

# POLITIAN



*Scene—Rome in the 16th century.*

*Characters:*

LALAGE, an orphan of illustrious family, last of her race, and ward of Di Broglio.

ALESSANDRA, niece of Di Broglio, and betrothed to Castiglione.

JACINTA, servant maid to Lalage.

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DUKE DI BROGLIO.

CASTIGLIONE, his son and heir.

SAN OZZO, companion of Castiglione.

POLITIAN, Earl of Leicester.

BALDAZZAR, his friend.

A MONK.

UGO

BENITO

RUPERT

} Servants in the family of Di Broglio.

## SCENE I

*(An apartment in the Palazzo of Di Broglio. Traces of a protracted revel. On a wine-table some candles burnt to the socket. Masks, a lute, a lady's slipper, cards and broken bottles are strewn about the*

*floor and on the table. Enter BENITO meeting UGO intoxicated)*

UGO. Oh! is that you, Benito? (hiccup) are they gone?

BENITO. Faith that's a question, Ugo, hard to answer,  
But are the bottles empty?—then they're gone.  
As for the Count San Ozzo who knocked me down  
Just now on the staircase as I came up hither,  
I can with more precision speak of him—  
He's gone, I'm sure of that—pretty far gone.

UGO. Is the bravo gone? (hiccup) where is the buffo-singer?  
Did you say his Excellency had departed?  
Are all the fiddlers off? (hiccup) the devil go with them!  
I'm positively stupid for want of sleep!

BENITO. (*eyeing him*) Oh you are right—quite right—  
being as you say  
Ugo, a most confounded stupid man.

UGO. Sirrah! I have said not so, or else I (hiccup) lied.

BENITO. I have no doubt, good Ugo, that you lied  
Being, as you observe, a most notorious liar—  
(UGO *sits, and helps himself to wine. Enter RUPERT*)  
Well, master Rupert, what have you done with the count?

RUPERT. What should I do with any drunken man?  
I pulled him from under the table where he lay  
And tumbled him into bed.

BENITO. I say, good Rupert!  
Can it be the Duke di Broglio is acquainted  
With these untimely revels of his son?  
It is a pity in so proper a man  
Is't not a pity in so young a man  
And of so gentle blood? Here is a change  
I had not look'd to see—he is sadly altered!

UGO. He is drunk, Benito,—did you not say so, Rupert?  
Most men are sadly altered when they're drunk  
Oh, I am sadly altered when I'm (hiccup) drunk.

RUPERT. (*to BENITO*) You think the Count Castiglione altered—  
I think so too. He was, not too long ago,  
Barring some trivial improprieties,  
A very nobleman in heart and deed.

BENITO. Now I've no faith in him, poor Lady Lalage!  
So beautiful and kind.

RUPERT. Truly, Benito  
His conduct there has damned him in my eyes.  
O villain! villain! she his plighted wife  
And his own father's ward. I have noticed well

That we may date his ruin—so I call it—  
His low debaucheries—his gambling habits  
And all his numerous vices from the time  
Of that most base seduction and abandonment.

BENITO. We may: the sin sits heavy on his soul  
And goads him to these courses. They say the Duke  
Pardons his son, but is most wroth with her  
And treats her with such marked severity  
As humbles her to the dust.

RUPERT. She sits alone  
Continually in her chamber with clasped hands  
(Jacinta tells me this) and listens aghast  
To the frightful sounds of merriment below  
Which she must never more share in.

BENITO. Ah, Noble lady!  
I saw her yester eve thro' the lattice-work  
Of her chamber-window sobbing upon her knees  
And ever and anon amid her sobs  
She murmured forth Castiglione's name  
Rupert, she loves him still!

RUPERT. How will she bear  
Think you, the consummation of these nuptials?  
Tomorrow week, are they not?

BENITO. Most true! they are.  
Tomorrow week Castiglione weds  
His cousin Alessandra. She was the friend  
The bosom friend of the fair lady Lalage  
Ere this mischance. I cannot bear to think  
On the despair of the young lady Lalage.

UGO. This wine's not bad! gentlemen, why d'ye blame  
My master in this matter? very good (hiccup) wine!  
Who is my lady Lalage? God knows!  
I don't, a super(hiccup)ciliary somebody  
Who play'd on the guitar! most excellent wine!  
And pride should have a fall. The count's a rake  
Or was, that very sure, but he's reforming  
And drinks none but the very (hiccup!) best of wine.

RUPERT. Let us to bed! the man is steeped in liquor.  
(to BENITO) Come let us to bed (*Exeunt RUPERT and BENITO*)

UGO. (*arousing*) What did they say? to bed!  
Is it so late? is it all gone? very well!  
I will to bed anon (*Enter JACINTA*) ah! bless my eyes!  
Jacinta! is it you?

JACINTA. Why, yes it is,

And yet it isn't, Ugo, there's a riddle!  
I was Jacinta yesternight, but now  
Madam Jacinta if you please, Sir Ugo!

UGO. Sweetheart, I fear me (hiccup!) very much (hiccup!)  
that you

Have been at the bottle—a pretty madam truly!

