 SOL.

And shall I own less niceness than my realm?
No! I would have him handsome a god;
Hyperion in his splendor, or the mien
Of conquering Bacchus, one whose very step
Should guide a limner, and whose common words
Are caught by Troubadours to frame their songs!
And O, my father, what if this bright prince
Should I have a heart as tender as his soul
Was high and peerless? If with this same heart
He loved thy daughter?

I:4:13 KING.

Close the airy page
Of thy romance; such princes are not found
Except in lays and legends! yet a man
Who would become a throne, I found thee, girl;
The princely Hungary.

I:4:14 SOL.

A more princely fate,
Than an unwilling wife, he did deserve.

I:4:15 KING.

Yet wherefore didst thou pledge thy troth to him?

I:4:16 SOL.

And wherefore do I smile when I should sigh?
And wherefore do I feed when I would fast?
And wherefore do I dance when I should pray?
And wherefore do I live when I should die?
Canst answer that, good Sir? O there are women
The world deem mad, or worse, whose life but seems
One vile caprice, a freakish thing of whims
And restless nothingness; yet if we pierce
The soul, may be we'll touch some cause profound
For what seems causeless. Early love despised,
Or baffled, which is worse; a faith betrayed,
For vanity or lucre; chill regards,
Where to gain constant glances we have paid
Some fearful forfeit: here are many springs,
Unmarked by shallow eyes, and some, or all
Of these, or none, may prompt my conduct now --
But I'll not have thy prince.

I:4:17 KING.

My, gentle child --

I:4:18 SOL.

I am not gentle. I might have been once;
But gentle thoughts and I have parted long;
The cause of such partition thou shouldst know
If memories were just.

I:4:19 KING.

Harp not, I pray,
On an old sorrow.

I:4:20 SOL.

Old! he calls it old!
The wound is green, and staunch it, or I die.

I:4:21 KING.

Have I the skill?

I:4:22 SOL.
Why! art thou not a King?
Wherein consists the magic of a crown
But in the bold achievement of a deed
Would scare a clown to dream?

I:4:23 KING.
I'd read thy thought.

I:4:24 SOL.
Then have it; I would marry.

I:4:25 KING.
It is well;
It is my wish.

I:4:26 SOL.
And unto such a prince
As I've described withal. For though a prince
Of Fancy's realm alone, as thou dost deem,
Yet doth he live indeed.

I:4:27 KING.
To me unknown.

I:4:28 SOL.
O! father mine, before thy reverend knees
Ere this we twain have knelt.

I:4:29 KING.
Forbear, my child;
Or can it be my daughter doth not know
He is no longer free?

I:4:30 SOL.
The power that bound him,
That bondage might dissolve? To holy church
Thou hast given great alms?

I:4:31 KING.
There's more to gain thy wish,
If more would gain it; but it cannot be,
Even were he content.

I:4:32 SOL.
He is content.

I:4:33 KING.
Hah!

I:4:34 SOL.
For he loves me still.

I:4:35 KING.

I would do much
To please thee. I'm prepared to bear the brunt
Of Hungary's ire; but do not urge, Solisa,
Beyond capacity of sufferance
My temper's proof.

I:4:36 SOL.

Alarcos is my husband,
Or shall the sceptre from our line depart.
Listen, ye saints of Spain, I'll have his hand,
Or by our faith, my fated womb shall be
As barren as thy love, proud King.

I:4:37 KING.

Thou'rt mad!
Thou'rt mad!

I:4:38 SOL.

Is he not mine? Thy very hand,
Did it not consecrate our vows? What claim
So sacred as my own?

I:4:39 KING.

He did conspire --

I:4:40 SOL.

'Tis false, thou know'st 'tis false: against themselves
Men do not plot: I would as soon believe
My hand could hatch a treason 'gainst my sight,
As that Alarcos would conspire to seize
A diadem I would myself have placed
Upon his brow.

I:4:41 KING.

[taking her hand]

Nay, calmness. Say 'tis true
He was not guilty, say perchance he was not --

I:4:42 SOL.

Perchance, O! vile perchance. Thou know'st full well,
Because he did reject her loose desires
And wanton overtures --

I:4:43 KING.

Hush, hush, O hush!

I:4:44 SOL.

The woman called my mother --

I:4:45 KING.

Spare me, spare --

I:4:46 SOL.

Who spared me?
Did not I kneel, and vouch his faith, and bathe
Thy hand with my quick tears, and clutch thy robe
With frantic grasp? Spare, spare indeed? In faith
Thou hast taught me to be merciful, thou hast, --
Thou and my mother!

I:4:47 KING.

Ah! no more, no more!
A crowned King cannot recall the past,
And yet may glad the future. She thou namest,
She was at least thy mother; but to me,
Whate'er her deeds, for truly, there were times
Some spirit did possess her, such as gleams
Now in her daughter's eye, she was a passion,
A witching form that did inflame my life
By a breath or glance. Thou art our child; the link
That binds me to my race; thou host her place
Within my shrined heart, where thou'rt the priest
And others are unhallowed; for, indeed,
Passion and time have so dried up my soul,
And drained its generous juices, that I own
No sympathy with man, and all his hopes
To me are mockeries.

I:4:48 SOL.

Ah! I see, my father,
That thou will'st aid me!

I:4:49 KING.

Thou canst aid thyself.
Is there a law to let him from thy presence?
His voice may reach thine ear; thy gracious glance
May meet his graceful offices. Go to.
Shall Hungary frown, if his right royal spouse
Smile on the equal of her blood and state,
Her gentle cousin?

I:4:50 SOL.

And is this thine aid!

I:4:51 KING.

What word has roughed the brow, but now confiding
In a fond father's love?

I:4:52 SOL.

Alas! what word?
What have I said? what done? that thou should'st deem
I could do this, this, this, that is so foul,
My baffled tongue deserts me. Thou should'st know me,

Thou hast set spies on me. What! have they told thee
I am a wanton? I do love this man
As fits a virgin's heart. Heaven sent such thoughts
To be our solace. But to act a toy
For his loose hours, or worse, to find him one
Procured for mine, grateful for opportunities
Contrived with decency, spared skillfully
From claims more urgent; not to dare to show
Before the world my homage; when he's ill
To be away, and only share his gay
And lusty pillow; to be shut out from all
That multitude of cares and charms that waits
But on companionship; and then to feel
These joys another shares, another hand
These delicate rites performing, and thou'rt remembered,
In the serener heaven of his bliss,
But as the transient flash: this is not love;
This is pollution.

I:4:53 KING.

Daughter, I were pleased
My cousin could a nearer claim prefer
To my regard. Ay, girl, 'twould please me well
He were my son, thy husband; but what then?
My pleasure and his conduct jar; his fate
Baulks our desire. He's married and has heirs.

I:4:54 SOL.

Heirs, didst thou say heirs?

I:4:55 KING.

What ails thee?

I:4:56 SOL.

Heirs, heirs?

I:4:57 KING.

Thou art very pale!

I:4:58 SOL.

The faintness of the morn
Clings to me still; I pray thee, father, grant
Thy child one easy boon.

I:4:59 KING.

She has to speak
But what she wills.

I:4:60 SOL.

Why, then, she would renounce
Her heritage; yes, place our ancient crown
On brows it may become. A veil more suits
This feminine brain; in Huelgas' cloistered shades

I'll find oblivion.

I:4:61 KING.

Woe is me! The doom
Falls on our house. I had this daughter left
To lavish all my wealth on and my might.
I've treasured for her; for her I have slain
My thousands, conquered provinces, betrayed,
Renewed, and broken faith. She was my joy;
She has her mother's eyes, and when she speaks
Her voice is like Brunhilda's. Cursed hour,
That a wild fancy touched her brain to cross
All my great hopes!

I:4:62 SOL.

My father, my dear father,
Thou call'dst me fondly, but some moments past,
Thy gentle child. I call my saint to witness
I would be such. To say I love this man
Is shallow phrasing. Since man's image first
Flung its wild shadow on my virgin soul,
It has borne no other reflex. I know well
Thou deemest he was forgotten; this day's passion
Passed as unused confrontment, and so transient
As it was turbulent. No, no, full oft,
When thinking on him, I have been the same.
Fruitless or barren, this same form is his,
Or it is God's. My father, my dear father,
Remember he was mine, and thou didst pour
Thy blessing on our heads! O God, O God!
When I recall the passages of love
That have ensued between me and this man,
And with thy sanction, and then just bethink
He is another's, O it makes me mad.
Talk not to me of sceptres: can she rule
Whose mind is anarchy? King of Castille,
Give me the heart that thou didst rob me of!
The penal hour's at hand. Thou didst destroy
My love, and I will end thy line -- thy line
That is thy life.

I:4:63 KING.

Solisa, I will do all
A father can, -- a father and a King.

I:4:64 SOL.

Give me Alarcos!

I:4:65 KING.

Hush, disturb me not;
I'm in the throes of some imaginings
A human voice might scare.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE 1

A Street in Burgos.

[Enter the COUNT OF SIDONIA and the COUNT OF LEON.]

II:1:1 SIDO.
Is she not fair?

II:1:2 LEON.
What then? She but fulfils
Her office as a woman. For to be
A woman and not fair, is, in my creed,
To be a thing unsexed.

II:1:3 SIDO.
Happy Alarcos!
They say she was of Aquitaine, a daughter
Of the De Foix. I would I had been banished.

II:1:4 LEON.
Go and plot then. They cannot take your head,
For that is gone.

II:1:5 SIDO.
But banishment from Burgos
Were worse than fifty deaths. O, my good Leon,
Didst ever see, didst ever dream could be,
Such dazzling beauty?

II:1:6 LEON.
Dream! I never dream;
Save when I've revelled over late, and then
My visions are most villainous; but you,
You dream when you're awake.

II:1:7 SIDO.
Wert ever, Leon,
In pleasant Aquitaine?

II:1:8 LEON.
O talk of Burgos;

It is my only subject -- matchless town,
Where all I ask are patriarchal years
To feel satiety like my sad friend.

II:1:9 SIDO.

'Tis not satiety now makes me sad;
So check thy mocking tongue, or cure my cares.

II:1:10 LEON.

Absence cures love. Be off to Aquitaine.

II:1:11 SIDO.

I chose a jester for my friend, and feel
His value now.

II:1:12 LEON.

You share the lover's lot
When you desire and you despair. What then?
You know right well that woman is but one,
Though she take many forms, and can confound
The young with subtle aspects. Vanity
Is her sole being. Make the myriad vows
That passionate fancy prompts. At the next tourney
Maintain her colours 'gainst the two Castilles
And Aragon to boot. You'll have her!

II:1:13 SIDO.

Why!

This was the way I woo'd the haughty Lara,
But I'll not hold such passages approach
The gentle lady of this morn.

II:1:14 LEON.

Well, then,

Try silence, only sighs and hasty glances
Withdrawn as soon as met. Could'st thou but blush:
But there's no hope. In time our sighs become
A sort of plaintive hint what hopeless rogues
Our stars have made us. Would we had but met
Earlier, yet still we hope she'll spare a tear
To one she met too late. Trust me she'll spare it;
She'll save this sinner who reveres a saint.
Pity or admiration gains them all.
You'll have her!

II:1:15 SIDO.

Well, whate'er the course pursued,
Be thou a prophet!

[Enter ORAN.]

II:1:16 ORAN.

Stand, Senors, in God's name.

II:1:17 LEON.
Or the devil's.
Well, what do you want?

II:1:18 ORAN.
Many things, but one
Most principal.

II:1:19 SIDO.
And that's --

II:1:20 ORAN.
A friend.

II:1:21 LEON.
You're right
To seek one in the street, he'll prove as true
As any that you're fostered with.

II:1:22 ORAN.
In brief,
I'm as you see a Moor; and I have slain
One of our princes. Peace exists between
Our kingdom and Castille; they track my steps.
You're young, you should be brave, generous you may be.
I shall be impaled. Save me!

II:1:23 LEON.
Frankly spoken.
Will you turn Christian?

II:1:24 ORAN.
Show me Christian acts,
And they may prompt to Christian thoughts.

II:1:25 SIDO.
Although
The slain's an infidel, thou art the same.
The cause of this rash deed?

II:1:26 ORAN.
I am a soldier,
And my sword's notched, sirs. This said Emir struck me.
Before the people too, in the great square
Of our chief place, Granada, and forsooth,
Because I would not yield the way at mosque.
His life has soothed my honour: if I die,
I die content; but with your gracious aid
I would live happy.

II:1:27 LEON.
You love life?

II:1:28 ORAN.

Most dearly.

II:1:29 LEON.

Sensible Moor, although he be impaled
For mobbing in a mosque. I like this fellow;
His bearing suits my humour. He shall live
To do more murders. Come, bold infidel,
Follow to the Leon Palace; and, sir, prithee
Don't stab us in the back.

[Exeunt omnes.]

SCENE 2

Chamber in the Palace of COUNT ALARCOS.

At the back of the Scene the Curtains of a large Jalousie withdrawn.

[Enter COUNT ALARCOS.]

II:2:1 ALAR.

'Tis circumstance makes conduct; life's a ship,
The sport of every wind. And yet men tack
Against the adverse blast. How shall I steer,
Who am the pilot of Necessity?
But whether it be fair or foul, I know not;
Sunny or terrible. Why let her wed him?
What care I if the pageant's weight may fall
On Hungary's ermined shoulders, if the spring
Of all her life be mine? The tair'd brow
Alone makes not a King. Would that my wife
Confessed a worldlier mood! Her recluse fancy
Haunts still our castled bowers. Then civic air
Inflame her thoughts! Teach her to vie and revel,
Find sport in peerless robes, the pomp of feasts
And ambling of a genet --

[A serenade is heard.]

