



Where there's a will, there's a way.

DONA FRANCESCA. 'Tis well. You will return shortly,
and receive my orders. (Lopez
respectfully kisses her hand.)

Act 1. Scene 1.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY.

A Comic Drama,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN MADDISON MORTON,

MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY,

AUTHOR OF

*Box and Cox, Two Bonnycastles, Who stole the Pocket Book,
The Midnight Watch, Poor Pillicoddy, Going to the Derby, Old
Honesty, Grimshaw, Done on both Sides, Young England,
The King and I, My Wife's Second Floor, The Double-
Bedded Room, Wedding Breakfast, Milliner's
Holiday, The Irish Tiger, Who's the Com-
poser? Who do they take me for? The
Attic Story, Brother Ben, Who's my
Husband? Thumping Legacy,
&c., &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, NORTH, STRAND,

LONDON.

909409

First performed at the New Strand Theatre,
September 6th, 1849.

Characters.

DON MANUEL.....	MR. LEIGH MURRAY.
DON SCIPIO DE POMPOLINO.....	MR. COMPTON.
DON LOPEZ AVILA.....	MR. W. FARREN, JUN.
SECRETARY OF STATE.....	MR. SANGER.
OFFICER.....	MR. GEOFFRY.
SERVANT.....	MR. MONTAGUE.
DONA FRANCESCA, PRINCESS REGENT OF PORTUGAL.....	MRS. STIRLING.
DONA BLANCHE DE TAVORA.....	MISS ADAMS.

Costumes.

DON MANUEL.—Green military frock coat with red facing, and richly trimmed with gold lace, white vest and breeches, white belt and sword, jack boots, spurs, cocked hat trimmed with white feathers, white lace neck tie, and powdered wig.

DON LOPEZ.—Dark blue velvet old-fashioned coat, pink satin vest, embroidered with silver, black satin breeches, silk stockings over the knee, garters below, shoes and buckles, cocked hat and powdered wig, sword.

DON SCIPIO.—Embroidered slate satin old-fashioned coat and breeches, white embroidered vest, silk stockings over the knee, garters below, shoes and buckles, cocked hat, powdered wig and sword.

SECRETARY.—Old-fashioned black suit, black silk stockings, shoes and buckles, powdered wig.

OFFICER.—White military frock, blue facings, gold lace, white vest and breeches, jack boots, powdered wig.

SERVANT.—Old-fashioned brown livery, silver lace, powdered wig.

DONA FRANCESCA.—Black velvet dress, hat and white feathers, blue band across shoulder with order, powdered wig. *Second dress*—White satin evening dress, embroidered with silver.

BLANCHE.—White satin dress, embroidered with silk, powdered wig.

Time in Representation, 1 hour.

✓X6385372

Arch.

Small
Chair Table

Chair Small
Table

Portug.
Table.

Chair
of State

Chair

Chair

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY.

SCENE.—*An Apartment in the Regent's Palace, Centre arch, backed by an interior. Practicable window, 3 E. R. discovered open. A large round table, R. with green cover, on which is a quantity of written papers, ordinances, proclamations, &c. Inkstand, pens, portfolio, writing paper, books, and Gazette. Chair R. of table, and chair of state and footstool, L. of table. Two chairs and small table at back, L. Small table, and one chair at back, R.*

Enter DON MANUEL, L. C. followed by OFFICER.

MAN. (R.) Is the Princess Regent still closeted with her ministers?

OFF. Yes, your Grace—but if you Highness wishes—

MAN. Grace! Highness! It is very evident, my good friend, that you are but a {very} recent importation into our good city of Lisbon, or you would know that I am simply Don Manuel, a Portuguese gentleman, husband of the Princess Regent, and Colonel of her Guards. Beyond that, I am nobody—a political cypher, my good friend—for I am not even admitted into the council chamber. You will therefore let me know the moment the long-headed gentlemen who condescended to conduct the affairs of the country have brought their important deliberations to a close. (**OFFICER** retires up, L. aside) I'd wager one half of them are fast asleep—and, heaven knows, none of them were ever particularly wide awake!

OFF. (comes down L.) Yes, your Grace—I mean, your Highness, that is—

MAN. My good friend, take my advice—don't spoil a good soldier by becoming a bad courtier. Leave me. (*Exit OFFICER, c. l.*) By St. Jago, but mine is a singular position! I think I may take upon myself to assert that I am the only husband in Portugal who is not allowed to see or speak to his wife whenever he thinks proper. To be sure, a good many husbands might not think that a hardship—but I do, for I'm unfashionable enough to love my wife. Dear Francesca! Besides, as the husband of the first lady in the land, I consider it my duty to set a proper example to all other married men. Heyday! Who have we here? (*seats himself l. of table in state chair, and reads a book*)

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Enter DON SCIPIO and OFFICER, C. L.

SCIPIO. (*to OFFICER, as he enters*) You are sure that her Highness, the Princess Regent, will pass this way on leaving the council chamber?

OFF. (*at back, l.*) Yes sir.

SCIPIO. Thank you. I'm obliged to you. Here—(*offering money*)

OFF. Excuse me, sir. I am a soldier!

SCIPIO. (c.) I beg your pardon, sir. I apologize, sir—I apologize several times, sir—in short, I'll go on apologizing for any length of time you think proper to mention, sir, (*OFFICER goes out c. l. aside*) That's a remarkable man! It shan't be my fault if that man's name isn't handed down to the latest posterity. I don't know his name, but that's not important. (*seeing DON MANUEL*) I wonder who this gentleman is? (*bowing to DON MANUEL*) Good morning, sir! (*DON MANUEL takes no notice*) Are you aware, sir, that I was civil enough to say, "Good morning, sir?"

MAN. The same to you, sir. (*aside*) Who can this be come to rob me of the few moments that I hoped to pass alone with Francesca!

SCIPIO. You are, doubtless, waiting the arrival of her most illustrious—I might say, her most stupendous Highness, sir?

MAN. I am, Sir. And, I must confess, with some little impatience. (*with intention*)

SCIPIO. Oh, only a *little* impatience! Then perhaps, my very dear sir, you won't mind giving up your turn to me, for I'm literally panting with impatience to bask in the sunshine of her most magnificent Highness's presence.

MAN. (*rising*) Indeed! And pray may I ask wherefore?

SCIPIO. Simply, because I wish her to see me. I wish her to fix one, or both of her royal eyes upon me—if it's only for a moment—for I have invariably found, if I make an impression at all, it's always at first sight.

MAN. In other words, you mean that the less you are known, the more you are liked. I begin to be entirely of your opinion.

SCIPIO. (*bowing*) You're very good? Between you and me, sir, my coming to court was altogether a sudden idea. The fact is, I'm rather remarkable for sudden ideas!

MAN. You are quite right to mention the fact, sir—for I assure you I should not have given you credit for ideas of any kind whatever!

SCIPIO. You're very good! Yes, it was only yesterday morning that I said to myself, "My dear Don Scipio de Pompolino," said I—

MAN. Oh, you are Don Scipio de Pompolino?

SCIPIO. Yes, sir. Perhaps you are not aware, sir, that the Pompolino's were created about the middle of the fourteenth century?