JACINTA. You may well say that Sir Ugo—very pretty!  
At all events, the Count Castiglione  
Tells me I'm pretty—drunken dolt, look here! (*Showing  
some jewels*)

UGO. (Hiccup!) where?

JACINTA. Here!—look here!

UGO. Jacinta! (hiccup!) why, Jacinta!  
You do not mean to say the count my master  
Gave you those jewels!

JACINTA. What if he did, friend Ugo?  
What if he did?

UGO. Look here!—I'll take my oath  
I saw that very ring upon the finger  
The middle—the fore—no, on the little finger  
Of the Count. I'm (hiccup!) done with you, Jacinta!  
O you vile wretch! I'll (hiccup!) not have you, Jacinta!  
I'm in despair! I'll (hiccup!) do some desperate deed!  
I'm desperate!

JACINTA. You're drunk!

UGO. I'm going to cut—

JACINTA. Your throat! O Heaven!

UGO. To cut you altogether!  
I'm gone, Jacinta. (*going*)

JACINTA. (*pulling him back*) Stop! You snivelling fool!  
Will you not see the jewels—look you here!  
This broach—these pearls—these rubies—don't you see?

UGO. (*sulkily*) I see.

JACINTA. These emeralds and this topaz!—won't you see?

UGO. I see.

JACINTA. You see! you see! can I get nothing more  
Out of your ugly mouth but "I see, I see"?—  
Dolt, I'm not sure you see—or if you see  
You certainly see double. Here's a cross  
A cross of rubies, you oaf! a cross of rubies!  
D'ye hear?—a cross which never cost a zecchin  
Less than five thousand crowns!

UGO. I see, oh I (hiccup!) see it all. (*looking knowing*)

JACINTA. You do not see

That I'm the richest waiting maid in Rome  
 The richest vintner's daughter owning these jewels!  
 You do not see, I say, that my mistress Lalage  
 (Who gave them to me, d'ye hear? who gave them to me  
 As a free gift, and for a marriage present  
 All of her jewels!—every one of them!)  
 Is certainly gone mad!

UGO. The lady Lalage  
*Gave* you the jewels! How (hiccup!) came you by the ring?

JACINTA. The count Castiglione, your sweet master  
 Gave it her as a token of his love  
 Last year—she gave it to me—d'ye see?

UGO. (with a leer) Jacinta!

JACINTA. *(returning it)* Ugo!

UGO. What, dear Jacinta?

JACINTA. Do you see?

UGO. Oh, nonsense, sweet Jacinta, let me look  
 Again (hiccup!) at the jewels!

JACINTA. D'ye see?

UGO. Pshaw!—let me look!

JACINTA. D'ye see? *(going and holding up the jewels)*

UGO. Sweet, dear, Jacinta! madame Jacinta.

JACINTA. Oh, I see. *(Puts them up and exit, followed by Ugo  
 staggering)*

## SCENE II

*(Castiglione's dressing-room. CASTIGLIONE [in dishabille] and SAN  
 OZZO)*

SAN OZZO. An excellent joke! I' faith an excellent joke!

Ha! ha! ha! ha!—a most superlative joke!

I shall die, Castiglione, I shall die!

Ha! ha! ha! ha!—Oh, I shall die of laughing!

CASTIGLIONE. *(sullenly)* I meant it for no joke.

SAN OZZO. Oh no! oh no!—you meant it for no joke.

Not you!—ha! ha! ha! ha!—I'll die, I'll die!

It's a very serious business, I assure you

To get drunk—a very serious business—excellent!

So you've turned penitent at last—bravo!

Why, Cas! I've got a string of beads at home

(I'll send them to you)—a bundle of paternosters

(You shall have them all) a robe of sackcloth too

I used at a masquerade, you shall have it—you shall  
 have it!

And I'll go home and send you in a trice  
A tub of excellent ashes!

CASTIGLIONE. San Ozzo! have done for—(*hesitating*)

SAN OZZO. Oh! I am—I am done for—completely done for—  
I'll die of laughing—

CASTIGLIONE. (*sternly*) San Ozzo! I am serious.

SAN OZZO. I know it—very!

CASTIGLIONE. Why, then, do you worry me with these ribald  
jests?

I've the headach, and besides I am not well  
Either in body or soul. When saw you last  
The lady—Lalage?

SAN OZZO. Not for eleven months.

What could have put that creature in your head?

CASTIGLIONE. (*fiercely*) San Ozzo!

SAN OZZO. (*calmly*) Sir?

CASTIGLIONE. (*after a pause*) Nothing. When did you say  
You spoke to the Lady Lalage?

SAN OZZO. Sir Count,

I have not seen her for eleven months.  
The Duke your father, as you very well know,  
Keeps her secluded from society  
And, between you and I, he's right in it:  
Ha! ha! you understand?

CASTIGLIONE. Not I, San Ozzo!

I do not understand.

SAN OZZO. Well! well! no matter (*sings*)

Birds of so fine a feather  
And of so wanton eye  
Should be caged—should be caged  
Should be caged in all weather  
Lest they fly!