Hah! that voice
Should not be strange. A tribute to her charms.
'Tis music sweeter to a spouse's ear
Than gallants dream of. Ay, she'll find adorers.
Or Burgos is right changed.

[Enter the COUNTESS.]

Listen, child.

[Again the serenade is heard.]

II:2:2 COUN.
'Tis very sweet.

II:2:3 ALAR.
It is inspired by thee.

II:2:4 COUN.
Alarcos!

II:2:5 ALAR.
Why dost look so grave? Nay, now,
There's not a dame in Burgos would not give
Her jewels for such songs.

II:2:6 COUN.
Inspired by me!

II:2:7 ALAR.
And who so fit to fire a lover's breast?
He's clearly captive.

II:2:8 COUN.
O! thou knowest I love not
Such jests, Alarcos.

II:2:9 ALAR.
Jest! I do not jest.
I am right proud the partner of my state
Should count the chief of our Castillian knights
Among her train.

II:2:10 COUN.
I pray thee let me close
These blinds.

II:2:11 ALAR.
Poh, poh! what, baulk a serenade?
'Twould be an outrage to the courtesies
Of this great city. Faith! his voice is sweet.

II:2:12 COUN.
Would that he had not sung! It is a sport
In which I find no pastime.

II:2:13 ALAR.
Marry, come,
It gives me great delight. 'Tis well for thee,
On thy first entrance to our world, to find
So high a follower.

II:2:14 COUN.

Wherefore should I need
His following?

II:2:15 ALAR.

Nought's more excellent for woman,
Than to be fixed on as the cynosure
Of one whom all do gaze on. 'Tis a stamp
Whose currency, not wealth, rank, blood, can match;
These are raw ingots, till they are impressed
With fashion's picture.

II:2:16 COUN.

Would I were once more
Within our castle!

II:2:17 ALAR.

Nursery days! The world
Is now our home, and we must worldly be,
Like its bold stirrers. I sup with the King.
There is no feast, and yet to do me honour,
Some chiefs will meet. I stand right well at Court,
And with thine aid will stand e'en better.

II:2:18 COUN.

Mine!
I have no joy but in thy joy, no thought
But for thy honour, and yet, how to aid
Thee in these plans or hopes, indeed, Alarcos,
Indeed, I am perplexed.

II:2:19 ALAR.

Art not my wife?
Is not this Burgos? And this pile, the palace
Of my great fathers? They did raise these halls
To be the symbols of their high estate,
The fit and haught metropolis of all
Their force and faction. Fill them, fill them, wife,
With those who'll serve me well. Make this the centre
Of all that's great in Burgos. Let it be
The eye of the town, whereby we may perceive
What passes in his heart: the clustering point
Of all convergence. Here be troops of friends
And ready instruments. Wear that sweet smile,
That wins a partisan quicker than power;
Speak in that tone gives each a special share
In thy regard, and what is general
Let all deem private. O! thou'lt play it rarely.

II:2:20 COUN.

I would do all that may become thy wife.

II:2:21 ALAR.

I know it, I know it. Thou art a treasure, Florimonde,
And this same singer -- thou hast not asked his name.
Didst guess it? Ah! upon thy gentle cheek
I see a smile.

II:2:22 COUN.

My lord -- indeed --

II:2:23 ALAR.

Thou playest
Thy game less like a novice than I deemed.
Thou canst not say thou didst not catch the voice
Of the Sidonia?

II:2:24 COUN.

My good lord, indeed
His voice to me is as unknown as mine
Must be to him.

II:2:25 ALAR.

Whose should the voice but his,
Whose stricken sight left not thy face an instant,
But gazed as if some new-born star had risen
To light his way to paradise? I tell thee,
Among my strict confederates I would count
This same young noble. He is a paramount chief;
Perchance his vassals might outnumber mine,
Conjoined we're adamant. No monarch's breath
Makes me again an exile. Florimonde,
Smile on him; smiles cost nothing; should he judge
They mean more than they say, why smile again;
And what he deems affection, registered,
Is but chaste Mockery. I must to the citadel.
Sweet wife, good-night.

[Exit ALARCOS.]

II:2:26 COUN.

O! misery, misery, misery!
Must we do this? I fear there's need we must,
For he is wise in all things, and well learned
In this same world that to my simple sense
Seems very fearful. Why should men rejoice,
They can escape from the pure breath of heaven
And the sweet franchise of their natural will,
To such a prison-house? To be confined
In body and in soul; to breathe the air
Of dark close streets, and never use one's tongue
But for some measured phrase that hath its bent
Well gauged and chartered; to find ready smiles
When one is sorrowful, or looks demure
When one would laugh outright. Never to be

Exact but when dissembling. Is this life?
I dread this city. As I passed its gates
My litter stumbled, and the children shrieked
And clung unto my bosom. Pretty babes!
I'll go to them. O! there is innocence
Even in Burgos.

[Exit COUNTESS.]

SCENE 3

A Chamber in the Royal Palace. The INFANTA SOLISA alone.

II:3:1 SOL.

I can but think my father will be just
And see us righted. O 'tis only honest,
The hand that did this wrong should now supply
The sovereign remedy, and balm the wound
Itself inflicted. He is with him now;
Would I were there, unseen, yet seeing all!
But ah! no cunning arras could conceal
This throbbing heart. I've sent my little Page,
To mingle with the minions of the Court,
And get me news. How he doth look, bow eat,
What says he and what does, and all the haps
Of this same night, that yet to me may bring
A cloudless morrow. See, even now he comes.

[Enter the PAGE.]

Prithee what news? Now tell me all, my child,
When thou'rt a knight, will I not work the scarf
For thy first tourney! Prithee tell me all.

II:3:2 PAGE.

O lady mine, the royal Seneschal
He was so crabbed, I did scarcely deem
I could have entered.

II:3:3 SOL.

Cross-grained Seneschal!
He shall repent of this, my pretty Page;
But thou didst enters?

II:3:4 PAGE.

I did so contrive.

II:3:5 SOL.

Rare imp! And then?

II:3:6 PAGE.

Well, as you told me, then
I mingled with the Pages of the King.
They're not so very tall; I might have passed
I think for one upon a holiday.

II:3:7 SOL.

O thou shalt pass for better than a page
But tell me, child, didst see my gallant Count?

II:3:8 PAGE.

On the right hand --

II:3:9 SOL.

Upon the King's right hand?

II:3:10 PAGE.

Upon the King's right hand, and there were also --

II:3:11 SOL.

Mind not the rest; thou'rt sure on the right hand?

II:3:12 PAGE.

Most sure; and on the left --

II:3:13 SOL.

Ne'er mind the left,
Speak only of the right. How did he seem?
Did there pass words between him and the King?
Often or scant? Did he seem gay or grave?
Or was his aspect of a middle tint,
As if he deemed that there were other joys
Not found within that chamber?

II:3:14 PAGE.

Sooth to say,
He did seem what he is, a gallant knight.
Would I were such! For talking with the King,
He spoke, yet not so much but he could spare
Words to the other lords. He often smiled,
Yet not so often, that a limner might
Describe his mien as jovial.

II:3:15 SOL.

'Tis himself!
What next? Will they sit long?

II:3:16 PAGE.

I should not like
Myself to quit such company. In truth,
The Count of Leon is a merry lord.

There were some tilting jests, I warrant you,
Between him and your knight.

II:3:17 SOL.
O tell it me!

II:3:18 PAGE.
The Count Alarcos, as I chanced to hear,
For tiptoe even would not let me see,
And that same Pedro, who has lately come
To Court, the Senor of Montilla's son,
He is so rough, and says a lady's page
Should only be where there are petticoats.

II:3:19 SOL.
Is he so rough? He shall be soundly whipped.
But tell me, child, the Count Alarcos --

II:3:20 PAGE.
Well,
The Count Alarcos -- but indeed, sweet lady,
I do not wish that Pedro should be whipped.

II:3:21 SOL.
He shall not then be whipped -- speak of the Count.

II:3:22 PAGE.
The Count was showing how your Saracen
Doth take your lion captive, thus and thus:
And fashioned with his scarf a dexterous noose
Made of a tiger's skin: your unicorn,
They say, is just as good.

II:3:23 SOL.
Well, then Sir Leon --

II:3:24 PAGE.
Why then your Count of Leon -- but just then
Sancho, the Viscount of Toledo's son,
The King's chief Page, takes me his handkerchief
And binds it on my eyes, he whispering round
Unto his fellows, here you see I've caught
A most ferocious cub. Whereat they kicked,
And pinched, and cuffed me till I nearly roared
As fierce as any lion, you be sure.

II:3:25 SOL.
Rude Sancho, he shall sure be sent from Court!
My little Ferdinand -- thou hast incurred
Great perils for thy mistress. Go again
And show this signet to the Seneschal,
And tell him that no greater courtesy
Be shown to any guest than to my Page.

This from myself -- or I perchance will send,
Shall school their pranks. Away, my faithful imp,
And tell me how the Count Alarcos seems.

II:3:26 PAGE.

I go, sweet lady, but I humbly beg
Sancho may not be sent from Court this time.

II:3:27 SOL.

Sancho shall stay.

[Exit PAGE.]

I hope, ere long, sweet child,
Thou too shalt be a page unto a King.
I'm glad Alarcos smiled not overmuch;
Your smilers please me not. I love a face
Pensive, not sad; for where the mood is thoughtful,
The passion is most deep and most refined.
Gay tempers bear light hearts -- are soonest gained
And soonest lost; but he who meditates
On his own nature, will as deeply scan
The mind he meets, and when he loves, he casts
His anchor deep.

[Re-enter PAGE.]

Give me the news.

II:3:28 PAGE.

The news!
I could not see the Seneschal, but gave
Your message to the Pages. Whereupon
Sancho, the Viscount of Toledo's son,
Pedro, the Senor of Montilla's son,
The young Count of Almeira, and --

II:3:29 SOL.

My child,
What ails thee?

II:3:30 PAGE.

O the Viscount of Jodar,
I think he was the very worst of all;
But Sancho of Toledo was the first.

II:3:31 SOL.

What did they?

II:3:32 PAGE.

'Las, no sooner did I say
All that you told me, than he gives the word,
'A guest, a guest, a very potent guest,'

Takes me a goblet brimful of strong wine
And hands it to me, mocking, on his knee.
This I decline, when on his back they lay
Your faithful Page, nor set me on my legs
Till they had drenched me with this fiery stuff,
That I could scarcely see, or reel my way
Back to your presence.

II:3:33 SOL.

Marry, 'tis too much
E'en for a page's license. Ne'er you mind,
They shall to Prison by to-morrow's dawn.
I'll bind this kerchief round your brow, its scent
Will much revive you. Go, child, lie you down
On yonder couch.

II:3:34 PAGE.

I'm sure I ne'er can sleep
If Sancho of Toledo shall be sent
To-morrow's dawn to prison.

II:3:35 SOL.

Well, he's pardoned.

II:3:36 PAGE.

Also the Senor of Montilla's son,

II:3:37 SOL.

He shall be pardoned too. Now prithee sleep.

II:3:38 PAGE.

The young Count of Almeira --

II:3:39 SOL.

O no more.
They all are pardoned.

II:3:40 PAGE.

I do humbly pray
The Viscount of Jodar be pardoned too.

[Exit SOLISA.]

SCENE 4

A Banquet; the KING seated; on his right ALARCOS.
SIDONIA, LEON, the ADMIRAL OF CASTILLE, and other LORDS.
Groups of PAGES, CHAMBERLAINS, and SERVING-MEN.

II:4:1 The KING.
Would'st match them, cousin, 'gainst our barbs?

II:4:2 ALAR.
Against
Our barbs, Sir!

II:4:3 KING.
Eh, Lord Leon, you can scan
A courser's points?

II:4:4 LEON.
O, Sir, your travellers
Need fleeter steeds than we poor shambling folks
Who stay at home. To my unskilful sense,
Speed for the chase and vigour for the tilt,
Meseems enough.

II:4:5 ALAR.'
If riders be as prompt.

II:4:6 LEON.
Our tourney is put off, or please your Grace,
I'd try conclusions with this marvellous beast,
This Pegasus, this courser of the sun,
That is to blind us all with his bright rays
And cloud our chivalry.

II:4:7 KING.
My Lord Sidonia,
You're a famed judge: try me this Cyprus wine;
An English prince did give it me, returning
From the holy sepulchre.

II:4:8 SIDO.
Most rare, my liege,
And glitters like a gem!

II:4:9 KING.
It doth content
Me much, your Cyprus wine. Lord Admiral,
Hast heard the news? The Saracens have fled
Before the Italian galleys.

II:4:10 THE ADMIRAL OF CASTILLE.
No one guides
A galley like your Pisan.

II:4:11 ALAR.
The great Doge
Of Venice, sooth, would barely veil his flag
To Pisa.

II:4:12 ADM.
Your Venetian hath his craft.
This Saracenic rent will surely touch
Our turbaned neighbours?

II:4:13 KING.
To the very core,
Granada's all a-mourning. Good, my Lords,
One goblet more. We'll give our cousin's health.
Here's to the Count Alarcos.

II:4:14 OMNES.
To the Count Alarcos.

[The Guests rise, pay their homage to the KING, and are retiring.]

II:4:15 KING.
Good night, Lord Admiral; my Lord of Leon,
My Lord Sidonia, and my Lord of Lara,
Gentle adieus; to you, my Lord, and you,
To all and each. Cousin, good night -- and yet
A moment rest awhile; since your return
I've looked on you in crowds, it may become us
To say farewell alone.