MAN. (*aside*) I wish with all my soul they had been extinct before the middle of the eighteenth!

SCIPIO. Well sir—(*DON MANUEL gives a loud yawn*) I hope you're better, sir.

MAN. Really, sir, your conversation is so remarkably lively and entertaining—

SCIP. You're very good! Well, sir, you must know that I look upon myself as an abominably ill-used person!

MAN. Pshaw! Then why don't you demand satisfaction? That's my way!

SCIP. It may be *your* way, but it doesn't happen to be *my* way! Besides, you wouldn't have me become a parricide, and kill my uncle, would you?

MAN. Your uncle!

SCIP. Yes, sir, my uncle—Don Ferdinand de Pompolino, Deputy Assistant Governor of the Brazils—a man literally rolling in gold, with diamonds enough to pave half the streets in Lisbon. Well, sir—instead of dying as soon as he conveniently could—which for my sake he obviously ought to have done—I've just heard that he's married again—and to a woman, too—and not only a woman, but a young woman, too! Consequently, as I don't see much chance of my inheriting anything from him except his blessing—which, between you and me, I don't value that—(snapping his fingers)—I've determined to present myself at court, and to push my own way in *my own way*! I say *in my own way*!

MAN. (*aside*) The insufferable coxcomb! (*aloud*) I understand. You hope to find favour in one or both of the eyes of the Princess Regent?

SCIP. Understand me, my dear sir, I wouldn't give any cause of uneasiness to that poor devil of a husband of her's for the world! I don't know the man—but I believe the man to be a good, worthy, common-place, every day sort of a man. Rather an obscure family, perhaps, but that's not his fault. But, nevertheless, if nature in its mysterious dispensations *has* gifted me with more than the usual average attractions, why—

MAN. (*aside*) If it wasn't for the trouble of the things I'd throw the last of the Pompolinos out of the window!

SCIP. But as a little information is always valuable—as I suppose you occupy some sort of a kind of a post at court—may I venture to enquire what sort of a kind of a post that sort of a kind of a post is?

MAN. (*drily*) A post of confidence.

SCIP. Oh, (*aside*) Gentleman of the Back Stairs, perhaps—or Clerk of the Kitchen! (*aloud*) Then of course you see everything that passes. They *do* say that the Princess Regent is rather of a romantic turn of mind—so am I—I repeat, so am I—so that we resemble each other in that particular. I have also heard that she's by many degrees the loveliest of her sex—it's unnecessary for me to mention that we resemble each other in *that* particular. Now all I can say is, that whoever devotes himself to my interests, will not have cause to repent it—I repeat, will not have cause to repent it!

MAN. I understand you. But unfortunately I know but of one appointment at Court vacant, at present.

SCIP. And what may that appointment be?

MAN. That of Court Fool!

SCIP. (*after a pause*) Well, I am not particular. I can take that till I can get something else.

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X MAN. Nay, I fear you would fill the duties of the office so efficiently, that your resignation would not be accepted.

SCIP. You're very good! But, tell me—touching this husband—this Don Manuel—couldn't one contrive to get on his blind side, eh?

MAN. You can try.

SCIP. I suppose, like the rest of us, he has his little peculiarities.

MAN. One, especially. He has the tact to distinguish between folly and impertinence. The one he laughs at—the other he chastises!

SCIP. Well, luckily I don't mind being laughed at. In fact, I rather like it!

MAN. Here comes her Highness! (*retires up to back, L.*)

SCIP. (L.) Ahem! (*drawing himself up, and placing himself in an attitude.*) DONA FRANCESCA enters, c. L. attended by SECRETARY OF STATE and OFFICER. *aside*) I hope she'll fix her royal eyes on me as soon as she conveniently can, for I can't stand in this attitude long!

DONA F. (*to SECRETARY, who stands on her L.*) You will immediately announce the result of our deliberations to the Court of Spain. If she acquiesces, well and good—if not, we must draw the sword, and throw away the scabbard!

SCIP. (*aside*) I shan't throw away mine, because it happens to be a very handsome one! Wheugh! (*changing his leg*)

DONA F. You will, however, invite his Excellency, the Spanish Ambassador, to our ball to-night. Both courtesy and policy require it. (*SECRETARY retires, and OFFICER advances on her L. to OFFICER*) Has our newly appointed Maid of Honour arrived?

OFF. No, your Highness.

DONA F. Let her be introduced the moment she presents herself. (*OFFICER retires up, and converses with SECRETARY*) Dear Blanche! I quite long to see her?

SCIP. (*aside—changing his leg*) Wheugh! (*DON MANUEL comes to L. C.*)

DONA F. (R. C. *seeing DON MANUEL*) Ah, Don Manuel! (*smiling*)

MAN. (L. C.) Francesca! (*about to advance—stops and bows*) Your Highness's most devoted servant!

DONA F. (*seeing DON SCIPIO*) A stranger!

MAN. (*nudging SCIPIO*) Now's your time! (*crosses to L.*) I give up my turn to you! (*aside*) I shall get rid of him all the sooner!

SCIP. (L. C. *bowing repeatedly*) May it please your most majestic Highness—

DONA F. (C.) True—I remember. I presume you are our new Master of the Ceremonies that we are expecting for our ball to-night?

SCIP. Master of the Ceremonies! Me? Your Highness graciously condescends to—to—put the saddle on the wrong horse—(*MANUEL nudges him*)—that is—I beg to inform your Highness that—

bma. 3^a man. Seip.^o

MAN. (*aside to him*) You'll put your foot in it, if you don't take care!

SCIP. That you'll put your foot in it, if you don't take care!

MAN. (*aside to him*) That's a settler!

SCIP. That's a settler!

DONA F. What is it you require, sir?

SCIP. (*takes letter from pocket*) That your Highness will read this letter. It contains a powerful recommendation in my favour from one of my nearest and most illustrious relatives—

MAN. (*aside—sharply*) Your grandmother!

SCIP. My grandmother! No—not my grandmother—my cousin, Admiral Villaflor.

DONA F. 'Tis well! (*turns her back upon him*)

MAN. (*aside to Scipio*) There—that'll do for the first interview.

SCIP. Do you think I've made an impression?

MAN. (*smiling*) Decidedly! (*DONA FRANCESCA waves her hand—the SECRETARY and OFFICER bow, and exit c. l.—aside to Scipio*) Did you observe that—(*imitating Francesca*)

SCIP. I did—and exquisitely graceful it was! (*imitating*)

MAN. Then why don't you go? She wishes to be alone.

SCIP. Then why don't you go?

MAN. My duty compels me to remain!

SCIP. Then, my dear friend, take this—(*giving letter*)—and present it to her Highness at the very first opportunity: and, as I said before, if once I get into favour I'll do something for you. Rely upon it, worthy man, I'll do something for you! (*to Francesca*) Your Highness, I take my leave—(*backing to c. d. and bowing*)—penetrated with a combination of admiration, gratification, veneration—

DONA F. Begone!

SCIP. I fly! (*runs off c. l.*)

DONA F. (*watching him out*) Alone at last! (*holds out her hands to MANUEL*)

DONA F. (*hurriedly taking her hands*) Dear, dear Francesca! with what impatience have I awaited this moment of happiness!