CASTIGLIONE. San Ozzo! you do her wrong—unmanly wrong

Never in woman's breast enthroned sat  
A purer heart! If ever woman fell  
With an excuse for falling, it was she!  
If ever plighted vows most sacredly  
Solemnly sworn perfidiously broken  
Will damn a man, that damnèd villain am I!  
Young, ardent, beautiful, and loving well  
And pure as beautiful, how could she think—  
How could she dream, being herself all truth  
Of my black perfidy? Oh that I were not

Castiglione but some peasant hind  
The humble tiller of some humble field  
That I might dare be honest!

SAN OZZO.

Exceeding fine!

I never heard a better speech in my life.  
Besides you're right—Oh! honesty's the thing!  
Honesty, poverty, and true content,  
With the unutterable extacies  
Of butternuts, gingerbread, and milk and water!

CASTIGLIONE. (*trying to suppress a smile*) San Ozzo, you are  
a fool!

SAN OZZO. He's right again. My lord, I'm going home,  
Ere I be tainted with your wisdomship.  
Good day!—I crave your patronage, however  
When you become a cardinal: meantime,  
I'll take the opportunity of sending  
The sackcloth and the ashes.

(Exit)

CASTIGLIONE.

Get you gone,

You merry devil! ha! ha! he makes me laugh  
Spite of myself. One can't be angry with him  
For the life of one. After all I don't see why  
I should so grieve about this little matter,  
This every-day occurrence. Marry her—no!  
Castiglione wed him with a wanton!  
Never!—oh never!—what would they say at the club?  
What would San Ozzo think? I have no right  
Had I the will, to bring such foul disgrace  
Upon my family—Di Broglio's line—  
Di Broglio's haughty and time-honoured line!  
No right at all to do it. Am I not bound too  
By the most sacred ties of honor bound  
To my cousin Alessandra? and Lalone  
Is lowly born—I can not pawn my honor.  
My honor—my honor. Pshaw! 'tis but the headach—  
The consequence of yester eve's debauch—  
Gives me these qualms of conscience. Be a man!  
A glass of wine will put you all to rights.  
Ugo!—do you hear there?—wine!

(Enter UGO, bearing a bundle and a basket full of bottles)

What the devil's that?

UGO. (*hesitatingly*) My lord!

CASTIGLIONE. What's that I say?—where is the wine?

UGO. My lord!—the wine?—here is some wine, my lord—

A dozen bottles, my lord.

CASTIGLIONE.

A dozen fools!

Bring me a *glass* of wine!

UGO.

A dozen bottles

So please you, Sir, of best Salerno brand

Sent as a present by his reverence

The Count San Ozzo.

CASTIGLIONE.

Really I'm much obliged

(*smiling*) To his reverence—did you not say his reverence?

Uncork a bottle, Ugo, and let me see

What it is made of.

UGO.

No, Sir, you can't have any.

CASTIGLIONE. How, Sir!—not have it?—what do you mean

by that?

UGO. Not a drop, Sir,—not a drop.

CASTIGLIONE.

And why? you ass.

UGO. Why, Sir, you see, the servant who brings it says

You're not to have the wine, only your choice.

CASTIGLIONE. What does the idiot mean?

UGO.

There's another present

Down in the hall, Sir,—you're to have your choice

Of the wine or of that.

CASTIGLIONE.

Blockhead! why don't you bring

The other present in?

UGO.

Eh?—Sir?

CASTIGLIONE. Dolt! dunderhead! why don't you bring me up

The other present and let me see it?

UGO.

I can't.

CASTIGLIONE. You can't! you villain? I'll try and make you then!

(*in a passion*) Scoundrel, bring it up! What's that you have on  
your shoulder?

UGO. Sir?—it's the sackcloth, and that down below

(*throwing down the bundle*) 'S a monstrous tub of ashes—

I can't lift it.

CASTIGLIONE. A monstrous tub of ashes! San Ozzo's a fool!

Ha! ha! ha! ha! too bad upon my soul!

A tub of ashes! too bad! I can't be angry

If I should die for it—to have my choice

The wine or the ashes! Ugo, send word to the Count

Ha! ha! ha! ha!—Ugo send word to the Count

I'll keep the wine, and he may have the ashes.

Stay!—tell him I've been thinking—been thinking

Of what he said—he knows—and that I'll meet him



At the masquerade, and afterwards crack a bottle  
 (*Exit Ugo*)  
 With him and the buffo-singer. Ha! ha! ha!  
 Only to think of that! a tub of ashes!  
 Ha! ha! ha! ha! I *can't* be angry with him!  
 He's a fine fellow after all, San Ozzo! (*Exit*)

## SCENE III

(*A Hall in a Palace. ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE*)

ALESSANDRA. Thou art sad, Castiglione.

CASTIGLIONE.

Sad!—not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!  
 A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,  
 Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy! (*sighs heavily*)

ALESSANDRA. Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing  
 Thy happiness!—what ails thee, cousin of mine?  
 Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

CASTIGLIONE. Did I sigh?