[The KING waves his hand to the SENESCHAL -- the Chamber is cleared.]

II:4:16 ALAR.
Most gracious Sire,
You honour your poor servant.

II:4:17 KING.
Prithee, sit.
This scattering of the Saracen, methinks,
Will hold the Moor to his truce?

II:4:18 ALAR.
It would appear
To have that import.

II:4:19 KING.
Should he pass the mountains,
We can receive him.

II:4:20 ALAR.
Where's the crown in Spain
More prompt and more prepared?

II:4:21 KING.
Cousin, you're right.
We flourish. By St. James, I feel a glow
Of the heart to see you here once more, my cousin;

I'm low in the vale of years, and yet I think
I could defend my crown with such a knight
On my right hand.

II:4:22 ALAR.

Such liege and land would raise
Our lances high.

II:4:23 KING.

We carry all before us.
Leon reduced. the crescent paled in Cordova,
Why, if she gain Valencia, Aragon
Must kick the beam. And shall she gain Valencia?
It cheers my blood to find thee by my side;
Old days, old days return, when thou to me
Wert as the apple of mine eye.

II:4:24 ALAR.

My liege,
This is indeed most gracious.

II:4:25 KING.

Gentle cousin,
Thou shalt have pause to say that I am gracious.
O! I did ever love thee; and for that
Some passages occurred between us once,
That touch my memory to the quick; I would
Even pray thee to forget them, and to hold
I was most vilely practised on, my mind
Poisoned, and from a fountain, that to deem
Tainted were frenzy.

II:4:26 ALAR.

[Falling on his knee, and taking the KING's hand.]

My most gracious liege,
This morn to thee I did my fealty pledge.
Believe me, Sire, I did so with clear breast,
And with no thought to thee and to thy line
But fit devotion.

II:4:27 KING.

O, I know it well,
I know thou art right true. Mine eyes are moist
To see thee here again.

II:4:28 ALAR.

It is my post,
Nor could I seek another.

II:4:29 KING.

Thou dost know

That Hungary leaves us?

II:4:30 ALAR.

I was grieved to hear
There were some crosses.

II:4:31 KING.

Truth, I am not grieved.
Is it such joy this fair Castillian realm,
This glowing flower of Spain, be rudely plucked
By a strange hand? To see our chambers filled
With foreign losels; our rich fiefs and abbeys
The prey of each bold scatterling, that finds
No heirship in his country? Have I lived
And laboured for this end, to swell the sails
Of alien fortunes? O my gentle cousin,
There was a time we had far other hopes!
I suffer for my deeds.

II:4:32 ALAR.

We must forget,
We must forget, my liege.

II:4:33 KING.

Is't then so easy?
Thou hast no daughter. Ah! thou canst not tell
What 'tis to feel a father's policy
Hath dimmed a child's career. A child so peerless!
Our race, though ever comely, veiled to her.
A palm tree in its pride of sunny youth
Mates not her symmetry; her step was noticed
As strangely stately by her nurse. Dost know,
I ever deemed that winning smile of hers
Mournful, with all its mirth? But ah! no more
A father gossips; nay, my weakness 'tis not.
'Tis not with all that I would prattle thus;
But you, my cousin, know Solisa well,
And once you loved her.

II:4:34 ALAR.

[Rising.]

Once! O God!
Such passions are eternity.

II:4:35 KING.

[Advancing.]

What then,
Shall this excelling creature, on a throne
As high as her deserts, shall she become

A spoil for strangers? Have I cause to grieve
That Hungary quit us? O that I could find
Some noble of our land might dare to mix
His equal blood with our Castillian seed!
Art thou more learned in our pedigrees?
Hast thou no friend, no kinsman? Must this realm
Fall to the spoiler, and a foreign graft
Be nourished by our sap?

II:4:36 ALAR.

Alas! alas!

II:4:37 KING.

Four crowns; our paramount Castille, and Leon,
Seviglia, Cordova, the future hope
Of Murcia, and the inevitable doom
That waits the Saracen; all, all, all;
And with my daughter!

II:4:38 ALAR.

Ah! ye should have blasted
My homeward path, ye lightnings!

II:4:39 KING.

Such a son
Should grudge his sire no days. I would not live
To whet ambition's appetite. I'm old;
And fit for little else than hermit thoughts.
The day that gives my daughter, gives my crown:
A cell's my home.

II:4:40 ALAR.

O, life, I will not curse thee
Let hard and shaven crowns denounce thee vain;
To me thou wert no shade! I loved thy stir
And panting struggle. Power, and pomp, and beauty
Cities and courts, the palace and the fane,
The chace, the revel, and the battle-field,
Man's fiery glance, and woman's thrilling smile,
I loved ye all. I curse not thee, O life!
But on my start; confusion. May they fall
From out their spheres, and blast our earth no more
With their malignant rays, that mocking placed
All the delight of life within my reach,
And chained me from fruition.

II:4:41 KING.

Gentle cousin,
Thou art disturbed; I fear these words of mine,
Chance words ere I did say to thee good night,
For O, 'twas joy to see thee here again,
Who art my kinsman, and my only one,
Have touched on some old cares for both of us.

And yet the world has many charms for thee;
Thou'rt not like us, and thy unhappy child
The world esteems so favoured.

II:4:42 ALAR.

Ah, the world
Ill estimates the truth of any lot.
Their speculation is too far and reaches
Only externals, they are ever fair.
There are vile cankers in your gaudiest flowers,
But you must pluck and peer within the leaves
To catch the pest.

II:4:43 KING.

Alas! my gentle cousin,
To hear thou hast thy sorrows too, like us,
It pains me much, and yet I'll not believe it,
For with so fair a wife --

II:4:44 ALAR.

Torture me not,
Although thou art a King.

II:4:45 KING.

My gentle cousin,
I spoke to solace thee. We all do hear
Thou art most favoured in a right fair wife.
We do desire to see her; can she find
A friend becomes her better than our child?

II:4:46 ALAR.

My wife? would she were not!

II:4:47 KING.

I say so too,
Would she were not!

II:4:48 ALAR.

Ah me! why did I marry?

II:4:49 KING.

Truth, it was very rash.

II:4:50 ALAR.

Who made me rash?
Who drove me from my hearth, and sent me forth
On the unkindred earth? With the dark spleen
Goading injustice, that 'tis vain to quell,
Entails on restless spirits. Yes, I married,
As men do oft, from very wantonness;
To tamper with a destiny that's cross,
To spite my fate, to put the seal upon
A balked career, in high and proud defiance

Of hopes that yet might mock me, to beat down
False expectation and its damned lures,
And fix a bar betwixt me and defeat.

II:4:51 KING.
These bitter words would rob me of my hope,
That thou at least wert happy.

II:4:52 ALAR.
Would I slept
With my grey fathers!

II:4:53 KING.
And my daughter too!
O most unhappy pair!

II:4:54 ALAR.
There is a way.
To cure such woes, one only.

II:4:55 KING.
'Tis my thought.

II:4:56 ALAR.
No cloister shall entomb this life; the grave
Shall be my refuge,

II:4:57 KING.
Yet to die were witless,
When Death, who with his fatal finger taps
At princely doors, as freely as he gives
His summons to the serf, may at this instant
Have sealed the only life that throws a shade
Between us and the sun.

II:4:58 ALAR.
She's very young.

II:4:59 KING.
And may live long, as I do hope she will;
Yet have I known as blooming as she die,
And that most suddenly. The air of cities
To unaccustomed lungs is very fatal;
Perchance the absence of her accustomed sports,
The presence of strange faces, and a longing
For those she has been bred among: I've known
This most pernicious: she might droop and pine,
And when they fail, they sink most rapidly.
God grant she may not; yet I do remind thee
Of this wild chance, when speaking of thy lot.
In truth 'tis sharp, and yet I would not die
When Time, the great enchanter, may change all,
By bringing somewhat earlier to thy gate

A doom that must arrive.

II:4:60 ALAR.

Would it were there!

II:4:61 KING.

'Twould be the day thy hand should clasp my daughter's,
That thou hast loved so lon; 'twould be the day
My crown, the crown of all my realms, Alarcos,
Should bind thy royal brow. Is this the morn
Breaks in our chamber? Why, I did but mean
To say good night unto my gentle cousin
So long unseen. O, we have gossiped, coz,
So cheering dreams!

[Exeunt.]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

SCENE 1

Interior of the Cathedral of Burgos.

The High Altar illuminated;

in the distance, various Chapels lighted, and in each of which Mass is
celebrating:

in all directions groups of kneeling Worshippers.

Before the High Altar the Prior of Burgos officiates, attended by his
Sacerdotal Retinue.

In the front of the Stage, opposite to the Audience, a Confessional.

The chanting of a solemn Mass here commences; as it ceases,

[Enter ALARCOS.]

III:1:1 ALAR.

Would it were done! and yet I dare not say
It should be done. O, that some natural cause,
Or superhuman agent, would step in,
And save me from its practice! Will no pest
Descend upon her blood? Must thousands die
Daily, and her charmed life be spared? As young
Are hourly plucked from out their hearths. A life!
Why, what's a life? A loan that must return
To a capricious creditor; recalled
Often as soon as lent. I'd wager mine

To-morrow like the dice, were my blood pricked.
Yet now,
When all that endows life with all its price,
Hangs on some flickering breath I could puff out,
I stand agape. I'll dream 'tis done: what then?
Mercy remains? For ever, not for ever
I charge my soul? Will no contrition ransom,
Or expiatory torments compensate
The awful penalty? Ye kneeling worshippers,
That gaze in silent ecstasy before
Yon flaming altar, you come here to bow
Before a God of mercy. Is't not so?

[ALARCOS walks towards the High Altar and kneels.]

[A Procession advances front the back of the Scene, singing a solemn Mass,
and preceding the Prior of Burgos, who seats himself in the Confessional
his Train filing of on each side of the Scene:
the lights of the High Altar are extinguished,
but the Chapels remain illuminated.]

III:1:2 THE PRIOR.

Within this chair I sit, and hold the keys
That open realms no conqueror can subdue,
And where the monarchs of the earth must fain
Solicit to be subjects: Heaven and Hades,
Lands of Immortal light and shores of gloom.
Eternal as the chorus of their wail,
And the dim isthmus of that middle space,
Where the compassioned soul may purge its sins
In pious expiation. Then advance
Ye children of all sorrows, and all sins,
Doubts that perplex, and hopes that tantalize,
All the wild forms the fiend Temptation takes
To tamper with the soul! Come with the care
That eats your daily life; come with the thought
That is conceived in the noon of night,
And makes us stare around us though alone;
Come with the engendering sin, and with the crime
That is full-born. To counsel and to soothe,
I sit within this chair.

[ALARCOS advances and kneels by the Confessional.]

III:1:3 ALAR.

O, holy father
My soul is burthened with a crime.

III:1:4 PRIOR.

My son,
The church awaits thy sin.

III:1:5 ALAR.

It is a sin
Most black and terrible. Prepare thine ear
For what must make it tremble.

III:1:6 PRIOR.

Thou dost speak
To Power above all passion, not to man.

III:1:7 ALAR.

There was a lady, father, whom I loved,
And with a holy love, and she loved me
As holily. Our vows were blessed, if favour
Hang on a father's benediction.

III:1:8 PRIOR.

Her
Mother?

III:1:9 ALAR.

She had a mother, if to bear
Children be all that makes a mother: one
Who looked on me, about to be her child,
With eyes of lust.

III:1:10 PRIOR.

And thou?

III:1:11 ALAR.

O, if to trace
But with the memory's too veracious aid
This tale be anguish, what must be its life
And terrible action? Father, I abjured
This lewd she-wolf. But ah! her fatal vengeance
Struck to my heart. A banished scatterling
I wandered on the earth.

III:1:12 PRIOR.

Thou didst return?

III:1:13 ALAR.

And found the being that I loved, and found
Her faithful still.

III:1:14 PRIOR.

And thou, my son, wert happy?

III:1:15 ALAR.

Alas! I was no longer free. Strange ties
Had bound a hopeless exile. But she I had loved,
And never ceased to love, for in the form,
Not in the spirit was her faith more pure,
She looked upon me with a glance that told
Her death but in my love. I struggled, nay,

'Twas not a struggle, 'twas an agony.
Her aged sire, her dark impending doom,
And the overwhelming passion of my soul:
My wife died suddenly.

III:1:16 PRIOR.

And by a life
That should have shielded hers?

III:1:17 ALAR.

Is there hope of mercy?
Can prayers, can penances, can they avail?
What consecration of my wealth, for I'm rich,
Can aid me? Can it aid me? Can endowments?
Nay, set no bounds to thy unlimited schemes
Of saving charity. Can shrines, can chauntries,
Monastic piles, can they avail? What if
I raise a temple not less proud than this,
Enriched with all my wealth, with all, with all?
Will endless masses, will eternal prayers,
Redeem me from perdition?

III:1:18 PRIOR.

What, would gold
Redeem the sin it prompted?

III:1:19 ALAR.

No, by Heaven!
No, Fate had dowered me with wealth might feed
All but a royal hunger.

III:1:20 PRIOR.

And alone
Thy fatal passion urged thee

III:1:21 ALAR.

Hah!

III:1:22 PRIOR.

Probe deep
Thy wounded soul.

III:1:23 ALAR.

'Tis torture: fathomless
I feel the fell incision.

III:1:24 PRIOR.