DONA F. Impatience! I see no symptoms of it. (*he kisses her*) That's more like it! Now let us be comfortable while we can. There—(*seats herself in state chair, l. of table*) Sit down! (*he seats himself at a distance*) A little nearer—there's nobody looking! (*he draws his chair close to her*) How delightful it is to throw aside the trammels of rank and power, and become one's self again! Dear, dear! that cravat of yours is shamefully put on! Let me arrange it. (*while she is tying MANUEL's cravat, she suddenly laughs*) Ha, ha, ha!

MAN. What's the matter?

DONA F. I was only wondering what my stupid old Chancellor of the Exchequer would say if he could see me. Ha, ha, ha!

MAN. He would say that you are the best of women, and I the happiest of men!

DONA F. (*with affectionate earnestness, taking MANUEL's hand*) And are you happy Manuel?

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MAN. (*smiling*) Do you love me, Francesca?

DONA F. With all my soul!

MAN. Then why ask me if I am happy? To be sure, perhaps—

DONA F. What?

MAN. N-nothing!

DONA F. Nothing? That "nothing" means something!

MAN. Then, to be honest with you—You'll not be offended?

DONA F. Honesty is not so common, that we can afford to quarrel with it. Go on—

MAN. Then I do most heartily grudge the hours you devote to public affairs.

DONA F. Not more than I do, I assure you!

MAN. Surely your sapient ministers might, in some measure, relieve you.

DONA F. No, Manuel, I have a duty—a sacred duty, to perform, and I will leave nothing to others that I can do myself.

MAN. You are an angel!

DONA F. No, Manuel—I am only a woman!

MAN. Well, that's much the same thing!

DONA F. Heigho!

MAN. May I enquire the meaning of that "Heigho?"

DONA F. Look at that table, literally covered with decrees, ordinances, and proclamations, which I must sign.

MAN. Of course—the business of the nation must not be neglected. So be it—and I will sit near you.

DONA F. Yes, near me—but not *too* near me. (*smiling*)

MAN. (*rises pettishly, and takes his chair to L.*) True! I must not forget that in becoming the husband of the Regent of Portugal, I abjured all interference in politics for the remainder of my life.

DONA F. It was no great sacrifice on your part, Manuel, believe me. (*signs papers*) Consider the cares, the toils, the anxieties, which you have escaped!

MAN. You don't seem to mind them *much*.

DONA F. I never shrink from my *duty*! (*signing*)

MAN. Why should you, when its performance is obviously a pleasure.

DONA F. Nay, Manuel—in marrying you, I, as it were, divided my existence into two parts. As a woman, I gave myself to you—as the Regent, to my country!

MAN. Heaven knows, I have no reason to complain! (*approaches, and places chair by her side*)

DONA F. (*complacently*) Nor my country either, I flatter myself?

MAN. Certainly not!

DONA F. (*taking up a paper*) Ah, here is indeed an important matter, and one that requires some little consideration. (*turns, and sees MANUEL looking intently at it—she smiles, and lays down the paper—MANUEL bows, and impatiently moves his chair against flat, L., DONA F. r. c.*) Nay, Manuel—listen to me. (*MANUEL comes down L. c.*) When I promised that my husband should hold himself at a distance from the crown—from the crown, not from his wife (*affectionately taking his arm—they walk from R. to L.*)—it

was to secure his happiness and my own. You know, as well as I do, the pride and jealousy of our ancient Portuguese nobility, and had you not consented to the conditions they thought proper to impose, our marriage must have been deferred till my brother Joseph was of age to ascend the throne—

MAN. Two years—an eternity!

DONA F. You, therefore, sacrificed your ambition—that was nothing—but you likewise relinquished the pleasure of serving your friends. That *was* a sacrifice—and yet such were the only means left to us to disarm envy, hatred, calumny! For were I to distinguish your friends, their talent would be denied—their merits criticised—their very virtues slandered! Therefore, let me again implore you, my dear husband, to introduce no one to my notice—to recommend no one to my favour—for my very love for you will not permit me to serve *them*—on the contrary—

MAN. (*smiles*) On the contrary! Surely that's going a little beyond the conditions.

DONA F. Nay, and to prove it—(*goes to table, and takes up paper*)—here is a vacant office, for which there are two candidates—their merits are so nicely balanced, that it would have been difficult to decide between them—but luckily one of them is known to be *your* friend, consequently I have no longer any hesitation in appointing the other. (*signs paper*)

MAN. (*aside*) Well, that's pleasant for *my* friend!

DONA F. (*seats herself*) But I forget. I have some important papers to peruse.

MAN. (*goes to her*) I'm sure if I can be of the least assistance—

DONA F. (*with some little severity*) You!

MAN. I beg your pardon! No, no—of course not. At any rate before you go, allow me to ask one little favour.

DONA F. A favour?

MAN. (*quickly*) Don't be alarmed, it's not a public matter—on the contrary, it is strictly *private*—entirely between ourselves. (*aside*) Hang it, I needn't be afraid—the ancient nobility are not looking! (*kisses her*)

Enter OFFICER, c. l. MANUEL crosses to L.

OFF. The Envoy from the Court of Saxony craves an audience of your Highness.

DONA F. (*impatiently*) This evening or to-morrow—(*the OFFICER is about to retire*) Stay! (*aside*) I suppose I must see this most prosy of diplomatists. Besides, it is but a few minutes' martyrdom. (*to OFFICER*) 'Tis well! (*to DON MANUEL*) Colonel—(*presents her hand*—DON MANUEL *kisses it, and leads her with great formality to the back*. *As she goes out, aside*) I'll soon return!

(*Exit c. and l., the OFFICER during this has been to table, takes portfolio under his arm, salutes DON MANUEL, and follows FRANCESCA*)

MAN. She's a charming creature! Such a grace in everything she does! There's something fascinating even in her style of reminding me of my utter insignificance!

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DON LOPEZ. (*without, u. e. r.*) In this apartment? Don't trouble yourself! (*he enters at c.*) My dear Don Manuel!

MAN. Don Lopez, a thousand welcomes! But how long have you been in Lisbon?

LOP. Not quite an hour and a half. I have just arrived from France.

MAN. And your first visit is to me. That's kind of you. That's what I like! (*shaking his hand heartily*)

LOP. I have a motive my dear friend—and, I fear, a selfish one.

MAN. (*warmly*) Tell me how I can serve you, and consider it done.

LOP. I knew you'd say so. (*shaking his hand*) Then listen, and with patience, if you can. When I left Lisbon two years ago, I left my heart behind me—

MAN. (*smiling*) You mean figuratively?

LOP. In other words, I loved a young lady, Oh, Don Manuel, such a creature! Young, beautiful, amiable, and accomplished! —in short, absolute perfection!

MAN. Of course—they're all absolute perfection. Go on!

LOP. She loved me in return—

MAN. Or she wouldn't have been all perfection. Go on!

LOP. In short, everything was bright—

MAN. Except you—or you wouldn't have gone away and left her. However, here you are again: and now, of course you're going to marry her.

LOP. Alas, she's no longer in Lisbon. She's in the Brazils, and I—

MAN. Ought to be in the Brazils, too—that's very clear!