I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,  
 A silly—a most silly fashion I have  
 When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh? (*sighing*)

ALESSANDRA. Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou has indulged  
 Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.  
 Late hours and wine, Castiglione,—these  
 Will ruin thee! thou art already altered—  
 Thy looks are haggard—nothing so wears away  
 The constitution as late hours and wine.

CASTIGLIONE. (*musings*) Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not  
 even deep sorrow—  
 Wears it away like evil hours and wine.  
 I will amend.

ALESSANDRA. Do it! I would have thee drop  
 Thy riotous company, too—fellows low born—  
 Ill suit the like with old Di Broglio's heir  
 And Alessandra's husband.

CASTIGLIONE.

I will drop them.

ALESSANDRA. Thou must. Attend thou also more  
 To thy dress and equipage—they are over plain  
 For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends  
 Upon appearances.

CASTIGLIONE. I'll see to it.

ALESSANDRA. Then see to it!—pay more attention, sir,

To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest  
In dignity.

CASTIGLIONE. Much, much, oh, much I want  
In proper dignity.

ALESSANDRA. (*haughtily*) Thou mockest me, sir!

CASTIGLIONE. (*abstractedly*) Sweet, gentle Lalage!

ALESSANDRA. Heard I aright?

I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage!

Sir Count! (*places her hand on his shoulder*) what art  
thou dreaming? he's not well!

What ails thee, sir?

CASTIGLIONE. (*starting*) Cousin! fair cousin!—madam!

I crave thy pardon—indeed, I am not well—

Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.

This air is most oppressive!—Madam—the Duke!

(*Enter DI BROGLIO*)

DI BROGLIO. My son, I've news for thee!—hey?—what's the  
matter? (*observing ALESSANDRA*)

In the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! you dog,

Kiss her and make it up, I say, this minute!

I've news for you both. Politian is expected

Hourly in Rome—Politian, Earl of Leicester!

We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit

To the imperial city.

ALESSANDRA. What! Politian  
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

DI BROGLIO. The same, my love. Politian's young  
In years, but grey in reputation. I never saw him,  
But Rumour speaks of him as a prodigy  
Pre-eminent in arts and arms, and wealth,  
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.

ALESSANDRA. I have heard much of this Politian  
Gay, volatile and giddy—is he not?  
And little given to thinking.

DI BROGLIO. Far from it, love.  
No branch, they say, of all philosophy  
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.  
Learned as few are learned.

ALESSANDRA. 'Tis very strange!  
I have known men have seen Politian  
And sought his company. They speak of him  
As of one who entered madly into life,  
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

CASTIGLIONE. Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian  
And know him well—nor learned nor mirthful he.  
He is a dreamer and a man shut out  
From common passions.

DI BROGLIO. Children, we disagree.  
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air  
Of the garden. Did dream, or did I hear  
Politian was a *melancholy* man? (exeunt)

## SCENE IV

(*A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background JACINTA leans carelessly upon the back of a chair*)

LALAGE. Jacinta! is it thou?

JACINTA. (*pertly*) Yes, Ma'am, I'm here.

LALAGE. I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.  
Sit down!—let not my presence trouble you—  
Sit down!—for I am humble, most humble.

JACINTA. (*aside*) It's time.

(*JACINTA seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. LALAGE continues to read*)

LALAGE. "It in another climate, so he said,  
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil"  
(*pauses—turns over some leaves, and resumes*)  
"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower—  
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind  
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."  
Oh, beautiful!—most beautiful!—how like  
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!  
O happy land! (*pauses*) She died!—the maiden died!  
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!  
Jacinta!

(*JACINTA returns no answer, and LALAGE presently resumes*)

Again!—a similar tale

Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!  
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play—  
"She died full young"—one Bossola answers him—  
"I think not so—her infelicity  
"Seemed to have years too many"—Ah luckless lady!  
Jacinta! (*still no answer*) Here's a far sterner story  
But like—oh, very like in its despair—

Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily  
 A thousand hearts, losing at length her own.  
 She died. Thus endeth the history—and her maids  
 Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids  
 with gentle names—Eiros and Charmion!  
 Rainbow and Dove!—Jacinta!

JACINTA. (*pettishly*) Madam, what is it?

LALAGE. Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind  
 As go down in the library and bring me  
 The Holy Evangelists.

JACINTA. Pshaw! (*exit*)

LALAGE. If there be balm  
 For the wounded spirit in Gilead, it is there!  
 Dew in the night time of my bitter trouble  
 Will there be found—"dew sweeter far than that  
 Which hangs like chains of pearls on Hermon hill."

(*re-enter JACINTA, and throws a volume on the table*)

JACINTA. There, ma'am, 's the book. (*aside*) Indeed, she is very  
 troublesome.

LALAGE. (*astonished*) What didst thou say, Jacinta? Have I  
 done aught  
 To grieve thee or to vex thee?—I am sorry.  
 For thou hast served me long and ever been  
 Trust-worthy and respectful. (*resumes her reading*)

JACINTA. (*aside*) I can't believe  
 She has any more jewels—no—no—she gave me all.