There is a lure
Thou dost not own, and yet its awful shade
Lowers in the back-ground of thy soul: thy tongue
Trifles the church's ear. Beware, my son,
And tamper not with Paradise.

III:1:25 ALAR.

A breath,
A shadow, essence subtler far than love:
And yet I loved her, and for love had dared
All that I ventured for this twin-born lure
Cradled with love, for which I soiled my soul.
O, father, it was Power.

III:1:26 PRIOR.

And this dominion
Purchased by thy soul's mortgage, still is't thine?

III:1:27 ALAR.

Yea, thousands bow to him, who bows to thee.

III:1:28 PRIOR.

Thine is a fearful deed.

III:1:29 ALAR.

O, is there mercy?

III:1:30 PRIOR.

Say, is there penitence?

III:1:31 ALAR.

How shall I gauge it?
What temper of contrition might the church
Require from such a sinner?

III:1:32 PRIOR.

Is't thy wish,
Nay, search the very caverns of thy thought,
Is it thy wish this deed were now undone?

III:1:33 ALAR.

Undone, undone! It is; O, say it were,
And what am I? O, father, wer't not done,
I should not be less tortured than I'm now;
My life less like a dream of haunting thoughts
Tempting to unknown enormities. The sun
Would rise as beamless on my darkened days,
Night proffer the same torments. Food would fly
My lips the same, and the same restless blood
Quicken my harassed limbs. Undone! undone!
I have no metaphysic faculty
To deem this deed undone.

III:1:34 PRIOR.

Thou must repent
This terrible deed. Look through thy heart. Thy wife,
There was a time thou lov'dst her?

III:1:35 ALAR.

I'll not think
There was a time.

III:1:36 PRIOR.
And was she fair?

III:1:37 ALAR.
A form
Dazzling all eyes but mine.

III:1:38 PRIOR.
And pure?

III:1:39 ALAR.
No saint
More chaste than she. Her consecrated shape
She kept as 'twere a shrine, and just as full
Of holy thoughts; her very breath was incense,
And all her gestures sacred as the forms
Of priestly offices!

III:1:40 PRIOR.
I'll save thy soul.
Thou must repent that one so fair and pure,
And loving thee so well --

III:1:41 ALAR.
Father, in vain.
There is a bar betwixt me and repentance.
And yet --

III:1:42 PRIOR.
Ay, yet --

III:1:43 ALAR.
The day may come, I'll kneel
In such a mood, and might there then be hope?

III:1:44 PRIOR.
We hold the keys that bind and loosen all:
But penitence alone is mercy's portal.
The obdurate soul is doomed. Remorseful tears
Are sinners' sole ablution. O, my son,
Bethink thee yet, to die in sin like thine;
Eternal masses profit not thy soul,
Thy consecrated wealth will but upraise
The monument of thy despair. Once more,
Ere yet the vesper lights shall fade away,
I do adjure thee, on the church's bosom
Pour forth thy contrite heart.

III:1:45 ALAR.
A contrite heart!

A stainless hand would count for more. I see
No drops on mine. My head is weak, my heart
A wilderness of passion. Prayers, thy prayers!

[ALARCOS rises suddenly and exit.]

SCENE 2

Chamber in the Royal Palace.

The INFANTA seated in despondency; the KING standing by her side.

III:2:1 KING.
Indeed, 'tis noticed.

III:2:2 SOL.
Solitude is all
I ask; and is it then so great a boon?

III:2:3 KING.
Nay, solitude's no princely appanage.
Our state's a pedestal, which men have raised
That they may gaze on greatness.

III:2:4 SOL.
A false idol,
And weaker than its worshippers. I've lived
To feel my station's vanity. O, Death,
Thou endest all!

III:2:5 KING.
Thou art too young to die,
And yet may be too happy. Moody youth
Toys in its talk with the dark thought of death,
As if to die were but to change a robe.
It is their present refuge for all cares
And each disaster. When the sere has touched
Their flowing locks, they prattle less of death,
Perchance think more of it.

III:2:6 SOL.
Why, what is greatness?
Will't give me love, or faith, or tranquil thoughts?
No, no, not even justice.

III:2:7 KING.
'Tis thyself
That does thyself injustice. Let the world

Have other speculation than the breach
Of our unfilled vows. They bear too near
And fine affinity to what we would,
Ay, what we will. I would not choose this moment,
Men brood too curiously upon the cause
Of the late rupture, for the cause detected
May bar the consequence.

III:2:8 SOL.

A day, an hour
Sufficed to crush me. Weeks and weeks pass on
Since I was promised right.

III:2:9 KING.

Take thou my sceptre
And do thyself this right. Is't, then, so easy?

III:2:10 SOL.

Let him who did the wrong, contrive the means
Of his atonement.

III:2:11 KING.

All a father can,
I have performed.

III:2:12 SOL.

Ah! then there is no hope.
The Bishop of Ossuna, you did say
He was the learnedest clerk of Christendom,
And you would speak to him?

III:2:13 KING.

What says Alarcos?

III:2:14 SOL.

I spoke not to him since I first received
His princely pledge.

III:2:15 KING.

Call on him to fulfil it.

III:2:16 SOL.

Can he do more than kings?

III:2:17 KING.

Yes, he alone;
Alone it rests with him. This learn from me.
There is no other let.

III:2:18 SOL.

I learn from thee
What other lips should tell me.

III:2:19 KING.

Girl, art sure
Of this same lover?

III:2:20 SOL.

O! I'll never doubt him.

III:2:21 KING.

And yet may be deceived.

III:2:22 SOL.

He is as true
As talismanic steel.

III:2:23 KING.

Why, then thou art,
At least thou should'st be, happy. Smile, Solisa;
For since the Count is true, there is no bar.
Why dost not smile?

III:2:24 SOL.

I marvel that Alarcos
Hath been so mute on this.

III:2:25 KING.

But thou art sure
He is most true.

III:2:26 SOL.

Why should I deem him true?
Have I found truth in any? Woe is me,
I feel as one quite doomed. I know not why
I ever was ill-omened.

III:2:27 KING.

Listen, girl;
Probe this same lover to the core; 't may be,
I think he is, most true; he should be so
If there be faith in vows, and men ne'er break
The pledge its profits them to keep. And yet --

III:2:28 SOL.

And what?

III:2:29 KING.

To be his Sovereign's cherished friend,
And smiled on by the daughter of his King,
Why that might profit him, and please so much,
His wife's ill humour might be borne withal.

III:2:30 SOL.

You think him false?

III:2:31 KING.

I think he might be true:
But when a man's well placed, he loves not change.

[Enter at the back of the Scene Count ALARCOS disguised.
He advances, dropping his Hat and Cloak.]

Ah, gentle cousin, all our thoughts were thine.

III:2:32 ALAR.

I marvel men should think. Lady, I'll hope
Thy thoughts are like thyself, most fair.

III:2:33 KING.

Her thoughts
Are like her fortunes, lofty, but around
The peaks cling vapours.

III:2:34 ALAR.

Eagles live in clouds,
And they draw royal breath.

III:2:35 KING.

I'd have her quit,
This strange seclusion, cousin. Give thine aid
To festive purposes.

III:2:36 ALAR.

A root, an egg,
Why there's a feast with a holy mind.

III:2:37 KING.

If ever
I find my seat within a hermitage,
I'll think the same.

III:2:38 ALAR.

You have built shrines, sweet lady?

III:2:39 SOL.

What then, my lord?

III:2:40 ALAR.

Why then you might be worshipped,
If your image were in front; I'd bow down
To anything so fair.

III:2:41 KING.

Dost know, my cousin,
Who waits me now? The deputies from Murcia.
The realm is ours,

[whispers him]

is thine.

III:2:42 ALAR.

The church has realms
Wider than both Castilles. But which of them
Will be our lot; that's it.

III:2:43 KING.

Mine own Solisa,
They wait me in my cabinet;

[aside to her]

Bethink thee
With whom all rests.

[Exit the KING.]

III:2:44 SOL.

You had sport to-day, my lord?
The King was at the chace.

III:2:45 ALAR.

I breathed my barb.

III:2:46 SOL.

They say the chace hath charm to cheer the spirit,

III:2:47 ALAR.

'Tis better than prayers.

III:2:48 SOL.

Indeed, I think I'll hunt.
You and my father seem so passing gay.

III:2:49 ALAR.

Why this is no confessional, no shrine
Haunted with presaged gloom. I should be gay
To look at thee and listen to thy voice;
For if fair pictures and sweet sounds enchant
The soul of man, that are but artifice,
How then am I entranced, this living picture
Bright by my side, and listening to this music
That nature gave thee. What's eternal life
To this inspired mortality! Let priests
And pontiffs thunder, still I feel that here
Is all my joy.

III:2:50 SOL.

Ah! why not say thy woe?
Who stands between thee and thy rights but me?
Who stands between thee and thine ease but me?

Who bars thy progress, brings thee cares, but me?
Lures thee to impossible contracts, goads thy faith
To mad performance, welcomes thee with sighs,
And parts from them with tears? Is this joy? No!
I am thine evil genius.

III:2:51 ALAR.

Say my star
Of inspiration. This reality
Baffles their mystic threats. Who talks of cares?
Why, what's a Prince, if his imperial will
Be bitted by a priest! There's nought impossible.
Thy sighs are sighs of love, and all thy tears
But affluent tenderness.

III:2:52 SOL.

You sing as sweet
As did the syrens; is it from the heart,
Or from the lips, that voice?

III:2:53 ALAR.

Solisa!

III:2:54 SOL.

Ay!
My ear can catch a treacherous tone; 'tis trained
To perfidy. My Lord Alarcos, look me
Straight in the face. He quails not.

III:2:55 ALAR.

O my soul,
Is this the being for whose love I've pledged
Even thy forfeit!

III:2:56 SOL.

Alarcos, dear Alarcos,
Look not so stern! I'm mad; yes, yes, my life
Upon thy truth; I know thou'rt true: he said
It rested but with thee; I said it not,
Nor thought it.

III:2:57 ALAR.

Lady!

III:2:58 SOL.

Not that voice!

III:2:59 ALAR.

I'll know
Thy thought; the King hath spoken?

III:2:60 SOL.

Words of joy

And madness. With thyself alone he says
It rests.

III:2:61 ALAR.
Nor said he more?

III:2:62 SOL.
It had found me deaf,
For he touched hearings quick.

III:2:63 ALAR.
Thy faith in me
Hath gone.

III:2:64 SOL.
I'll doubt our shrined miracles
Before I doubt Alarcos.

III:2:65 ALAR.
He'll believe thee,
For at this moment he has much to endure,
And that he could not.

III:2:66 SOL.
And yet I must choose
This time to vex thee. O, I am the curse
And blight of the existence, which to bless
Is all my thought! Alarcos, dear Alarcos,
I pray thee pardon me. I am so wretched:
This fell suspense is like a frightful dream
Wherein we fall from heights, yet never reach
The bottomless abyss. It wastes my spirit,
Wears down my life, gnaws ever at my heart,
Makes my brain quick when others are asleep,
And dull when theirs is active. O, Alarcos,
I could lie down and die.

III:2:67 ALAR.

[Advancing in soliloquy.]

Asleep, awake,
In dreams, and in the musing moods that wait
On unfulfilled purposes, I've done it;
And thought upon it afterwards, nor shrunk
From the fell retrospect.

III:2:68 SOL.
He's wrapped in thought;
Indeed his glance was wild when first he entered,
And his speech lacked completeness.

III:2:69 ALAR.

How is it then,
The body that should be the viler part,
And made for servile uses, should rebel
'Gainst the mind's mandate, and should hold its aid
Aloof from our adventure? Why the sin
Is in the thought, not in the deed; 'tis not
The body pays the penalty, the soul
Must clear that awful scot. What palls my arm?
It is not pity; trumpet-tongued ambition
Stifles her plaintive voice; it is not love,
For that inspires the blow! Art thou Solisa?

III:2:70 SOL.

I am that luckless maiden whom you love.

III:2:71 ALAR.

You could lie down and die. Who speaks of death?
There is no absolution for self-murder.
Why 'tis the greater sin of the two. There is
More peril in't. What, sleep upon your post
Because you are wearied? No, we must spy on
And watch occasions. Even now they are ripe.
I feel a turbulent throbbing at my heart
Will end in action: for there spiritual tumults
Herald great deeds.

III:2:72 SOL.

It is the church's scheme
Ever to lengthen suits.

III:2:73 ALAR.

The church?

III:2:74 SOL.

Ossana
Leans much to Rome.

III:2:75 ALAR.

And how concerns us that?

III:2:76 SOL.

His Grace spoke to the Bishop, you must know?

III:2:77 ALAR.

Ah, yes! his Grace, the church, it is our friend.
And truly should be so. It gave our griefs,
And it should bear their balm.

III:2:78 SOL.

Hast pardoned me
That I was querulous? But lovers crossed
Wrangle with those that love them, as it were,
To spite affection.

III:2:79 ALAR.

We are bound together
As the twin powers of the storm. Very love
Now makes me callous. The great bond is sealed;
Look bright; if gloomy, mortgage future bliss
For present comfort. Trust me 'tis good 'surance.
I'll to the King.

[Exeunt both.]

SCENE 3

A Street in Burgos.

[Enter the COUNT OF LEON, followed by ORAN.]

III:3:1 LEON.

He has been sighing like a Sybarite
These six weeks past, and now he sends to me
To hire my bravo. Well, that smacks of manhood.
He'll pierce at least one heart, if not the right one.
Murder and marriage! which the greater crime
A schoolman may decide. All arts exhausted,
His death alone remains. A clumsy course.
I care not. Truth, I hate this same Alarcos,
I think it is the colour of his eyes,
But I do hate him; and the royal ear
Lists coldly to me since this same return.
The King leans wholly on him. Sirrah Moor,
All is prepared?