LOP. She writes me word that her old brute of a guardian—

MAN. Of course—guardians are always brutes. Go on!

LOP. Has dared to propose another marriage to her, and she implores me to embark without loss of time, and boldly assert my claim to her hand.

MAN. Then why don't you go? You might have been half way there in the time you have taken to tell the story.

LOP. Alas, her guardian is too proud a man to bestow the hand of his ward on the son of an exile. For my father was an exile, although his punishment was unjust. Besides I am without fortune, save what I can earn with my sword. But you, my dear friend—you may assist me.

MAN. I'll go through fire and water to serve you!

LOP. A thousand thanks!

MAN. Now, speak—make haste—what can I do for you?

LOP. Present me to your wife—the Princess Regent.

MAN. Of course I will. Come along—(*taking his arm*)

LOP. And solicit some employment for me as your *particular friend*—

MAN. (*suddenly struck with a recollection*) As my particular friend! (*aside*) The devil! (*disengaging his arm from LOPEZ, and crosses to L.*)

LOP. But of course it *must* be in the Brazils.

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MAN. Y-es—yes. Of course, as you say, it *must* be in the Brazils! (*aside*) Here's a pleasant situation!

LOP. I don't require any very important appointment.

MAN. That's lucky!

LOP. Indeed, I should be perfectly satisfied even with a Lieutenantancy.

MAN. Ah—yes, yes!

LOP. (*observing him*) I hope I have not been indiscreet?

MAN. (*quickly*) Oh, no! The fact is, I was thinking—considering—

LOP. How you might serve me better? That's very kind of you. Of course I'd rather be a Captain.

MAN. (*aside*) He'd rather be a Captain! I thought he'd rather be a Captain! and I couldn't even make him a Drummer, much less a Corporal! (*aside*)

LOP. Now as your wife couldn't possibly refuse you, why not say Major at once?

MAN. Of course not. Why not? You may as well make it a General—or Commander-in-chief at once! Don't be modest. (*aside*) This is what I call a remarkable, agreeable little incident altogether! If I tell him the truth, he'll not believe me! (*aloud*) The fact is, my dear friend—it's very absurd—but, somehow or other, Lieutenants abound just now. Yes, they do, indeed, and as for Captains, they literally swarm! (*aside*) I'm ashamed to tell him, but I must! (*aloud*) In short, the fact is that the Portuguese nobility, backed by my old wife—I should say, the old wife—I mean, the old nobility—that is, in short—(*aside*) I flatter myself no man ever cut a more ridiculous figure than I do! (*aloud*) To be brief, you see—you perfectly understand me!

LOP. I am afraid I *do* understand. Don Manuel, forgive my importunity, and permit me to retire. (*proudly, going up c.*)

MAN. (*running after him, and dragging him back by the arm*) No such thing! I won't forgive you, and I won't permit you to retire! (*warmly*) I'm your friend, I always will be your friend—and what's more, I'd serve you in spite of all the ancient nobility in the kingdom! (*aside*) I don't exactly know *how*, but never mind that!

LOP. Explain!

MAN. I haven't time. Does any one know that you are *my* friend?

LOP. No.

MAN. Then don't mention it. (*crosses r.*) Act openly I cannot. If he could only have been presented by somebody else—(*aloud*) Ah—yes:

LOP. What?

MAN. What's that to you? I have it! (*taking out letter which Pompolino has given him, and reading it*) Umph! (*reads*) "A young and noble cavalier—the bearer of these—deign to receive him with favour"—&c. &c. No name—no detail? The very thing! Hurrah! But, hold! am I justified in taking his letter? Of course I am. (*He would have taken my wife!*) (*aloud, and*

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crosses to l.) Here, Lopez, present yourself with this. Don't ask any questions, but present yourself.

LOP. But, my dear friend—

MAN. (quickly) I'm not your dear friend—I'm not your friend at all. I never saw you in my life before—remember that! (hastily seats himself in state chair, and pretends to read a paper)

LOP. He's slightly mad! (retires to l.)

Enter DONA FRANCESCA, c. from l. not perceiving LOPEZ.

DONA F. (to MANUEL) You see I've soon returned. (DON MANUEL pretends to be reading with great earnestness) Don Manuel! (touching him on the shoulder)

MAN. (with pretended astonishment) Ah! a thousand pardons! (rises, and comes down r.)

DONA F. An interesting document, apparently!

MAN. Exceedingly so. I was quite absorbed.

DONA F. So I should think, for you are holding the paper upside down!

MAN. (aside) Wheugh!

DONA F. (seeing DON LOPEZ—with evident annoyance) Another stranger?

MAN. A stranger! Where? (pretending surprise at seeing DON LOPEZ) Ha! How strange I should not have noticed him. Probably, I was so—

DONA F. Absorbed!

MAN. Exactly! (aloud) And pray, young gentleman, how did you get here?

LOP. (surprised) Get here?

MAN. Yes, sir—get here. I speak intelligibly, I hope? But, however, as it seems you are here, perhaps you'll explain your motive for being here?

LOP. (astonished) My dear—(DON MANUEL makes signs to him to be quiet)

DONA F. Really, Don Manuel, I see no necessity for this violence.

MAN. I beg your Highness's pardon—this is no public thoroughfare! Is no part of the palace to be safe from impudent intrusion? Leave the room, sir! (with pretended anger—then shaking his head aside, to tell him not to go—DON LOPEZ perfectly bewildered)

DONA F. (with dignity) I have yet to learn, Don Manuel, that I am not at liberty to give audience when and where I think proper.

MAN. Certainly, your Highness. (aside) The spirit of contradiction's at work already! (aloud) I wasn't aware your Highness would receive any audiences to-day. However, as I have a gentleman to present—(turns up r. to c.)

DONA F. (surprised) You!

LOP. He's going to present somebody else! (aside)

MAN. (looking off c. l.) And luckily, here he comes!

Enter SCIPIO, c. from L.

Come in, my dear friend—you're just in time (*takes his hand, and leads him down, R.*) Your Highness will permit me to present to you this youthful, elegant, and accomplished cavalier—

SCIPI. (*aside to him*) That's right—do me justice! (*putting himself in an elegant attitude*)

MAN. Don—Don—

SCIPI. (*aside*) Scipio—

MAN. Don Scipio de Pompo—

SCIPI. (*aside*) Lino! Don't forget my "lino!"

MAN. Recommended to the favour of your Highness by—his—uncle—

SCIPI. (*aside*) His cousin!

MAN. His cousin, Admiral Villaflor!

SCIPI. In a letter, which—(*nudging MANUEL to produce the letter*)—I say, in a letter, which—

MAN. Exactly! In a letter, which more than confirms the exalted opinion I have had of him for years!

SCIPI. (*aside*) For years? Come, he goes it, when he does begin!

MAN. In short, when I assure your Highness that his personal attractions—

SCIPI. Oh!

MAN. Are only to be exceeded by his mental qualifications.

SCIPI. Oh!

DONA F. (*angrily*) That's enough!

SCIPI. (*aside to DON MANUEL*) She says that's enough!

MAN. (*aside to him*) Yes—I think you'll find it quite enough!