LALAGE. What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me  
 Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.  
 How fares good Ugo?—and when is it to be?  
 Can I do aught?—is there no farther aid  
 Thou needest, Jacinta?

JACINTA. (*aside*) Is there no farther aid!  
 That's meant for me. I'm sure, Madam, you need not  
 Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

LALAGE. Jewels! Jacinta,—now indeed, Jacinta,  
 I thought not of the jewels.

JACINTA. Oh! perhaps not!  
 But then I might have sworn it. After all,  
 There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,  
 For he's sure the Count Castiglione never  
 Would have given a real diamond to such as you;  
 And at the best I'm certain, Madam, you cannot  
 Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it.  
 (*exit*)

LALAGE. (*bursts into tears and leans her head upon the table  
—after a short pause raises it*)

Poor Lalage!—and is it come to this?  
Thy servant maid!—but courage!—'tis but a viper  
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!  
(*taking up the mirror*)

Hal here at least's a friend—too much a friend  
In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee.  
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)  
A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not  
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.  
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,  
And Beauty long deceased—remembers me  
Of Joy departed—Hope, the Seraph Hope,  
Inurned and entombed!—now, in a tone  
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,  
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning  
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true!—thou liest not!  
Thou hast no end to gain—no heart to break—  
Castiglione lied who said he loved—  
Thou true—he false!—false!—false!

(*while she speaks, a monk enters her apartment, and  
approaches unobserved*)

MONK. Refuge thou hast,  
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!  
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

LALAGE. (*arising hurriedly*) I cannot pray!—My soul is at war  
with God!

The frightful sounds of merriment below  
Disturb my senses—go! I cannot pray—  
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!  
Thy presence grieves me—go!—thy priestly raiment  
Fills me with dread—thy ebony crucifix  
With horror and awe!

MONK. Think of thy precious soul!

LALAGE. Think of my early days!—think of my father  
And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,  
And the rivulet that ran before the door!  
Think of my little sisters!—think of them!  
And think of me!—think of my trusting love  
And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think—think  
Of my unspeakable misery!—begone!  
Yet stay! yet stay!—what was it thou saidst of prayer  
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith  
And vows before the throne?

MONK.

I did.

LALAGE.

'Tis well.

There is a vow were fitting should be made—  
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,  
A solemn vow!

MONK.

Daughter, this zeal is well!

LALAGE. Father, this zeal is anything but well!

Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?

A crucifix whereon to register

This sacred vow? (*he hands her his own*)

Not that. Oh no!—no!—no! (*shuddering*)

Not that! Not that!—I tell thee, holy man,

Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!

Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,—

I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting

The deed—the vow—the symbol of the deed—

And the deed's register should tally, father!

(*draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high*)

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine

Is written in Heaven!

MONK.

Thy words are madness, daughter,

And speak a purpose unholy—thy lips are livid—

Thine eyes are wild—tempt not the wrath divine!

Pause ere too late!—oh, be not—be not rash!

Swear not the oath—oh, swear it not!

LALAGE.

'Tis sworn!

## SCENE V

(A room in DI BROGLIO'S palace. DI BROGLIO and CASTIGLIONE)

DUKE.

Why do you laugh?

CASTIGLIONE.

Indeed,

I hardly know myself. Stay! was it not

On yesterday we were speaking of the Earl?

Of the Earl Politian? Yes, it was yesterday.

Alessandra, you and I, you must remember!

We were walking in the garden.

DUKE.

Perfectly

I do remember it—decidedly—what then?

CASTIGLIONE. O nothing—nothing at all.

DUKE.

Nothing at all!

It is most singular now that you should laugh

At nothing at all!

CASTIGLIONE.

Most singular—singular!

DUKE. Look you, Castiglione, be so kind  
And tell me, Sir, at once what is't you mean.  
What are you talking of?

CASTIGLIONE. Was it not so?  
We differed in opinion touching him.

DUKE. The Earl of Leicester!—yes!—is it he you mean?  
We differed indeed. If I now recollect  
The words you used were that the Earl you knew  
Was neither learned nor mirthful.

CASTIGLIONE. Ha! ha!—now did I?

DUKE. That did you, Sir, and well I knew at the time  
You were wrong—it being not the character  
Of the Earl—whom all the world allows to be  
A most hilarious man. Be not, my son,  
Too positive again.

CASTIGLIONE. 'Tis singular!

Most singular! I could not think it possible  
So little time could so much alter one!  
To say the truth, about an hour ago  
As I was walking with the Count San Ozzo  
All arm in arm we met this very man  
The Earl—he with his friend Baldazzar  
Having just arrived in Rome. Ha! ha! he *is* altered!  
Such an account he gave me of his journey!  
'Twould have made you die with laughter—such tales  
he told  
Of his caprices and his merry freaks  
Along the road—such oddity—such humour  
Such wit—such whim—such flashes of wild merriment  
Set off too in such full relief by the grave  
Demeanour of his friend—who, to speak the the truth,  
Was gravity itself.