III:3:2 ORAN.

And prompt.

III:3:3 LEON.

'Tis well; no boggling;
Let it be cleanly done.

III:3:4 ORAN.

A stab or two,
And the Arlanzon's wave shall know the rest.

III:3:5 LEON.

I'll have to kibe his heels at Court, if you fail.

III:3:6 ORAN.

There is no fear. We have the choicest spirits

In Burgos.

III:3:7 LEON.
Goodly gentlemen! you wait
Their presence?

III:3:8 ORAN.
Here anon.

III:3:9 LEON.
Good night, dusk infidel,
They'll take me for an Alguazil. At home
Your news will reach me.

III:3:10 ORAN.
And were all your throats cut,
I would not weep. O, Allah, let them spend
Their blood upon themselves! My life he shielded,
And now exacts one at my hands; we're quits
When this is closed. That thought will grace a deed
Otherwise graceless. I would break the chain
That binds me to this man. His callous eye
Repels devotion, while his reckless vein
Demands prompt sacrifice. Now is't wise this?
Methinks 'twere wise to touch the humblest heart
Of those that serve us? In maturest plans
There lacks that finish, which alone can flow
From zealous instruments. But here are some
That have no hearts to touch.

[Enter Four BRAVOs.]

How now, good senors.
I cannot call them comrades; you're exact,
As doubtless ye are brave. You know your duty?

III:3:11 1ST BRAVO.
And will perform it, or my name is changed,
And I'm not Guzman Jaca.

III:3:12 ORAN.
You well know
The arm you cross is potent?

III:3:13 2ND BRAVO.
All the steel
Of Calatrava's knights shall not protect it.

III:3:14 3RD BRAVO.
And all the knights to boot.

III:3:15 4TH BRAVO.
A river business.

III:3:16 ORAN.

The safest sepulchre.

III:3:17 4TH BRAVO.

A burial ground
Of which we are the priests, and take our fees;
I never cross a stream, but I do feel
A sense of property.

III:3:18 ORAN.

You know the signal:
And when I boast I've friends, they may appear
To prove I am no braggart.

III:3:19 1ST BRAVO.

To our posts
It shall be cleanly done, and brief.

III:3:20 2ND BRAVO.

No oaths,
No swagger.

III:3:21 3RD BRAVO.

Not a word; but all as pleasant
As we were nobles like himself.

III:3:22 4TH BRAVO.

'Tis true, sir;
You deal with gentlemen.

[Exeunt BRAVOs.]

[Enter COUNT ALARCOS.]

III:3:23 ALAR.

The moon's a sluggard,
I think, to-night. How now, the Moor that dodged
My steps at vespers. Hem! I like not this.
Friends beneath cloaks; they're wanted. Save you, sir?

III:3:24 ORAN.

And you, sir?

III:3:25 ALAR.

Not the first time we have met,
Or I've no eye for lurkers.

III:3:26 ORAN.

I have tasted
Our common heritage, the air, to-day;
And if the selfsame beam warmed both our bloods,
What then?

III:3:27 ALAR.

Why nothing; but the sun has set,
And honest men should seek their hearths.

III:3:28 ORAN.

I wait
My friends.

[The BRAVOs rush in, and assault COUNT ALARCOS, who,
dropping his Cloak, shows his Sword already drawn, and keeps them at bay.]

So, so! who plays with princes' blood?
No sport for varlets. Thus and thus, I'll teach ye
To know your station.

III:3:29 1ST BRAVO.

Ah!

III:3:30 2ND BRAVO.

Away!

III:3:31 3RD BRAVO.

Fly, fly!

III:3:32 4TH BRAVO.

No place for quiet men.

[The BRAVOs run off.]

III:3:33 ALAR.

A little breath
Is all they have cost me, tho' their blood has stained
My damask blade. And still the Moor! What ho!
Why fliest not like thy mates?

III:3:34 ORAN.

Because I wait
To fight.

III:3:35 ALAR.

Rash caitiff! knowest thou who I am?

III:3:36 ORAN.

One who I heard was brave, and now has proved it.

III:3:37 ALAR.

Am I thy foe?

III:3:38 ORAN.

No more than all thy race.

III:3:39 ALAR.

Go, save thy life.

III:3:40 ORAN.

Look to thine own, proud lord.

III:3:41 ALAR.

Perdition catch thy base-born insolence.

[They fight: after a long and severe encounter,
ALARCOS disarms ORAN, who falls wounded.]

III:3:42 ORAN.

Be brief, dispatch me.

III:3:43 ALAR.

Not a word for mercy?

III:3:44 ORAN.

Why should'st thou give it?

III:3:45 ALAR.

'Tis not merited,
Yet might be gained. Who set thee on to this?
My sword is at thy throat. Give me his name,
And thine shall live.

III:3:46 ORAN.

I cannot.

III:3:47 ALAR.

What, is life
So light a boon? It hangs upon this point.
Bold Moor, is't then thy love to him who fees thee
Makes thee so faithful?

III:3:48 ORAN.

No; I hate him.

III:3:49 ALAR.

What
Restrains thee, then?

III:3:50 ORAN.

The feeling that restrained
My arm from joining stabbers -- Honour.

III:3:51 ALAR.

Humph!
An overseer of stabbers for some ducats.
And is that honour?

III:3:52 ORAN.

Once he screened my life,

And this was my return.

III:3:53 ALAR.

What if I spare
Thy life even now? Wilt thou accord to me
The same devotion?

III:3:54 ORAN.

Yea; the life thou givest
Thou shouldst command.

III:3:55 ALAR.

If I, too, have a foe
Crossing my path and blighting all my life?

III:3:56 ORAN.

This sword should strive to reach him.

III:3:57 ALAR.

Him! thy bond
Shall know no sex or nation. Limitless
Shall be thy pledge. I'll claim from thee a life
For that I spare. How now, wilt live?

III:3:58 ORAN.

To pay
A life for that now spared.

III:3:59 ALAR.

Swear to thy truth;
Swear by Mahound, and swear by all thy gods,
If thou hast any; swear it by the stars,
In which we all believe; and by thy hopes
Of thy false paradise; swear it by thy soul,
And by thy sword!

III:3:60 ORAN.

I swear.

III:3:61 ALAR.

Arise and live.

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

SCENE 1

Interior of a Posada frequented by BRAVOs, in an obscure quarter of Burgos. FLIX at the fire, frying eggs. Men seated at small tables drinking; others lying on benches. At the side, but in the front of the Scene, some Beggars squatted on the ground, thrumming a Mandolin; a Gipsy Girl dancing.

IV:1:1 A BRAVO.

Come, mother, dost take us for Saracens? I say we are true Christians, and so must drink wine.

IV:1:2 ANOTHER BRAVO.

Mother Flix is sour to-night. Keep the evil eye from the olla!

IV:1:3 3RD BRAVO.

[advancing to her]

Thou beauty of Burgos, what are dimples unless seen? Smile! wench.

IV:1:4 FLIX.

A frying egg will not wait for the King of Cordova.

IV:1:5 1ST BRAVO.

Will have her way. Graus knows a pretty wife's worth. A handsome hostess is bad for the guest's purse.

IV:1:6 1ST BRAVO.

[rising]

Good companions make good company. Graus, Graus! another flagon.

IV:1:7 2ND BRAVO.

Of the right Catalan.

IV:1:8 3RD BRAVO.

Nay, for my omelette.

IV:1:9 FLIX.

Hungry men think the cook lazy.

[Enter GRAUS with a Flagon of wine.]

IV:1:10 1ST BRAVO.

'Tis mine.

IV:1:11 2ND BRAVO.

No, mine.

IV:1:12 1ST BRAVO.

We'll share.

IV:1:13 2ND BRAVO.

No, each man his own beaker; he who shares has the worst half.

IV:1:14 3RD BRAVO.

[to FLIX, who brings the omelette]

An egg and to bed.

IV:1:15 GRAUS.

Who drinks, first chinks.

IV:1:16 1ST BRAVO.

The debtor is stoned every day. There will be water-work to-morrow,
and that will wash it out. You know me?

IV:1:17 GRAUS.

In a long journey and a small inn, one knows one's company.

IV:1:18 2ND BRAVO.

Come, I'll give, but I won't share. Fill up.

IV:1:19 GRAUS.

That's liberal; my way; full measure but prompt pezos;
I loathe your niggards.

IV:1:20 1ST BRAVO.

As the little tailor of Campillo said, who worked for nothing,
and found thread.

[To the other BRAVO.]

Nay, I'll not refuse; we know each other.

IV:1:21 2ND BRAVO.

We've seen the stars together.

IV:1:22 AN OLD MAN.

Burgos is not what it was.

IV:1:23 5TH BRAVO.

[waking]

Sleep ends and supper begins. The olla, the olla, Mother Flix;

[shaking a purse]

there's the dinner bell.

IV:1:24 2ND BRAVO.

That will bring courses.

IV:1:25 1ST BRAVO.

An ass covered with gold has more respect than a horse with a pack-saddle.

IV:1:26 5TH BRAVO.

How for that ass?

IV:1:27 2ND BRAVO.

Nay, the sheep should have his belly full who quarrels with his mate.

IV:1:28 5TH BRAVO.

But how for that ass?

IV:1:29 A FRIAR.

[advancing]

Peace be with ye, brethren! A meal in God's name.

IV:1:30 5TH BRAVO.

Who asks in God's name, asks for two. But how for that ass?

IV:1:31 FLIX.

[bringing the olla]

Nay, an ye must brawl, go fight the Moors. 'Tis a peaceable house, and we sleep quiet o' nights.

IV:1:32 5TH BRAVO.

Am I an ass?

IV:1:33 FLIX.

He is an ass who talks when he might eat.

IV:1:34 5TH BRAVO.

A Secadon sausage! Come, mother, I'm all peace; thou'rt a rare hand. As in thy teeth, comrade, and no more on't

IV:1:35 1ST BRAVO.

When I will not, two cannot quarrel.

IV:1:36 OLD MAN.

Everything is changed for the worse.

IV:1:37 FRIAR.

For the love of St. Jago, senors; for the love of St. Jago!

IV:1:38 5TH BRAVO.

When it pleases not God, the saint can do little.

IV:1:39 2ND BRAVO.

Nay, supper for all, and drink's the best meat. Some have sung for it, some danced. There is no fishing for trout in dry breeches. You shall preach.

IV:1:40 FRIAR.

Benedicite, brethren --

IV:1:41 1ST BRAVO.

Nay, no Latin, for the devil's not here.

IV:1:42 2ND BRAVO.

And prithee let it be as full of meat as an egg; for we do many deeds, love not many words.

IV:1:43 FRIAR.

Thou shalt not steal.

IV:1:44 1ST BRAVO.

He blasphemes.

IV:1:45 FRIAR.

But what is theft?

IV:1:46 2ND BRAVO.

Ay! there it is.

IV:1:47 FRIAR.

The tailor he steals the cloth, and the miller he steals the meal; is either a thief? 'tis the way of trade. But what if our trade be to steal? Why then our work is to cut purses; to cut purses is to follow our business; and to follow our business is to obey the King; and so thieving is no theft. And that's probatum, and so, amen.

IV:1:48 5TH BRAVO.

Shall put thy spoon in the olla for that.

IV:1:49 2ND BRAVO.

And drink this health to our honest fraternity.

IV:1:50 OLD MAN.

I have heard sermons by the hour; this is brief; every thing falls off.

[Enter a PERSONAGE masked and cloaked.]

IV:1:51 1ST BRAVO.

[to his Companions]

See'st yon mask?

IV:1:52 2ND BRAVO.

'Tis strange.

IV:1:53 GRAUS.

[to FLIX]

Who is this?

IV:1:54 FLIX.

The fool wonders, the wise man asks. Must have no masks here.

IV:1:55 GRAUS.

An obedient wife commands her husband. Business with a stranger,
title enough.

[Advancing and addressing the Mask.]

Most noble Senor Mask.

IV:1:56 THE UNKNOWN.

Well, fellow!

IV:1:57 GRAUS.

Hem; as it may be. D'ye see, most noble Senor Mask, that 'tis an
orderly house this, frequented by certain honest gentlemen, that
take their siesta, and eat a fried egg after their day's work,
and so are not ashamed to show their faces. Ahem!

IV:1:58 THE UNKNOWN.

As in truth I am in such villanous company.

IV:1:59 GRAUS.

Wheugh! but 'tis not the first ill word that brings a blow.
Would'st sup indifferently well here at a moderate rate, we are
thy servants. My Flix hath reputation at the frying-pan, and my
wine hath made lips smack; but here, senor, faces must be uncovered.

IV:1:60 THE UNKNOWN.

Poh! poh!

IV:1:61 GRAUS.

Nay, then, I will send some to you shall gain softer words.

IV:1:62 1ST BRAVO.

Why, what's this?

IV:1:63 2ND BRAVO.

Our host is an honest man, and has friends.

IV:1:64 5TH BRAVO.

Let me finish my olla, and I will discourse with him.

IV:1:65 THE UNKNOWN.

Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke. I come here on business,
and with you all.

IV:1:66 1ST BRAVO.

Carraho! and who's this?

IV:1:67 THE UNKNOWN.

One who knows you, though you know not him. One whom you have never seen, yet all fear. And who walks at night, and where he likes.

IV:1:68 2ND BRAVO.

The devil himself!