DONA F. (*aside*) So soon after our conversation! This urgent appeal in favour of another—and that other *his* friend! It is thoughtless of him—inconsistent—disrespectful!

SCIPI. (*crosses to c.*) May I venture to flatter myself that your august—I might say, your most transcendent Highness—

DONA F. (*coldly*) Don Scipio de Pompolino may fully rely on all the advantages he is likely to obtain from possessing so zealous, so devoted an advocate in *his* friend! (*haughtily and throwing a disdainful look at MANUEL*)

SCIPI. (*aside*) I shall be Admiral of the Fleet in a few days!

MAN. (*aside*) Poor devil! I wouldn't give much for his chance!

LOP. (*coming to L. H. from back*) Well, this is the strangest way of "going through fire and water" to serve me!

MAN. All Don Scipio solicits is a few moments' audience (*crosses to c.*)

DONA F. Perhaps this gentleman requires an audience too? (*pointing to DON LOPEZ, graciously*)

LOP. (*approaching her*) Most anxiously—most—

MAN. (*R. c.*) Softly—softly, young gentleman. Don Scipio was here before you.

DONA F. No, no—pardon me—after him.

MAN. I beg your Highness's pardon—but—

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DONA F. (*angrily*) Pray, Don Manuel, who has constituted you our Master of the ceremonies? I shall receive these gentlemen in the order that I think proper! (DON LOPEZ bows)

MAN. (*aside to SCIPIO*) Never mind—don't despair!

SCIPI. (*aside*) I never do!

MAN. (*aloud to SCIPIO*) Her Highness will receive you at a more favourable opportunity. Let me see—yes, during the ball this evening. (*turns up L.*)

DONA F. (*aside*) He presumes to invite him to my ball! This is intolerable!

SCIPI. (*aside*) If there is *one thing* I shine in more than another, that one thing is the intoxicating waltz! (*he waltzes round two or three times to c.—meets FRANCESCA's eyes fixed indignantly at him—stops suddenly, and bows*). I humbly take my leave. (*retires to c. then aside to MANUEL*) You've done a good thing for yourself! (*exit suddenly, c. and L.*)

DONA F. (*seats herself in state chair L. of table—then seeing DON MANUEL, who takes a book from table and comes down R., is not disposed to leave the room*) Don Manuel—

MAN. Your Highness—

DONA F. (*significantly*) I am about to grant an audience, Don Manuel!

MAN. I'm not listening! I'm reading politics. (*seats himself R. of table, and pretends to read a book*)

DONA F. (*after a severe look at MANUEL—to LOPEZ*) Now, sir—proceed!

LOP. Pardon my confusion, madam, but—

DONA F. (*smiling*) Nay, are we so very formidable?

LOP. Madam, I should not tremble before a Prince—but in the presence of a woman—(*warmly*)—a divinity—

MAN. (*in a patronizing tone*) Bravo! bravo! (FRANCESCA looks at him, and he hastily resumes his book)

DONA F. (*to LOPEZ*) Speak, sir—and without fear.

LOP. Nay, madam, the object of my wishes, and the sentiments that inspire them, are so—so—

MAN. (*in an ironical tone*) Ha, ha! (*silenced by another look from FRANCESCA*)

DONA F. (*looking at LOPEZ*) I see I must assist the poor young man a little. (*aloud*) You hold a letter in your hand—

LOP. Yes, madam—it—is—a—letter—(*trying to catch MANUEL's eye, who turns his back upon him*)—a letter of recommendation—

DONA F. From whom?

LOP. (*aside*) I'm sure I don't know! (*peeps into the letter*) From Admiral Villaflor. (*presents letter*)

DONA F. (*reads letter*) Our good friend, the Admiral, seems very liberal in his recommendations.

MAN. (*glumply*) And not very particular!

DONA F. Sir! (MANUEL resumes his book)

LOP. (*aside*) Does he mean to insult me?

DONA F. (*to LOPEZ*) Your name?

LOP. Don Lopez Avila, the son of a Portuguese General.

MAN. (*satirically*) And an exile!

DONA F. (*rises*) An exile no longer! We recall him to his country, and his sovereign's favour.

LOP. Oh, madam! My devotion—my gratitude—

MAN. (*aside, comes down R.*) We're getting on exceedingly well!

DONA F. And now, having done justice to the father, how can we serve the son?

LOP. By permitting him to devote his sword to your Highness's service.

MAN. (*satirically*) Oh! oh!

DONA F. (*shvrlply*) Why that exclamation, sir?

MAN. Simply, that the young gentleman's selection is an unfortunate one. Your Highness's military champions are so numerous, that there are more candidates than vacancies.

LOP. (*aside*) He does everything he can to injure me!

DONA F. I regret to say, sir, that I signed and filled up the only vacant Lieutenancy this morning.

LOP. Enough, madam. Fortune has so long ceased to smile upon me, that I should have been prepared for this. My deepest regret, however, is, that I now feel I no longer have a friend! (*pointedly, to DON MANUEL*)

MAN. Now there's gratitude! (*aside—turns up R. to back*)

LOP. Your Highness, I take my leave—(*going. DON MANUEL makes signs for him to stop*)

DONA F. Stay, sir. One of our Private Secretaries has this morning resigned his office, and the vacant appointment is at your service.

LOP. Madam, I—(*aside*) Remain here, when she I love calls me to her side—impossible! Your Highness, I—I—(*seeing DON MANUEL at back making violent signs to him to accept*) What can he be nodding his head in that-energetic manner for?

DONA F. Then you accept? (*same signs from MANUEL*)

LOP. (*after looking at MANUEL*) Yes, madam, with gratitude.

DONNA F. 'Tis well! You will return shortly, and receive my orders. (*LOPEZ respectfully kisses her hand, and retires up to MANUEL, (who is R. of C. D.) who abruptly turns his back on him, and reads book*)

LOP. As I said before—slightly mad, beyond a doubt! *Exit R.C.*

MAN. (*throwing book on table—aside*) Well, this isn't exactly the nearest way to the Brazils—but we shall get there in time! (*comes down R.*) Rather a protracted audience!

DONA F. Thanks to your interruptions!

MAN. Of course, my dear Francesca, you cannot be serious in conferring so distinguished a mark of your favour upon a total stranger—

DONA F. Nay, you forget that Don Lopez Avila is recommended by Admiral Villafior?

MAN. (*quietly*) So is Don Scipio de Pompolino!

DONA F. (*quickly*) Oh, your preference is sufficiently obvious!

MAN. (*drily*) Yours, madam, perhaps too obvious!

DONA F. (*smiling archly*) Jealous?

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MAN. Why not, madam? Princesses are but women—and I know the sex well!

DONA F. You do, do you?

MAN. By report—nothing more, of course. Hitherto the Ministers who have surrounded you have been men advanced in years—most of them fathers, some of them grandfathers—then they've been conveniently gouty, or becomingly asthmatic—but really this young Secretary is a remarkably fine, handsome, dashing fellow, and—*(aside)*—upon my life, this is *very* hard work—*(aloud)*—and—*(suddenly)* Ha!

DONA F. What is the matter?

MAN. Yes, of course. I see it all—he's the very man! I ought to have known him the moment I saw him!