DUKE. Did I not tell you?

CASTIGLIONE. How much I was mistaken! I always thought  
The Earl a gloomy man.

DUKE. So, so, you see.  
Be not positive. Whom have we here?

CASTIGLIONE. 'Tis not the Earl—but yet it is—and leaning  
Upon his friend Baldazzar. Ah! welcome, Sir!

(Enter POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR)

My Lord! a second welcome let me give you  
To Rome—his Grace the Duke of Broglio.  
Father! this is the Earl Politian, Earl  
Of Leicester in Great Britain. (POLITIAN bows haughtily)

This, his friend  
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. The Earl has letters,  
So please you for your Grace.

DUKE. Ah—ha! most welcome  
To Rome and to our palace, Earl Politian!  
And you, most noble Duke! I am glad to see you!  
I knew your father well, my lord Politian.  
Castiglione! call your cousin hither  
And let me make the noble Earl acquainted  
With your betrothed. You come, Sir, at a time  
Most seasonable. The wedding—

POLITIAN. Touching those letters, Sir,  
Your son made mention of—(your son, is he not?)  
Touching those letters, Sir, I wot not of them.  
If such there be, my friend Baldazzar here—  
Baldazzar!—ah!—my friend Baldazzar here  
Will hand them to your Grace. I would retire.

DUKE. Retire!—so soon?

CASTIGLIONE. What ho! Benito! Rupert!  
His lordship's chambers—show his lordship to them!  
His lordship is unwell! (Enter BENITO)

BENITO. This way, my lord! (Exit followed by POLITIAN)

DUKE. Retire!—unwell!

BALDAZZAR. So please you, Sir, I fear me very much  
'Tis as you say—his lordship is unwell.  
The damp air of the evening—the fatigue  
Of a long journey—the—indeed I had better  
Follow his lordship. He must be unwell.  
I will return anon.

DUKE. Return anon!  
Now this is very strange! Castiglione!  
This way, my son, I wish to speak with thee.  
You surely were mistaken in what you said  
Of the Earl, mirthful indeed!—which of us said  
Politian was a melancholy man? (Exeunt)

## SCENE VI

(An apartment in the palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR)

BALDAZZAR. —————Arouse thee now, Politian!  
Thou must not—nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not  
Give way unto these humours. Be thyself!  
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,



And live, for now thou diest!

POLITIAN.

Not so, Baldazzar!

I live—I live.

BALDAZZAR.

Politian, it doth grieve me

To see thee thus.

POLITIAN.

Baldazzar, it does grieve me

To give thee cause for grief, my honoured friend.

Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?

At thy behest I will shake off that nature

Which from my forefathers I did inherit,

Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe,

And be no more Politian, but some other.

Command me, sir!

BALDAZZAR.

To the field then—to the field—

To the senate or the field.

POLITIAN.

Alas! alas!

There is an imp would follow me even there!

There is an imp *hath* followed me even there!

There is—what voice was that?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

I heard not any voice except thine own,

And the echo of thine own.

POLITIAN.

Then I but dreamed.

BALDAZZAR. Give not thy soul to dreams; the camp—the court

Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—

And her, the trumpet-tongued, thou wilt not hear

In hearkening to imaginary sounds

And phantom voices.

POLITIAN.

It is a phantom voice!

Didst thou not hear it *then*?

BALDAZZAR.

I heard it not.

POLITIAN. Thou heardst it not!—Baldazzar, speak no more

To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.

Oh! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,

Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities

Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile!

We have been boys together, school-fellows—

And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—

For in the eternal city thou shalt do me

A kind and gentle office, and a Power—

A Power august, benignant and supreme—

Shall then absolve thee of all farther duties

Unto thy friend.

BALDAZZAR.

Thou speakest a fearful riddle

I *will* not understand.

POLITIAN.

Yet now as Fate

Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,  
 The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,  
 And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!  
 I *cannot* die, having within my heart  
 So keen a relish for the beautiful  
 As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air  
 Is balmier now that it was wont to be—  
 Rich melodies are floating in the winds—  
 A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—  
 And with a holier lustre the quiet moon  
 Sitteth in Heaven.—Hist! hist! thou canst not say  
 Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar?

BALDAZZAR.

Indeed I hear not.

POLITIAN. Not hear it!—listen now—listen!—the faintest sound  
 And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!  
 A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!  
 Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!  
 Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls  
 Into my heart of hearts! that voice—that voice  
 I surely never heard—yet it were well  
 Had I *but* heard it with its thrilling tones  
 In earlier days!

BALDAZZAR.

I myself hear it now.

Be still!—the voice, if I mistake not greatly,  
 Proceeds from yonder lattice—this way you can see it  
 Very plainly through the window—that lattice belongs,  
 Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.  
 The singer is undoubtedly beneath  
 The roof of his Excellency—and perhaps  
 Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke  
 As the betrothed of Castiglione,  
 His son and heir.

POLITIAN. Be still!—it comes again!

VOICE. (*very faintly*) And is thy heart so strong  
 As for to leave me thus  
 Who hath loved thee so long  
 In wealth and woe among?  
 And is thy heart so strong  
 As for to leave me thus?

