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SCENE I. Without the Florentine camp.

Enter Second French Lord, with five or six other Soldiers in ambush

Second Lord

He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.
When you sally upon him, speak what terrible
language you will: though you understand it not
yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to
understand him, unless some one among us whom we
must produce for an interpreter.

First Soldier

Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

Second Lord

Art not acquainted with him? knows he not thy voice?

First Soldier

No, sir, I warrant you.

Second Lord

But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

First Soldier

E'en such as you speak to me.

Second Lord

He must think us some band of strangers i' the
adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of
all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every
one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we
speak one to another; so we seem to know, is to
know straight our purpose: choughs' language,
gabble enough, and good enough. As for you,
interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch,
ho! here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep,
and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLLES

PAROLLES

Ten o'clock: within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: they begin to smoke me; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

Second Lord

This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

PAROLLES

What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in exploit: yet slight ones will not carry it; they will say, 'Came you off with so little?' and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

Second Lord

Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?

PAROLLES

I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

Second Lord

We cannot afford you so.

PAROLLES

Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.

Second Lord

'Twould not do.

PAROLLES

Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

Second Lord

Hardly serve.

PAROLLES

Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel.

Second Lord

How deep?

PAROLLES

Thirty fathom.

Second Lord

Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

PAROLLES

I would I had any drum of the enemy's: I would swear
I recovered it.

Second Lord

You shall hear one anon.

PAROLLES

A drum now of the enemy's,--

Alarum within

Second Lord

Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

All

Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo.

PAROLLES

O, ransom, ransom! do not hide mine eyes.

They seize and blindfold him

First Soldier

Boskos thromuldo boskos.

PAROLLES

I know you are the Muskos' regiment:
And I shall lose my life for want of language;
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,
Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll
Discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

First Soldier

Boskos vauvado: I understand thee, and can speak
thy tongue. Kerely bonto, sir, betake thee to thy
faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

PAROLLES

O!

First Soldier

O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulce.

Second Lord

Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

First Soldier

The general is content to spare thee yet;
And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on
To gather from thee: haply thou mayst inform
Something to save thy life.

PAROLLES

O, let me live!
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,

Their force, their purposes; nay, I'll speak that
Which you will wonder at.

First Soldier

But wilt thou faithfully?

PAROLLES

If I do not, damn me.

First Soldier

Acordo linta.
Come on; thou art granted space.

Exit, with PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within

Second Lord

Go, tell the Count Rousillon, and my brother,
We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled
Till we do hear from them.

Second Soldier

Captain, I will.

Second Lord

A' will betray us all unto ourselves:
Inform on that.

Second Soldier

So I will, sir.

Second Lord

Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

Exeunt