DONA F. Him? Who?

MAN. Who? This presumptuous young Secretary of yours—who for some time past has been observed to watch you like your shadow. I saw him myself this very morning on the terrace, with his eyes fixed upwards. I thought at first he was looking at the moon—I mean the sun—but, no, no—his gaze was riveted on your chamber window!

DONA F. You cannot be serious, Manuel?

MAN. *(aside)* It's just as much as I can! *(aloud)* Not serious? Oh! *(taking out handkerchief, and pretending emotion)* And even now, it was evident, painfully evident, that ambition was not his motive.

DONA F. Then what could it be?

MAN. Love!

DONA F. For me?

MAN. Or me. But as that's not very probable, I can only presume that you—And yet, it's impossible—

DONA F. Nay, I don't see that it's *impossible* at all!

MAN. *(aside)* Oh, the vanity of women!

DONA F. But so improbable, that I will instantly send for Don Lopez, and he shall at once remove your absurd suspicions! *(going up c.)*

MAN. *(aside)* Zounds, that'll never do! *(aloud)* No, no! What, Francesca, compromise the dignity of the crown—and the crown's husband? Besides, of course he'd deny it before the husband. I always did!

DONA F. *(comes down)* You!

MAN. No, no, no—of course not!

DONA F. But my word is pledged to Don Lopez. How escape that difficulty?

MAN. I'm sure I don't know—unless you have him shot. Stay—a capital thought! If his presence in Lisbon isn't quite desirable, that's no reason you shouldn't employ him elsewhere. There are the Colonies—for instance, the Brazils. Why not the Brazils?

DONA F. The Brazils! Why that would be positive exile for the poor young man. However be it as you wish.

MAN. Besides, as the Lieutenantancies seem to be all gone, you can give him a Captaincy—I think there's one vacant.

DONA F. There is but *one* vacant, and that was promised yesterday to the Archbishop of Oporto.

MAN. Let the Archbishop wait. Besides, patience is a virtue, and Archbishops ought to practise what they preach. So I'll instantly have Don Lopez' commission properly executed, and the order for his immediate embarkation for the Brazils prepared. A thousand thanks!

DONA F. Ah, Manuel! you are the most despotic of husbands.

MAN. And you the most adorable of wives! (*kisses her hand—aside, retiring to r. c.*) So far, so well! A little more, and the proverb is verified, that "Where there's a will there's a way!"

Exit c. and L.

DONA F. So—sentence of banishment has been passed upon Don Lopez Avila. And what's his crime? He loves me! It's a subject's duty to love his sovereign. I must say that an act of more atrocious tyranny never was committed!

Enter SERVANT, c. from R.

SERV. (*announcing*) Dona Blanche de Tavora. (*she enters, c. from R., exit SERVANT*)

DONA F. Dear, dear Blanche!

BLANCHE. (*timidly*) Your Highness——

DONA F. I command you, Blanche de Tavora, to forget that such a word exists, and instantly throw your pretty little arms round my neck, and kiss me till we are both fairly out of breath! (*holding out her arms*)

BLANCHE. (*runs into her arms*) Dear Francesca!

DONA F. Now, first tell me—your marriage——

BLANCHE. Heigho!

DONA F. That's enough! Your guardian still insists on its taking place?

BLANCHE. He does—and has brought me from the Brazils for that horrible purpose.

DONA F. You have never seen this formidable intended?

BLANCHE. Never!

DONA F. Then perhaps you may like the fellow after all! You can't tell.

BLANCHE. Oh, yes I can—because——

DONA F. Because you like some other fellow already, eh?

BLANCHE. Yes, and one whom, perhaps, I may never see again! Oh, Francesca, what a happy lot is yours! Rank, beauty, wealth, power—and married to one who is not only your husband, but your subject.

DONA F. My dear Blanche, with such subjects as those one is always in fear of a revolution.

BLANCHE. Don Manuel——

DONA F. Is jealous!

BLANCHE. Jealous! of whom?

DONA F. Of a gentleman, who it appears, follows me like my shadow, and watches my every movement. I never noticed his conduct—not that I should have resented it if he had—because,

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after all, the poor man can't help it. Don Manuel was furious, and nothing would pacify him but the instant banishment of Don Lopez Avila from the Court.

BLANCHE. Don Lopez Avila!

DONA F. Yes. Perhaps even now, he's at his accustomed post, on the terrace—(*crosses to window, r.*)—with his eyes riveted on the window! yes—see there—'tis he!

BLANCHE. (*aside—looking behind DONA FRANCESCA*) 'Tis he, indeed—the monster!

DONA F. Look, Blanche! Don't you see how agitated he looks? (*turns round, and sees BLANCHE, who is nearly fainting*) And so do you! Blanche—dear Blanche! what ails you?

BLANCHE. Nothing! The heat—the fatigue of the voyage——

DONA F. I'll not hear a word about fatigue, for I give you fair warning, Blanche, you'll have to dance all night. Not a word—I insist upon it. So hasten to your toilet, and make yourself still more beautiful, if possible, than you are now. I mean to do so, I assure you! (*looking towards window*) Heigho! poor young man!

Exit L.

BLANCHE. So—Lopez has deceived me! and while I was braving a guardian's anger to remain true to him, he was faithless—perjured! But I'll be revenged!

Enter DON LOPEZ, hastily. c. from L.

LOP. (*sees BLANCHE*) My eyes did not deceive me! 'Tis she! Blanche—dear, dear Blanche! I thought it was a dream when I saw you there at yon window.

BLANCHE. (*coldly*) Yes, sir—we were both there.

LOP. How's this? Why this coldness, Blanche? So unlike your usual self. In mercy, explain!

Enter DON SCIPIO, c. from L., in ball dress.

SCIPIO. Well, this I will say, of all the cool proceedings——

LOP. (*aside*) What the devil brings him here?

SCIPIO. Where's my friend? You don't happen to have seen my friend, sir?

LOP. Pshaw!

SCIPIO. Then I'll tell you all about it. Just conceive, sir—the door of the ball room slammed in my face, within an inch of my nose, and by her Highness's orders, too! Now what can have caused such extraordinary conduct on the part of the crown towards me, I can't imagine, unless she's afraid of me! She needn't be! I don't come here for her! I've just ascertained that I'm going to be married. I don't know the lady—but she's young, lovely, accomplished, and rich—at least so her guardian, Don Roderigo, has told me.

BLANCHE. Don Roderigo! If you allude to Blanche de Tavora, sir, I am she!

SCIPIO. Allow me to congratulate you. (*crosses to c. DON LOPEZ turns up to back, mystified*) I am he!

BLANCHE. Who?

SCIP. Your never-to-be-sufficiently envied intended, Don Scipio de Pompolino !

BLANCHE. Indeed ! (*looking proudly at LOPEZ*) Then Don Scipio de Pompolino, here is my hand !

SCIP. (*aside*) Well, she don't take much courting ! (*about to take her hand*)

LOP. (*coming down between them—very loud*) Hold !

SCIP. (*jumps away to R.*) I wish you wouldn't sir ! You ought to give one notice when the explosion's coming.