Say nay—say nay!

BALDAZZAR. The song is English, and I oft have heard it  
 In merry England—never so plaintively—

Hist! hist! it comes again!

VOICE. (*more loudly*) Is it so strong  
As for to leave me thus  
Who hath loved thee so long  
In wealth and woe among?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus?

Say nay—say nay!

BALDAZZAR. 'Tis hushed and all is still!

POLITIAN. All is *not* still.

BALDAZZAR. Let us go down.

POLITIAN.

Go down, Baldazzar, go!

BALDAZZAR. The hour is growing late—the Duke awaits us,—  
Thy presence is expected in the hall  
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

VOICE. (*distinctly*) Who hath loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among,  
And is thy heart so strong?

Say nay—say nay!

BALDAZZAR. Let us descend!—'tis time. Politian, give  
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,  
Your bearing lately savoured much of rudeness  
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

POLITIAN. Remember? I do. Lead on! I *do* remember.  
(*going*)

Let us descend. Baldazzar! Oh I would give,  
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom  
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice—  
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear  
Once more that silent tongue."

BALDAZZAR.

Let me beg you, sir,

Descend with me—the Duke may be offended.

Let us go down, I pray you.

VOICE. (*loudly*) *Say nay!—say nay!*

POLITIAN. (*aside*) 'Tis strange!—'tis very strange—methought  
the voice

Chimed in with my desires and bade me stay!

(*approaching the window*)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.

Now be this Fancy, by Heaven, or be it Fate,

Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make

Apology unto the Duke for me;

I go not down tonight.

BALDAZZAR.

Your lordship's pleasure

Shall be attended to. Good night, Politian.  
 POLITIAN. Good night, my friend, good night.

SCENE VII

(*The gardens of the palace—Moonlight. LALAGE and POLITIAN*)

LALAGE. And dost thou speak of love  
 To *me*, Politian?—dost thou speak of love  
 To Lalage?—ah woe—ah, woe is me!  
 This mockery is most cruel!—most cruel indeed!

POLITIAN. Weep not! oh, weep not thus!—thy bitter tears  
 Will madden me. Oh mourn not, Lalage—  
 Be comforted! I know—I know it all,  
 And *still* I speak of love. Look at me, brightest  
 And beautiful Lalage! and listen to *me!*  
 Thou askest me if I could speak of love,  
 Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.  
 Thou askest me that—and thus I answer thee—  
 Thus on my bended knee I answer thee. (*kneeling*)  
 Sweet Lalage, *I love thee—love thee—love thee;*  
 Thro' good and ill—thro' weal and woe I *love thee.*  
 Not mother, with her first born on her knee,  
 Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.  
 Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,  
 Burned there a holier fire than burneth now  
 Within my soul for *thee.* And do I love thee? (*arising*)  
 Even for thy woes I love thee—even for thy woes—  
 Thy beauty and thy woes.

LALAGE. Alas, proud Earl,  
 Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!  
 How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens  
 Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,  
 Could the dishonoured Lalage abide?  
 Thy wife, and with a tainted memory—  
 My seared and blighted name, how would it tally  
 With the ancestral honours of thy house,  
 And with thy glory?

POLITIAN. Speak not to me of glory!  
 I hate—I loathe the name; I do abhor  
 The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.  
 Art thou not Lalage and I Politian?  
 Do I not love—art thou not beautiful—  
 What need we more? Ha! glory!—now speak not of it!

By all I hold most sacred and most solemn—  
 By all my wishes now—my fears hereafter—  
 By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven—  
 There is no deed I would more glory in,  
 Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory  
 And trample it under foot. What matters it—  
 What matters it, my fairest and my best,  
 That we go down unhonoured and forgotten  
 Into the dust—so we descend together.  
 Descend together, and then—and then perchance—

LALAGE. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN. And then perchance  
 Arise together, Lalage, and roam  
 The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,  
 And still—

LALAGE. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN. And still *together—together*.

LALAGE. Now, Earl of Leicester!  
 Thou *lovest* me, and in my heart of hearts  
 I feel thou *lovest* me truly.

POLITIAN. Oh, Lalage! (*throwing himself upon his knee*)  
 And *lovest* thou *me*?

LALAGE. Hist! hush! within the gloom  
 Of yonder trees methought a figure past—  
 A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless—  
 Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.  
 (*walks across and returns*)

I was mistaken—'twas but a giant bough  
 Moved by the autumn wind. Politian!

POLITIAN. My Lalage—my love! why art thou moved?  
 Why dost thou turn pale? Not Conscience' self,  
 Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,  
 Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind  
 Is chilly—and these melancholy boughs  
 Throw over all things a gloom.

LALAGE. Politian!  
 Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land  
 With which all tongues are busy—a land new found—  
 Miraculously found by one of Genoa—  
 A thousand leagues within the golden west?  
 A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,  
 And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,  
 And mountains, around whose towering summits the winds  
 Of Heaven untrammelled flow—which air to breathe

Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter  
In days that are to come?