IV:1:69 THE UNKNOWN.

It may be so.

IV:1:70 2ND BRAVO.

Sit by me, Friar, and speak Latin.

IV:1:71 THE UNKNOWN.

There is a man missing in Burgos, and I will know where he is.

IV:1:72 OLD MAN.

There were many men missing in my time.

IV:1:73 THE UNKNOWN.

Dead or alive, I care not; but land or water, river or turf, I will know where the body is stowed. See

[shaking a purse]

here is eno' to point all the poniards of the city. You shall have it to drink his health.

IV:1:74 A BRAVO.

How call you him?

IV:1:75 THE UNKNOWN.

Oran, the Moor.

IV:1:76 1ST BRAVO.

[Jumping from his seat and approaching the Stranger.]

My name is Guzman Jaca; my hand was in that business.

IV:1:77 THE UNKNOWN.

With the Moor and three of your comrades?

IV:1:78 1ST BRAVO.

The same.

IV:1:79 THE UNKNOWN.

And how came your quarry to fly next day?

IV:1:80 1ST BRAVO.

Very true; 'twas a bad business for all of us. I fought like a lion; see, my arm is still bound up; but he had advice of our visit; and no sooner had we saluted him, than there suddenly appeared a goodly company of twelve serving-men, or say twelve to fifteen --

IV:1:81 THE UNKNOWN.

You lie; he walked alone.

IV:1:82 1ST BRAVO.

Very true; and if I am forced to speak the whole truth, it was thus. I fought like a lion; see, my arm is still bound up; but I was not quite his match alone, for I had let blood the day before, and my comrades were taken with a panic, and so left me in the lurch. And now you have it all.

IV:1:83 THE UNKNOWN.

And Oran?

IV:1:84 1ST BRAVO.

He fled at once.

IV:1:85 THE UNKNOWN.

Come, come, Oran did not fly.

IV:1:86 1ST BRAVO.

Very true. We left him alone with the Count.
And now you have it all.

IV:1:87 THE UNKNOWN.

Had he slain him, the body would have been found.

IV:1:88 1ST BRAVO.

Very true. That's the difference between us professional performers, and you mere amateurs; we never leave the bodies.

IV:1:89 THE UNKNOWN.

And you can tell me nothing of him?

IV:1:90 1ST BRAVO.

No, but I engage to finish the Count, any night you like now, for I have found out his lure.

IV:1:91 THE UNKNOWN.

How's that?

IV:1:92 1ST BRAVO.

Every evening, about an hour after sunset, he enters by a private way the citadel.

IV:1:93 THE UNKNOWN.

Hah! what more?

IV:1:94 1ST BRAVO.

He is stagg'd; there is a game playing, but what I know not.

IV:1:95 THE UNKNOWN.

Your name is Guzman Jaca?

IV:1:96 1ST BRAVO.

The same.

IV:1:97 THE UNKNOWN.

Honest fellow! there's gold for you. You know nothing of Oran?

IV:1:98 1ST BRAVO.

Maybe he has crawled to some place wounded.

IV:1:99 THE UNKNOWN.

To die like a bird. Look after him. If I wish more, I know where to find you. What ho, Master Host! I cannot wait to try your mistress's art to-night; but here's my scot for our next supper.

[Exit THE UNKNOWN.]

SCENE 2

A Chamber in the Palace of Alarcos.

The COUNTESS and SIDONIA.

IV:2:1 SIDO.

Lady, you're mov'd: nay, 'twas an idle word.

IV:2:2 COUN.

But was it true?

IV:2:3 SIDO.

And yet might little mean.

IV:2:4 COUN.

That I should live to doubt!

IV:2:5 SIDO.

But do not doubt;
Forget it, lady. You should know him well;
Nay, do not credit it.

IV:2:6 COUN.

He's very changed.
I would not own, no, not believe that change,
I've given it every gloss that might confirm
My sinking heart. Time and your tale agree;
Alas! 'tis true.

IV:2:7 SIDO.
I hope not; still believe
It is not true. Would that I had not spoken!
It was unguarded prate.

IV:2:8 COUN.
You have done me service:
Condemned, the headsman is no enemy,
Bat closes suffering.

IV:2:9 SIDO.
Yet a bitter doom
To torture those you'd bless. I have a thought.
What if this eve you visit this same spot,
That shrouds these meetings? If he's wanting then,
The rest might prove as false.

IV:2:10 COUN.
He will be there,
I feel he will be there.

IV:2:11 SIDO.
We should not think so,
Until our eyes defeat our hopes.

IV:2:12 COUN.
O Burgos,
My heart misgave me when I saw thy walls!
To doubt is madness, yet 'tis not despair,
And that may be my lot.

IV:2:13 SIDO.
The palace gardens
Are closed, except to master-keys. Here's one,
My office gives it me, and it can count
Few brethren. You will be alone.

IV:2:14 COUN.
Alas!
I dare not hope so.

IV:2:15 SIDO.
Well, well, think of this;
Yet take the key.

IV:2:16 COUN.
O that it would unlock

The heart now closed to me! To watch his ways
Was once my being. Shall I prove the spy
Of joys I may not share? I will not take
That fatal key.

IV:2:17 SIDO.

'Tis well; I pray you, pardon
My ill-timed zeal.

IV:2:18 COUN.

Indeed, I should be grateful
That one should wish to serve me. Can it be?
'Tis not two months, two little, little months,
You crossed this threshold first; Ah! gentle air,
And we were all so gay! What have I done?
What is all this? so sudden and so strange?
It is not true, I feel it is not true;
'Tis factious care that clouds his brow, and calls
For all this timed absence. His brain's busy
With the State. Is't not so? I prithee speak,
And say you think it.

IV:2:19 SIDO.

You should know him well;
And if you deem it so, why I should deem
The inference just.

IV:2:20 COUN.

Yet if he were not there,
How happy I should sleep! there is no peril;
The garden's near; and is there shame? 'Tis love
Makes me a lawful spy. He'll not be there,
And then there is no prying.

IV:2:21 SIDO.

Near at hand,
Crossing the way that bounds your palace court,
There is a private portal.

IV:2:22 COUN.

If I go,
He will not miss me. Ah, I would he might!
So very near; no, no; I cannot go;
And yet I'll take the key.

[Takes the key.]

Would thou could'st speak,
Thou little instrument, and tell me all
The secrets of thy office! My heart beats;
'Tis my first enterprise; I would it were
To do him service. No, I cannot go;
Farewell, kind sir; indeed I am so troubled,

I must retire.

[Exit COUNTESS.]

IV:2:23 SIDO.

Thy virtue makes me vile;
And what should move my heart inflames my soul.
O marvellous world, wherein I play the villain
From very love of excellence! But for him,
I'd be the rival of her stainless thoughts
And mate her purity. Hah!

[Enter ORAN.]

IV:2:24 ORAN.

My noble lord!

IV:2:25 SIDO.

The Moor!

IV:2:26 ORAN.

Your servant.

IV:2:27 SIDO.

Here! 'tis passing strange.
How's this?

IV:2:28 ORAN.

The accident of war, my lord.
I am a prisoner.

IV:2:29 SIDO.

But at large, it seems.
You have betrayed me

IV:2:30 ORAN.

Had I chosen that,
I had been free and you not here. I fought,
And fell in single fight. Why spared I know not,
But that the lion's generous.

IV:2:31 SIDO.

Will you prove
Your faith

IV:2:32 ORAN.

Nay, doubt it not.

IV:2:33 SIDO.

You still can aid me.

IV:2:34 ORAN.

I am no traitor, and my friends shall find

I am not wanting.

IV:2:35 SIDO.

Quit these liberal walls
Where you're not watched. In brief, I've coined a tale
Has touched the Countess to the quick. She seeks,
Alone or scantily tended, even now,
The palace gardens; eager to discover
A faithless husband, where she'll chance to find
One more devout. My steeds and servants wait
At the right post; my distant castle soon
Shall hold this peerless wife. Your resolute spirit
May aid me much. How say you, is it well
That we have met?

IV:2:36 ORAN.

Right well. I will embark
Most heartily in this.

IV:2:37 SIDO.

With me at once.

IV:2:38 ORAN.

At once?

IV:2:39 SIDO.

No faltering. You have learned and know
Too much to spare you from my sight, good Oran.
With me at once.

IV:2:40 ORAN.

'Tis urgent; well at once,
And I will do good service, or I'll die.
For what is life unless to aid the life
Has aided thine?

IV:2:41 SIDO.

On then; with me no eye
Will look with jealousy upon thy step.

[Exeunt both.]

SCENE 3

A retired spot in the Gardens of the Palace.

[Enter the COUNTESS.]

IV:3:1 COUN.

Is't guilt, that I thus tremble? Why should I
Feel like a sinner? I'll not dare to meet
His flashing eye. O, with what scorn, what hate
His lightning glance will wither me. Away,
I will away. I care not whom he meets.
What if he love me not, he shall not loathe
The form he once embraced. I'll be content
To live upon the past, and dream again
It may return. Alas! were I the false one,
I could not feel more humbled. Ah, he comes!
I'll lie, I'll vow I'm vile, that I came here
To meet another, anything but that
I dared to doubt him. What, my Lord Sidonia!

[Enter SIDONIA.]

IV:3:2 SIDO.

Thy servant and thy friend. Ah! gentle lady,
I deemed this unused scene and ill-timed hour
might render solace welcome. He'll not come;
He crossed the mountains, ere the set of sun,
Towards Briviesca.

IV:3:3 COUN.

Holy Virgin, thanks!
Home, home!

IV:3:4 SIDO.

And can a hearth neglected cause
Such raptures?

IV:3:5 COUN.

I, and only I, neglect it;
My cheek is fire, that I should ever dare
To do this stealthy deed.

IV:3:6 SIDO.

And yet I feel
I could do one as secret and more bold.
A moment, lady; do not turn away
With that cold look.

IV:3:7 COUN.

My children wait me, sir;
Yet I would thank you, for you meant me kindness.

IV:3:8 SIDO.

And mean it yet. Ah! beautiful Florimonde,
It is the twilight hour, when hearts are soft,
And mine is like the quivering light of eve;
I love thee!

IV:3:9 COUN.
And for this I'm here, and he,
He is not false! O happiness!

IV:3:10 SIDO.
Sweet lady --

IV:3:11 COUN.
My Lord Sidonia, I can pardon thee,
I am so joyful.

IV:3:12 SIDO.
Nay, then.

IV:3:13 COUN.
Unhand me, Sir!

IV:3:14 SIDO.
But to embrace this delicate waist. Thou art mine:
I've sighed and thou hast spurned. What is not yielded
In war we capture. Ere a flying hour,
Thy hated Burgos vanishes. That voice;
What, must I stifle it, who fain would listen
For ever to its song? In vain thy cry,
For none are here but mine.

[Enter ORAN.]

IV:3:15 ORAN.
Turn, robber, turn --

IV:3:16 SIDO.
Ah! treason in the camp! Thus to thy heart.

[They fight. ORAN beats off SIDONIA, they leave the scene fighting;
the COUNTESS swoons.]

[Enter a procession with lighted torches, attending the Infanta SOLISA
from Mass.]

IV:3:17 1ST USH.
A woman!

IV:3:18 2ND USH.
Does she live

IV:3:19 SOL.
What stops our course?

[The Train ranging themselves on each side, the Infanta approaches
the COUNTESS.]

IV:3:20 SOL.

Most strange and lovely vision! Does she breathe?
I'll not believe 'tis death. Her hand is cold,
And her brow damp; Griselda, Julia, maidens
Hither, and yet stand off; give her free air.
How shall we bear her home? Now, good Lorenzo,
You, and Sir Miguel, raise her; gently, gently.
Still gently, sirs. By heavens, the fairest face
I yet did gaze on! Some one here should know her.
'Tis one that must be known. That's well; relieve
That kerchief from her neck; mind not our state;
I'll by her side; a swoon, methinks; no more,
Let's hope and pray!

[They raise the body of the COUNTESS, and bear her away.]

[Enter Count of LEON.]

IV:3:21 LEON.

I'll fathom this same mystery,
If there be wit in Burgos. I have heard,
Before I knew the Court, old Nunez Leon
Whisper strange things -- and what if they prove true?
It is not exile twice would cure that scar.
I'll reach him yet. 'Tis likely he may pass
This way; 'tis lonely, and well suits a step
Would not be noticed. Ha! a man approaches;
I'll stand awhile aside.

[Re-enter ORAN.]

IV:3:22 ORAN.

Gone, is she gone!
Yet safe I feel. O Allah! thou art great!
The arm she bound, and tended with that glance
Of sweet solicitude, has saved her life,
And more than life. The dark and reckless villains!
O! I could curse them, but my heart is soft
With holy triumph. I'm no more an outcast.
And when she calls me, I'd not change my lot
To be an Emir. In their hall to-night
There will be joy, and Oran will have smiles.
This house has knit me to their fate by ties
Stronger than gyves of iron.

IV:3:23 LEON.

Do I see
The man I seek? Oran!

[ORAN turns, and recognising Leon, rushes and seizes him.]

IV:3:24 ORAN.

Incarnate fiend,
Give her me, give her me!

IV:3:25 LEON.
Off, ruffian, off!

IV:3:26 ORAN.
I have thee and I'll hold thee. If I spare
Thy damned life, and do not dash thee down,
And trample on thee, fiend, it is because
Thou art the gaoler of a pearl of price
I cannot gain without thee. Now, where is she?
Now by thy life!