LOP. Blanche, this is madness—folly—

SCIP. Really, my dear sir—

LOP. Silence, fool ! (*to BLANCHE*) Stay—one word, I entreat—I implore—

BLANCHE. Farewell, sir—and for ever !

Exit L.

LOP. Now, sir, instantly resign all pretensions to that lady's hand, or I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of running this sword through your body !

SCIP. Sir, painful as that operation might be to your feelings, my present impression is, that it would be still more unpleasant to mine.

LOP. 'Sdeath, sir, no trifling ! (*taking hold of his arm—in a loud whisper*) As duelling is strictly prohibited by law, we must not be overheard.

SCIP. (*very loud*) Of course—as we're going to fight a duel, we mustn't be overheard—(*shouting*)—mustn't be overheard !

LOP. Hush ! On the ramparts—in an hour—

SCIP. (*loudly*) On the ramparts, in an hour !

LOP. Silence !

SCIP. (*shouting*) Silence !

LOP. Swords—pistols—

SCIP. (*shouting*) How many ? *R.*

Enter DON MANUEL, c. l.

MAN. Swords ! What's that I hear ?

SCIP. (*sees MANUEL, crosses to LOPEZ—in a bullying tone*) Yes, sir, swords—swords, sir, and plenty of 'em ; (*pretends to see DON MANUEL—sings*) La, la, la ! You didn't see anything, eh, my dear friend ? You didn't hear me say I was going to fight a duel ? I did say so, distinctly.

MAN. (*smiling*) Not I, indeed !

SCIP. (*aside*) What a bore ! (*aloud*) Of course it's against the law, and it's your duty, your imperative duty to see the law respected. But you won't interfere, will you ? I can't help it, if you do. You won't go and give information to the nearest magistrate, will you ? There's three of them within a quarter of a mile—but you won't, will you ?

MAN. Not I, indeed !

SCIP. (*aside*) Then I will !

MAN. I'm the last man in the world to spoil sport—and to prove it, I'll be your second ! (*slaps him on the back*)

SCIP. Generous creature ! (*aside*) Sanguinary ruffian !

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LOP. Then, sir, I shall expect you at the place named in an hour.

SCIP. Or a week ! The sooner the better for me.

LOP. I will wait for you, sir,

SCIP. (at c. d.) I think it is more than probable you will ! (*draws his sword, and lunges off, c. and l.*)

MAN. Now, my dear Lopez, confess I am your friend, in spite of appearances. See here (*shews two papers*)—your appointment as Captain in the Portuguese service, and what's still more to the purpose, an order for your immediate embarkation to the Brazils. So, come to my arms ! (*MANUEL gives him a hug*)

LOP. The Brazils ! Pshaw ! What should I do in the Brazils ? She's here !

MAN. She ! Who ?

LOP. The woman I love—Dona Blanche de Tavora !

MAN. My wife's new Maid of Honour ! Zounds, then it seems I've had all my trouble for nothing, after all !

LOP. If you have served me, Don Manuel, as I am inclined, in spite of appearances, to believe, your kindness has been thrown away, for Blanche not only no longer loves me but is about to marry my rival,

MAN. Your rival ! And who may your rival be ?

LOP. Your dear friend, Don Scipio de Pompolino.

MAN. But her motive ?

LOP. Some momentary fit of anger—

MAN. Or jealousy ?

LOP. Nay, I can have given her no cause for jealousy.

MAN. I don't know that. I mean you don't know that. Tell me—had she seen my wife ?

LOP. She had that moment parted from her Highness.

MAN. (aside) Then I see it all ! Francesca has been blabbing ! The young lady's jealousy has been aroused, and I'm in a mess ! How to get out of it ? (*aloud*) My dear Lopez, if this ridiculous duel takes place, the whole Court will know your affection for Blanche.

LOP. Well : why not ?

MAN. (in an agony) But my wife will know it !

LOP. Well, why should she not know that Blanche is the only woman that I ever loved ?

MAN. Because she thinks—I mean, she believes—that is—
(aside) If he sees her, an explanation will take place, and a pretty ridiculous figure I shall cut ! (*aloud*) This duel must not take place.

LOP. It must—it shall !

MAN. It shall not ! What ho ! within there—(*OFFICER enters c. l.*) Officer, arrest Don Lopez Avila. Don Lopez deliver up your sword. (*DON LOPEZ gives sword to OFFICER, who retires to c. d.*)

LOP. Don Manuel, you shall bitterly repent this perfidy !

MAN. (to OFFICER) You will be answerable for his safe custody till the pleasure of her Highness is known. (*he crosses to OFFICER,*

and whispers) Convey him to the Blue Chamber, at the end of the corridor. Away!

LOP. (*as he passes, aside to DON MANUEL*) Traitor!

Exit with OFFICER, c. and r.

MAN. Come, I needn't be afraid of his doing any mischief. And now what's to be done next? Confess everything to Francesca—that my jealousy was assumed—in short that she has been tricked, duped, imposed upon. She'd never forgive me. I have another plan—it's a desperate one! (*SERVANT enters, c. with lighted candles, which he places on table, and is about to retire.*) Stay! (*aside*) It must be so. (*seats himself in state chair, and writes at table*) Let my travelling carriage be in readiness in the Court yard immediately.

SER. Yes, Colonel.

MAN. Stay! (*writing, folds letter, and rises*) You will deliver this letter to her Highness as she passes through this apartment on her way to the ball room.—Come this way—I'll instruct you farther.

Exit c. and L.

Enter FRANCESCA and BLANCHE, l. h. in elegant ball costume.

SERVANT passes from L. to R. behind.

DONA F. Surely, Blanche, you cannot seriously intend to bestow your hand on so ridiculous a coxcomb as this Don Scipio de Pompolino?

BLANCHE. Do not question me, Francesca, I implore.

DONA F. But your acknowledged affection for another—

BLANCHE. Speak of him no more!

DONA F. What noise is that?

BLANCHE. (*at window, r.*) One of the royal carriages leaving the palace yard. (*crosses to L. and back again*)

DONA F. And by that gate?

Enter SERVANT, c. from r. with a letter on salver.

SER. This letter for your Highness, from Don Manuel.

Exit SERVANT, c. and L.

DONA F. (*anxiously*) What can it mean? (*hurriedly opening the letter. DON MANUEL appears at c. from L. listening—she reads.*) "I have quitted the Palace rather than tamely witness the new indignity which is about to be offered to me. Don Lopez Avila not only refuses to leave Lisbon, but insists on resigning his commission into your hands *alone*. I might have chastised his presumption, but I prefer avoiding public scandal, by giving you timely notice of his intentions."

BLANCHE. His perfidy is now beyond all doubt!

DONA F. I really seem to have inspired quite a romantic attachment. Poor young man!

MAN. (*aside*) Heyday! it's him she pities!

BLANCHE. And Don Manuel—to think of leaving me at such a moment.

MAN. (*aside*) Holloa—it's me she accuses!

DONA F. Blanche, this has quite disconcerted me. Go to the

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ball room, and announce that a sudden indisposition will detain me for a short time. I wish to be alone.

BLANCHE. Yes, your Highness. (*retires back perceives DON MANUEL and utters an exclamation—DON MANUEL hastily conceals himself, L.*)

DONA F. What is it?