IV:3:27 LEON.
Why, thou outrageous Moor,
Hast broken thy false prophet's rule, and so
Fell into unused drink, that thus thou darest
To flout me with thy cloudy menaces?
What mean'st thou, sir? And what have I withheld
From thy vile touch? By heavens, I pass my days
In seeking thy dusk corpse, I deemed well drilled
Ere this, but it awaits my vengeance.

IV:3:28 ORAN.
Boy!
Licentious boy! Where is she? Now, by Allah!
This poniard to thy heart, unless thou tell'st me.

IV:3:29 LEON.
Whom dost thou mean?

IV:3:30 ORAN.
Thy comrade and thy crew
They all have fled. I left the Countess here.
She's gone. Thou fill'st her place.

IV:3:31 LEON.
What Countess? Speak.

IV:3:32 ORAN.
The Count Alarcos' wife.

IV:3:33 LEON.
The Count Alarcos!
I'd be right glad to see him; but his wife
Concerns the Lord Sidonia. If he have played
Some Pranks here 'tis a fool, and he has marred
More than he'll ever make. My time's worth gems;
My knightly word, dusk Moor, I tell thee truth.
I will forget these jest, but we must meet
This night at my palace.

IV:3:34 ORAN.
I'll see her first.

[Exit ORAN.]

IV:3:35 LEON.

Is it the Carnival? What mummery's this?
What have I heard? One thing alone is clear.
We must be rid of Oran.

SCENE 4

A Chamber in the Palace.

The Countess ALARCOS lying on a Couch,
the Infanta kneeling at her side;
MAIDENS grouped around. A PHYSICIAN and the PAGE.

IV:4:1 SOL.

Didst ever see so fair a skin? Her bodice
Should still be loosened. Bring the Moorish water,
Griselda, you. They are the longest lashes!
They hang upon her cheek. Doctor, there's warmth;
The blood returns?

IV:4:2 PHY.

But slowly.

IV:4:3 SOL.

Beauteous creature!
She seems an angel fallen from some star.
'Twas well we passed. Untie that kerchief, Julia;
Teresa, wave the fan. There seems a glow
Upon her cheek, what but a moment since
Was like a sculptured saint's.

IV:4:4 PHY.

She breathes.

IV:4:5 SOL.

Hush, hush!

IV:4:6 COUN.

And what is this? where am I?

IV:4:7 SOL.

With thy friends.

IV:4:8 COUN.

It is not home.

IV:4:9 SOL.

If kindness make a home,
Believe it such.

[The PHYSICIAN signifies silence.]

Nay lady, not a word,
Those lips must now be closed. I've seen such eyes
In pictures, girls.

IV:4:10 PHY.
Methinks she'll sleep.

IV:4:11 SOL.
'Tis well.
Maidens, away. I'll be her nurse; and, doctor,
Remain within.

[Exeunt PHYSICIAN and MAIDENS.]

Know you this beauteous dame?

IV:4:12 PAGE.
I have heard minstrels tell that fays are found
In lonely places.

IV:4:13 SOL.
Well, she's magical.
She draws me charm-like to her. Vanish, imp,
And see our chamber still.

[Exit PAGE.]

It is the hour
Alarcos should be here. Ah! happy hour,
That custom only makes more strangely sweet!
His brow has lost its cloud. The bar's removed
To our felicity; time makes amends
To patient sufferers.

[Enter COUNT ALARCOS.]

Hush, my own love, hush!

[SOLISA takes his hand and leads him aside.]

So strange an incident! the fairest lady!
Found in our gardens; it would seem a swoon;
Myself then passing; hither we have brought her;
She is so beautiful, you'll almost deem
She bears some charmed life. You know that fays
Are found in lonely places.

IV:4:14 ALAR.

In thy garden!
Indeed 'tis strange! The Virgin guard thee, love.
I am right glad I'm here. Alone to tend her,
'Tis scarcely wise.

IV:4:15 SOL.
I think when she recovers,
She'll wave her wings and fly.

IV:4:16 ALAR.
Nay, for one glance!
In truth you paint her bright.

IV:4:17 SOL.
E'en now she sleeps.
Tread lightly, love; I'll lead you.

[SOLISA cautiously leads ALARCOS to the couch;
as they approach it, the COUNTESS opens her eyes and shrieks.]

IV:4:18 COUN.
Ah! 'tis true,
Alarcos
[relapses into a swoon.]

IV:4:19 ALAR.
Florimonde!

IV:4:20 SOL.
Who is this lady?

IV:4:21 ALAR.
It is my wife.

IV:4:22 SOL.

[flings away his arms and rushes forward.]

-- Not mad!
Virgin and Saints be merciful; not mad!
O spare my brain one moment; 'tis his wife.
I'm lost: she is too fair. The secret's out
Of sick delays. He's feigned; he has but feigned.

[Rushing to Alarcos.]

Is that thy wife? and I? and what am I?
A trifled toy, a humoured instrument?
To guide with glozing words, vilely cajole
With petty perjuries? Is that thy wife?
Thou said'st she was not fair, thou did'st not love her:
Thou lied'st. O, anguish, anguish!

IV:4:23 ALAR.
By the cross,
My soul is pure to thee. I'm wildered quite.
How came she here

IV:4:24 SOL.
As she shall ne'er return.
Now, Count Alarcos, by the cross thou swearest
Thy faith is true to me.

IV:4:25 ALAR.
Ay, by the cross,

IV:4:26 SOL.
Give me thy dagger.

IV:4:27 ALAR.
Not that hand or mine.

IV:4:28 SOL.
Is this thy passion!

[Takes his dagger.]

Thus I gain the heart
I should despise.

[Rushes to the couch.]

IV:4:29 COUN.
What's this I see?

IV:4:30 ALAR.

[seizing the Infanta's upraised arm]

A dream
A horrid dream, yet but a dream.

THE END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

SCENE 1

Exterior of the Castle of Alarcos in the valley of Arlanzon.

[Enter the COUNTESS.]

V:1:1 COUN.

I would recall the days gone by, and live
A moment in the past; if but to fly
The dreary present pressing on my brain,
Woe's omened harbinger. In exiled love
The scene he drew so fair! Ye castled crags,
The sunbeam plays on your embattled cliffs,
And softens your stern visage, as his love
Softened our early sorrows. But my sun
Has set for ever! Once we talked of cares
And deemed that we were sad. Men fancy sorrows
Until time brings the substance of despair,
And then their griefs are shadows. Give me exile!
It brought me love. Ah! days of gentle joy,
When pastime only parted us, and he
Returned with tales to make our children stare;
Or called my lute, while, round my waist entwined,
His hand kept chorus to my lay. No more!
O, we were happier than the happy birds;
And sweeter were our lives than the sweet flowers;
The stars were not more tranquil in their course,
Yet not more bright! The fountains in their play
Did most resemble us, that as they flow
Still sparkle!

[Enter ORAN.]

Oran, I am very sad.

V:1:2 ORAN.

Cheer up, sweet lady, for the God of all
Will guard the innocent.

V:1:3 COUN.

Think you he'll come
To visit us? Methinks he'll never come.

V:1:4 ORAN.

He's but four leagues away. This vicinage
Argues a frequent presence.

V:1:5 COUN.

But three nights --
Have only three nights past? It is an epoch
Distant and dim with passion. There are seasons
Feelings crowd on so, time not flies but staggers;
And memory poises on her burthened plumes
To gloat upon her prey. Spoke he of coming?

V:1:6 ORAN.

His words were scant and wild, and yet he murmured
That I should see him.

V:1:7 COUN.

I've not seen him since
That fatal night, yet even that glance of terror --
I'd hail it now. O, Oran, Oran, think you
He ever more will love me? Can I do
Aught to regain his love? They say your people
Are learned in these questions. Once I thought
There was no spell like duty -- that devotion
Would bulwark love for ever. Now, I'd distil
Philtres, converse with moonlit hags, defile
My soul with talismans, bow down to spirits,
And frequent accursed places, all, yea all --
I'd forfeit all -- but to regain his love.

V:1:8 ORAN.

There is a cloud now rising in the west,
In shape a hand, and scarcely would its grasp
Exceed mine own, it is so small; a spot,
A speck; see now again its colour flits!
A lurid tint; they call it on our coast
'The hand of God;' I for when its finger rises
From out the horizon, there are storms abroad
And awful judgments.

V:1:9 COUN.

Ah! it beckons me.

V:1:10 ORAN.

Lady!

V:1:11 COUN.

Yes, yes, see now the finger moves
And points to me. I feel it on my spirit.

V:1:12 ORAN.

Methinks it points to me --

V:1:13 COUN.

To both of us.
It may be so. And what would it portend?
My heart's grown strangely calm. If there be chance
Of storms, my children should be safe. Let's home.

SCENE 2

An illuminated Hall in the Royal Palace at Burgos;
in the background Dancers.

Groups of GUESTS passing.

V:2:1 1ST GUEST.

Radiant!

V:2:2 2ND GUEST.

Recalls old days.

V:2:3 3RD GUEST.

The Queen herself
Ne'er revelled it so high!

V:2:4 4TH GUEST.

The Infanta beams
Like some bright star!

V:2:5 5TH GUEST.

And brighter for the cloud
A moment screened her.

V:2:6 6TH GUEST.

Is it true 'tis over
Between the Count Sidonia and the Lara?

V:2:7 1ST GUEST.

A musty tale. The fair Alarcos wins him.
Where's she to-night?

V:2:8 2ND GUEST.

All on the watch to view
Her entrance to our world.

V:2:9 3RD GUEST.

The Count is here.

V:2:10 4TH GUEST.

Where?

V:2:11 3RD GUEST.

With the King; at least a moment since.

V:2:12 2ND GUEST.

They say she's ravishing.

V:2:13 4TH GUEST.

Beyond belief!

V:2:14 3RD GUEST.

The King affects him much.

V:2:15 5TH GUEST.

He's all in all.

V:2:16 6TH GUEST.
Yon Knight of Calatrava, who is he?

V:2:17 1ST GUEST.
Young Mendola.

V:2:18 2ND GUEST.
What he so rich?

V:2:19 1ST GUEST.
The same.

V:2:20 2ND GUEST.
The Lara smiles on him.

V:2:21 1ST GUEST.
No worthier quarry

V:2:22 3RD GUEST.
Who has the vacant Mastership?

V:2:23 4TH GUEST.
I'll back
The Count of Leon.

V:2:24 3RD GUEST.
Likely; he stands well
With the Lord Admiral.

[They move away.]

[The Counts of SIDONIA and LEON come forward.]

V:2:25 LEON.
Doubt as you like,
Credulity will come, and in good season.

V:2:26 SIDO.
She is not here that would confirm your tale.

V:2:27 LEON.
'Tis history, my Sidonia. Strange events
Have happened, stranger come.

V:2:28 SIDO.
I'll not believe it.
And favoured by the King! What can it mean?

V:2:29 LEON.
What no one dares to say.

V:2:30 SIDO.
A clear divorce.
O that accursed garden! But for that --

V:2:31 LEON.
'Twas not my counsel. Now I'd give a purse
To wash good Oran in Arlanzon's wave;
The dusk dog needs a cleansing.

V:2:32 SIDO.
Hush! here comes
Alarcos and the King.

[They retire: the KING and COUNT ALARCOS advance.]

V:2:33 KING.
Solisa looks
A Queen.

V:2:34 ALAR.
The mirror of her earliest youth
Ne'er shadowed her so fair!

V:2:35 KING.
I am young again,
Myself to-night. It quickens my old blood
To see my nobles round me. This goes well.
'Tis Courts like these that make a King feel proud.
Thy future subjects, cousin.

V:2:36 ALAR.
Gracious Sire,
I would be one.

V:2:37 KING.
Our past seclusion lends
A lustre to this revel.

[The KING approaches the Count of LEON; SOLISA advances to ALARCOS.]

V:2:38 SOL.
Why art thou grave?
I came to bid thee smile. In truth, to-night
I feel a lightness of the heart to me
Hath long been strange.

V:2:39 ALAR.
'Tis passion makes me grave.
I muse upon thy beauty. Thus I'd read
My oppressed spirit, for in truth these sounds
Jar on my humour.

V:2:40 SOL.

Now my brain is vivid
With wild and blissful images. Canst guess
What laughing thought unbidden, but resistless,
Plays o'er my mind to-night? Thou canst not guess:
Meseems it is our bridal night.

V:2:41 ALAR.
Thy fancy
Outruns the truth but scantily.

V:2:42 SOL.
Not a breath.
Our long-vexed destinies -- even now their streams
Blend in one tide. It is the hour, Alarcos:
There is a spirit whispering in my ear,
The hour is come. I would I were a man
But for a rapid hour. Should I rest here,
Prattling with gladsome revellers, when time,
Steered by my hand, might bring me to a port
I long had sighed to enter? But, alas!
These are a woman's thoughts.

V:2:43 ALAR.
And yet I share them.

V:2:44 SOL.
Why not to-night? Now, when our hearts are high,
Our fancies glowing, pulses fit for kings,
And the whole frame and spirit of the man
Prepared for daring deeds?

V:2:45 ALAR.
And were it done --
Why then 'twere not to do.

V:2:46 SOL.
The mind grows dull,
Dwelling on method of its deeds too long.
Our schemes should brood as gradual as the storm;
Their acting should be lightning. How far is't?

V:2:47 ALAR.
An hour.

V:2:48 SOL.
Why it wants two to midnight yet.
O could I see thee but re-enter here,
Ere yet the midnight clock strikes on my heart
The languish of new hours -- I'd not ask thee
Why I had missed the mien, that draws to it ever
My constant glance. There'd need no speech between us;
For I should meet -- my husband.