BLANCHE. Nothing! (*distant music heard. FRANCESCA resumes her thoughtful attitude*)

MAN. (*re-appearing, L.—aside to BLANCHE*) Hush—quick to the Blue Chamber, at the end of the corridor. All will be explained. Haste! (*BLANCHE, surprised, hurries out, c. and R.*)

DONA F. (*seats herself in state chair*) I am glad to be alone. Something must be done—and yet there can be no fear! Don Manuel's foolish jealousy has made him unjust. (*rises and crosses to L.*) This young man would never dare to present himself in the attitude of a lover—

MAN. (*behind*) I wonder what she'd do, if he did! It's worth ascertaining. (*crosses on tiptoe to table, and blows out candles. Stage dark*)

DONA F. (*slightly screaming*) Ha—who's there? Speak, or I'll scream for help! Who are you?

MAN. (*c. L. in a disguised voice*) An unhappy miserable wretch!

DONA F. 'Tis he!

MAN. Who implores you not to exile him from your beauteous presence—(*aside*)—She doesn't scream!—but to allow him to restore this hated commission into your hands. Thus, on my knees —(*falls on his knees*)

DONA F. Leave the room, sir—I implore—I command!

MAN. Never! (*aside*) She's a long time screaming!

DONA F. Should you be discovered, your life will pay the forfeit—

MAN. My life! What is my life without you? (*aside*) As I said before she's a long time screaming!

DONA F. (*proudly*) Rise, sir. This is an ungenerous, unmanly insult—and in my husband's absence—

MAN. The man to whom your cruel fate has united you—

DONA F. The man, sir, whom I am bound to love and honour—the man I do honour with my whole soul—whom I do love with my whole heart!

MAN. (*aside*) Bless her! bless her! (*aloud*) Let me, at least, possess some token of your forgiveness. Ha—this handkerchief —(*snatches her handkerchief from her and kisses it violently*).

DONA F. Hark—some one comes—fly—

MAN. Ha—the window? Farewell, Francesca—farewell for ever! (*kisses her hand, runs to the window, shuts it with violence, then crosses back on tiptoe, and quietly seats himself in chair, L. H.* SERVANT enters with lighted flambeaux, c. from R.)

SER. Will your Highness proceed to the ball room.

DONA F. Immediately! (*SERVANT lights the candles on table, bows and exit, c. and L.* FRANCESCA looks out of window). He has escaped! (*crosses to sit in state chair, sees DON MANUEL seated, looking at her*) Don Manuel here!

MAN. (*with pretended severity*) Yes, Madam, here! A very patient listener, you must confess.

DONA F. Then you heard—

MAN. (*smiles*) I heard your screams for help, and arrived in time to be witness to my own humiliation. (*rises*). Come down ~~I~~.

MAN. (*disengaging his hand*) Nay, Madam, while I do you justice—full justice—(*aside*)—I could fairly hug her to my heart—
(aloud) I cannot but feel that my honour has been outraged, publicly outraged! A man seen to leap from my wife's balcony—for he must have been seen—

DONA F. No, no!

MAN. What will be said? That this visit was intended for another? Would that it were so!

DONA F. (*quickly*) It was—it was! I was not alone! It was for another!

Enter BLANCHE and OFFICER, c. from r.

MAN. Her name?

DONA F. (*seeing BLANCHE*) Blanche de Tavora! (*hastily takes BLANCHE by the hand, brings her down on her r. aside*) Blanche, my only hope is in you. Hush! (*puts her across to DON MANUEL. To OFFICER at back*) Summon Don Lopez Avila to our presence instantly.

BLANCHE. (*aside to DON MANUEL*) I have seen him! He has explained everything.

MAN. (*aside to her*) Hush! (*BLANCHE crosses behind FRANCESCA, and comes down r.*)

Enter OFFICER and DON LOPEZ, c. from r.

DONA F. (*with a little hesitation of manner, her eyes on the ground*) Don Lopez Avila, approach!

LOP. (*approaches her l.*) Your Highness!

MAN. (*aside to LOPEZ*) Put on a sanctified look, as if you are very much ashamed of yourself.

LOP. (*aside*) Why?

MAN. (*aside*) I'll tell you presently!

DONA F. (*alarmed at seeing DON MANUEL speaking to LOPEZ*) Don Manuel, it is for me to speak to this gentleman. Don Lopez we are fully aware of the motives—the sentiments that have led you to our Court,

LOP. Oh, Madam, why should I deny that love the most ardent—the most devoted—

MAN. (*aside*) Ahem! (*strikes him a blow on the back*)

DONA F. Exactly. Love for one of our fair ladies. (*to BLANCHE*) You understand me, Blanche.

BLANCHE. (*timidly*) Yes, I think I do!

LOP. Oh, Madam, how can I ever repay—

MAN. (*aside*) Hold your tongue, do! (*another blow on the back*)

DONA F. Don Lopez, receive from me the hand of the only woman you ever loved. (*with intention*).

BLANCHE. It is true, your Highness. He has just told me so.

DONA F. (*taking his hand affectionately*) Manuel, dear Manuel.

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X RC
MAN. (*to BLANCHE, aside*) Hush !

DONA F. (*astonished*) He has just told you so ?

BLANCHE. Yes, in the Blue Chamber, at the end of the corridor, where he was confined a prisoner, by the order of Don Manuel.

MAN. Wheugh !

DONA F. Confined in the Blue Chamber ? Then he who was here but a few minutes since—

MAN. Hopes to disarm your displeasure by this token of your forgiveness—(*smiles, and presents handkerchief*)—your Highness's handkerchief !

DONA F. Ha ! (*snatches handkerchief angrily, then in a tone of affection*) Manuel, though I cannot but feel some humiliation at the deception you have practised, the trick you have played upon me, let me, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that your motive was a worthy one.

MAN. Hear it, and judge, Francesca. As I was not allowed openly to serve a friend, I was compelled to do so by stratagem. Besides, I wished it to be recorded of me, that I had made two people happy. (*points to DON LOPEZ and BLANCHE*)

Enter DON SCIPIO, c. from L.

DONA F. Welcome, Don Scipio de Pompolino. You are here to claim your bride.

SCIP. Rather ! I happen to have the consent of her guardian.

MAN. That's unfortunate : for Don Lopez happens to have the consent of his Sovereign.

SCIP. (*aside*) Holloa ! I say, my dear friend—

DONA F. Nay, speak boldly, sir: Don Manuel has no secrets from his wife. (*gives her hand to MANUEL*)

SCIP. His wife ?

MAN. Yes, I am the poor devil of a husband—ha, ha !

SCIP. (*bows to DON M.*) Oh, your grace—your highness—your omnipotence ! (*aside*) It suddenly occurs to me that I have put my foot into it !

DONA F. Then all are happy ? All ! Stay—

(*to the AUDIENCE*)

To you, who sit in judgment of our play

I make appeal, and humbly pray

For your applause. Bestow it—don't say nay—

Have but the will—you know the way.

(*imitating applause*)

SCIPIO. DON MANUEL. FRANCESCA. DON LOPEZ. BLANCHE.

Curtain.