V:2:49 ALAR.

'Tis the burthen
Of this unfilled doom weighs on my spirit.
Why am I here? My heart and face but mar
This festive hall. To-night, why not to-night?
The night will soon have past: then 'twill be done.
We'll meet again to-night.

[Exit ALARCOS.]

SCENE 3

A Hall in the Castle of ALARCOS;
in the back of the Scene a door leading to another Apartment.

V:3:1 ORAN.

Reveal the future, lightnings! Then I'd hail
That arrowy flash. O darker than the storm
Cowed as the beasts now crouching in their caves,
Is my sad soul. Impending o'er this house,
I feel some bursting fate, my doomed arm
In vain would ward,

[Enter a MAN AT ARMS.]

How now, hast left thy post?

V:3:2 MAN.

O worthy Castellan, the lightnings play
Upon our turrets, that no human step
Can keep the watch. Each forky flash seems missioned
To scathe our roof, and the whole platform flows
With a blue sea of flame.

V:3:3 ORAN.

It is thy post.
No peril clears desertion. To thy post.
Mark me, my step will be as prompt as thine;
I will relieve thee.

[Exit MAN AT ARMS.]

Let the mischievous fire
Wither this head. O Allah! grant no fate
More dire awaits me.

[Enter the COUNT ALARCOS.]

Hah! the Count! My lord,
In such a night!

V:3:4 ALAR.
A night that's not so wild
As this tempestuous breast. How is she, Oran?

V:3:5 ORAN.
Well.

V:3:6 ALAR.
Ever well.

V:3:7 ORAN.
The children --

V:3:8 ALAR.
Wine, I'm wearied,
The lightning scared my horse; he's galled my arm.
Get me some wine.

[Exit ORAN.]

The storm was not to stop me.
The mind intent construes each natural act
To a personal bias, and so catches judgments
In every common course. In truth the flash,
Though it seemed opening hell, was not so dreadful
As that wild glaring hall.

[Re-enter ORAN with a goblet and flagon.]

Ah! this re-mans me!
I think the storm has lulled. Another cup.
Go see, good Oran, how the tempest speeds.

[Exit ORAN.]

An hour ago I did not dare to think
I'd drink wine more.

[Re-enter ORAN.]

V:3:9 ORAN.
The storm indeed has lulled
As by a miracle; the sky is clear,
There's not a breath of air; and from the turret
I heard the bell of Huelgas.

V:3:10 ALAR.
Then 'twas nothing.
My spirit vaults! Oran, thou dost remember
The night that we first met?

V:3:11 ORAN.
'Tis graven deep
Upon my heart.

V:3:12 ALAR.
I think thou lov'st me, Oran?

V:3:13 ORAN.
And all thy house.

V:3:14 ALAR.
Nay, thou shalt love but me.
I'll no divisions in the hearts that are mine.

V:3:15 ORAN.
I have no love but that which knits me to thee
With deeper love.

V:3:16 ALAR.
I found thee, Oran, what --
I will not say. And now thou art, good Oran,
A Prince's Castellan.

V:3:17 ORAN.
I feel thy bounty.

V:3:18 ALAR.
Thou shalt be more. But serve me as I would,
And thou shalt name thy meed.

V:3:19 ORAN.
To serve my lord
Is my sufficient meed.

V:3:20 ALAR.
Come hither, Oran,
Were there a life between me and my life,
And all that makes that life a thing to cling to,
Love, Honour, Power, ay, what I will not name
Nor thou canst image -- yet enough to stir
Ambition in the dead -- I think, good Oran,
Thou would'st not see me foiled?

V:3:21 ORAN.
Thy glory's dearer
Than life to me.

V:3:22 ALAR.
I knew it, I knew it.
Thou shalt share all; thy alien blood shall be
No bar to thy preferment. Hast thou brothers?
I'll send for them. An aged sire, perchance?

Here's gold for him. Count it thyself. Contrive
All means of self-enjoyment. To the full
They shall lap up fruition. Thou hast, all have,
Some master wish which still eludes thy grasp,
And still's the secret idol of thy soul;
'Tis gained. And only if thou dost, good Oran,
What love and duty prompt.

V:3:23 ORAN.
Count on my faith,
I stand prepared to prove it.

V:3:24 ALAR.
Good, good, Oran.
It is an hour to midnight?

V:3:25 ORAN.
The moon is not
Within her midnight bower, yet near.

V:3:26 ALAR.
So late!
The Countess sleeps?

V:3:27 ORAN.
She has long retired.

V:3:28 ALAR.
She sleeps,
O, she must wake no more!

V:3:29 ORAN.
Thy wife!

V:3:30 ALAR.
It must
Be done, ere yet the Castle chime shall tell
Night wanes.

V:3:31 ORAN.
Thy wife! God of my fathers! none
Can do this deed!

V:3:32 ALAR.
Upon thy hand it rests.
The deed must fall on thee.

V:3:33 ORAN.
I will not do it.

V:3:34 ALAR.
Thine oath, thine oath! Hast thou forgot thine oath?
Thou owest me a life, and now I claim it.

What, hast thou trifled with me? Hast thou fooled
With one whose point was at thy throat? Beware!
Thou art my slave, and I have branded thee
With this infernal ransom!

V:3:35 ORAN.

I am thy slave,
And I will be thy slave, and all my days
Devoted to perdition. Not for gold
Or worldly worth; to cheer no aged parent,
Though I have one, a mother; not to bask
My seed within thy beams; to feed no passions
And gorge no craving vanity; but because
Thou gavest me life, and led to that which made
That life for once delicious. O, great sir,
The King's thy foe? Surrounded by his guards
I would waylay him. Hast thou some fierce rival?
I'll pluck his heart out. Yea! there is no peril
I'd not confront, no rack I'll not endure,
No great offence commit, to do thee service --
So thou wilt spare me this, and spare thy soul
This unmatched sin.

V:3:36 ALAR.

I had exhausted suffering
Ere I could speak to thee. I claim thine oath.

V:3:37 ORAN.

One moment, yet one moment. This is sudden
As it is terrible.

V:3:38 ALAR.

The womb is ripe,
And thou art but the midwife of the birth
I have engendered.

V:3:39 ORAN.

Think how fair she is,
How gracious, how devoted!

V:3:40 ALAR.

Need I thee
To tell me what she is!

V:3:41 ORAN.

Thy children's mother.

V:3:42 ALAR.

Would she were not! Another breast should bear
My children.

V:3:43 ORAN.

Thou inhuman bloody man --

It shall not be, it cannot, cannot be.
I tell thee, tyrant, there's a power abroad
E'en now that crashes thee. The storm that raged
Blows from a mystic quarter. 'Tis the hand
Of Allah guides the tempest of this night.

V:3:44 ALAR.
Thine oath, thine oath!

V:3:45 ORAN.
Accursed be the hour
Thou sparedst my life!

V:3:46 ALAR.
Thine oath, I claim thine oath.
Nay, Moor, what is it? 'Tis a life, and thou
Hast learnt to rate existence at its worth.
A life, a woman's life! Why, sack a town,
And thousands die like her. My faithful Oran,
Come let me love thee, let me find a friend
When friends can prove themselves. It's not an oath
Vowed in our sunshine ease, that shows a friend;
'Tis the tempestuous mood like this, that calls
For faithful service.

V:3:47 ORAN.
Hah! the Emir's blood
Cries for this judgment. It was sacred seed.

V:3:48 ALAR.
It flowed to clear thine honour. Art thou he
That honour loved so dearly. that he scorned
Betrayal of a foe, although that foe
Had changed him to a bravo?

V:3:49 ORAN.
Let me kiss
Thy garment's hem, and grovel it thy feet --
I pray, I supplicate -- my lord, my lord --
Absolve me from that oath!

V:3:50 ALAR.
I had not thought
To claim it twice. It seems I lacked some judgment
In man, to deem that honour might be found
In hired stabbers.

V:3:51 ORAN.
Hah! I vowed to thee
A life for that which thou didst spare -- 'tis well.
The debt is paid.

[Stabs himself and falls.]

[Enter the COUNTESS from the inner Chamber.]

V:3:52 COUN.

I cannot sleep -- my dreams are full of woe!
Alarcos! my Alarcos! Hah! dread sight!
Oran!

V:3:53 ORAN.

O, spare her; 'tis no sacrifice
If she be spared.

V:3:54 COUN.

Wild words! Thou dost not speak.
O, speak, Alarcos! speak!

V:3:55 ORAN.

His voice is death.

V:3:56 COUN.

Ye Saints uphold me now, for I am weak
And lost. What means this? Oran dying! Nay --
Alarcos! I'm a woman. Aid me, aid me.
Why's Oran thus? O, save him, my Alarcos!
Blood! And why shed? Why, let us staunch his wounds.
Why are there wounds? He will not speak. Alarcos,
A word, a single word! Unhappy Moor!
Where is thy hurt?

[Kneels by ORAN.]

V:3:57 ORAN.

That hand! This is not death;
'Tis Paradise.

[Dies.]

V:3:58 ALAR.

[advancing in soliloquy]

He sets me great examples.
'Tis easier than I deemed; a single blow
And his bold soul has fled. His lavish life
Enlists me in quick service. Quit that dark corpse;
He died as did become a perjured traitor.

V:3:59 COUN.

To whom, my lord?

V:3:60 ALAR.

To all Castille perchance.
Come hither, wife. Before the morning breaks
A lengthened journey waits thee. Art prepared?

V:3:61 COUN.

[springing to ALARCOS]

I will not go. Alarcos, dear Alarcos,
Thy look is terrible! What mean these words?
Why should'st thou spare me? Why should Oran die?
The veil that clouds thy mind -- I'll rend it. Tell me --
Yea! I'll know all. A power supports me now --
Defies even thee.

V:3:62 ALAR.

A traitor's troubled tongue
Disturbs thy mind. I tell thee, thou must leave
This castle promptly.

V:3:63 COUN.

Not to Burgos -- say
But that. I will not go. That fatal woman --
Her shadow's on thy soul.

V:3:64 ALAR.

No, not to Burgos.
'Tis not to Burgos that thy journey tends.
The children sleep?

V:3:65 COUN.

Spite of the storm.

V:3:66 ALAR.

Go -- kiss them.
Thou canst not take them with thee. To thy chamber --
Quick to thy chamber.

[The COUNTESS as if about to speak, but ALARCOS stops her.]

Nay, time presses, wife.

[The COUNTESS slowly re-enters her Chamber.]

V:3:67 ALAR.

I am alone -- with Death. And will she look
Serene as this? The visage of a hero
Stamped with a martyred end! Thou noble Moor!
What if thy fate were mine! Thou art at rest:
No dark fulfilment waits o'er thee. The tomb
Hath many charms.

[The COUNTESS calls.]

V:3:68 COUN.

Alarcos!

V:3:69 ALAR.

Ay, anon.
Why did she tell me that she lived? Methought
It was all past. I came to confront death;
And we have met. This sacrificial blood --
What, bears it no atonement? 'Twas an offering
Fit for the Gods.

[The midnight bell.]

She waits me now; her hand
Extends a diadem; my achieveless arm
Would wither at her scorn. 'Tis thus, Solisa,
I gain thy heart and realm!

[ALARCOS moves hastily to the Chamber, which he enters;
the stage for some seconds is empty; a shriek is then heard;
ALARCOS re-appears, very pale, and slowly advances to the front of the stage.]

'Tis over and I live. I heard a sound;
Was't Oran's spirit?
I'll not rest here, and yet I dare not back.
The bodies? Nay, 'tis done -- I'll not shrink now.
I have seen death before. But is this death?
Methinks a deeper mystery. Well, 'tis done.
There'll be no hour so dark as this. I would
I had not caught her eye.

[A trumpet sounds.]

The Warder's note!
Shall I meet life again?

[Another trumpet sounds.]

[Enter the SENESCHAL.]

V:3:70 SEN.
Horsemen from Court.

V:3:71 ALAR.
The Court! I'm sick at heart. Perchance she's eager,
And cannot wait my coming.

[Enter two COURTIERS.]

Well, good sirs!

V:3:72 1ST COURT.
Alas, my lord.

V:3:73 ALAR.

I live upon thy words.
What now?

V:3:74 1ST COURT.
We have rode post, my lord.

V:3:75 ALAR.
Bad news
Flies ever. 'Tis the King?

V:3:76 1ST COURT.
Alas!

V:3:77 ALAR.
She's ill.
My horse, my horse there!

V:3:78 1ST COURT.
Nay, my lord, not so.

V:3:79 ALAR.
Why then I care for nought.

V:3:80 1ST COURT.
Unheard-of horror!
The storm, the storm --

V:3:81 ALAR.
I rode in it.

V:3:82 1ST COURT.
Methought
Each flash would fire the Citadel; the flame
Wreathed round its pinnacles, and poured in streams
Adown the pallid battlements. Our revellers
Forgot their festival, and stopped to gaze
On the portentous vision. When behold!
The curtained clouds re-opened, and a bolt
Came winged from the startling blue of heaven,
And struck -- the Infanta!

V:3:83 ALAR.
There's a God of Vengeance.

V:3:84 1ST COURT.
She fell a blighted corpse. Amid the shrieks
Of women, prayers of hurrying multitudes,
The panic and the stir we sought for thee;
The King's overwhelmed.

V:3:85 ALAR.
My wife's at least a Queen,
She reigns in Heaven. The King's o'erwhelmed -- poor man

Go tell him, sirs, the Count Alarcos lived
To find a hell on earth; yet thus he sought
A deeper and a darker.

[Falls.]

- The End -

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