POLITIAN.

O, wilt thou—wilt thou  
Fly to that Paradise—my Lalage, wilt thou  
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,  
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.  
And life shall then be mine, for I will live  
For thee, and in thine eyes—and thou shalt be  
No more a mourner—but the radiant Joys  
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope  
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee  
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,  
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,  
My all;—oh, wilt thou—wilt thou, Lalage,  
Fly thither with me?

LALAGE.

A deed is to be done—

Castiglione lives!

POLITIAN.

And he shall die! (*exit*)

LALAGE. (*after a pause*) And—he—shall—die!——alas!

Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?  
Where am I?—what was it he said?—Politian!  
Thou *art* not gone—thou art not gone, Politian!  
I *feel* thou art not gone, yet dare not look,  
Lest I behold thee not; thou *couldst* not go  
With those words upon thy lips—O, speak to me!  
And let me hear thy voice—one word, one word,  
To say thou art not gone,—one little sentence,  
To say how thou dost scorn—how thou dost hate  
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou *art* not gone—  
O speak to me! I *knew* thou wouldst not go!  
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go.  
Villain, thou *art* not gone—thou mockest me!  
And thus I clutch thee—thus!——He is gone, he is gone—  
Gone—gone. Where am I?——'tis well—'tis very well!  
So that the blade be keen—the blow be sure,  
'Tis well, 'tis *very* well—alas! alas! (*exit*)

## SCENE VIII

(*A street near the palace. Bells ringing and shouts heard in the distance. Several persons cross and recross the stage rapidly. Enter BENITO walking quickly, and followed by RUPERT at the same pace*)

RUPERT. What ho! Benito! did you say to-night?

Is it to night—the wedding?

BENITO. To-night I believe.

(*Exeunt*)

(*Enter JACINTA fantastically dressed, and bearing a flat band-box. She enters at first quickly—then saunteringly—and finally stops near the middle of the stage, and is lost in the contemplation of the jewels upon one of her hands, which is ungloved. She at length sets down the band-box and looks at a watch hanging by her side*)

JACINTA. It is not late—oh no! it is not late—

What need is there of hurry? I'll answer for it

There's time enough to spare—now let me see!

The wedding is to be at dark, and here

The day is not half done,—stay, I can tell

To a minute how many hours there are between

This time and dark—one, two, three, four, five, six!

Six hours! why I can very easily do

The whole of my errands in two hours at farthest!

Who'd be without a watch?—these are pretty gloves!

I will not walk myself to death at all—

I won't—I'll take my time.

(*Sits herself on a bank and kicks the bandbox to and fro with an air of nonchalance. BENITO recrosses the stage rapidly with a bundle*)

Look you, Benito!

Benito! I say—Benito!—don't you hear?

The impudent varlet, not to answer me!

The wretch, not even to deign to condescend

To see me, as I sit upon the bank

Looking so like a lady! *I'm a lady!*

I am indeed!—but after all I think

There is a difference between some ladies

And others—the ignorant, stupid, villain!—

Between my former mistress, Lalage,

For instance, and my present noble mistress,

The lady Alessandra. I made a change

For the better, I think—indeed I'm sure of it—

Besides, you know it was impossible

When such reports have been in circulation

To stay with her now. She'd nothing of the lady

About her—not a tittle! One would have thought

She was a peasant girl, she was so humble.

I *hate* all humble people!—and then she talked

To one with such an air of condescension.

And she had not common sense—of that I'm sure

Or would she, now—I ask you now, Jacinta,  
Do you, or do you not suppose your mistress  
Had common sense or understanding when  
She gave you all these jewels?

(RUPERT recrosses the stage rapidly and without noticing JACINTA)

That man's a fool

Or he would not be in a hurry—he would have stopped—  
If he had not been a *fool* he would have stopped—  
Took off his hat, and making a low bow,  
Said "I am most superlatively happy  
To see you, *Madam* Jacinta." Well, I don't know.  
Some people are fools by nature—some have a talent  
For being stupid—look at that ass now, Ugo,  
He thinks I'll have him—but oh no!—I couldn't.  
He might as well, for all the use he makes of it,  
Have been born without a head. Heigho! what's this?  
Oh! it's the paper that my lady gave me,  
With the list of articles she wants—ten yards  
Of taffeta—sixteen of gold brocade—  
And ten of Genoa velvet—one, two, three,

(*As she counts, she tears a slip from the paper at each number, and arranges it on the floor in an abstracted manner*)  
Four, five, six, seven—that's it—now eight, nine, ten,  
Ten yards of velvet—I must try and get me  
A dress of Genoa velvet—'tis becoming.  
And I would look so like my lady in it!  
Methinks I see her now—Oh! she's a lady  
Worth serving indeed—oh, she has airs and graces  
And dignity—yes! she has dignity.

(*Arises and struts affectedly across the stage*)  
And then she has a voice. Heavens! what a voice!  
So loud, so lady-like, and so commanding!  
"Jacinta, get me this—D'ye hear?—bring that  
And tell the Count Castiglione I want him."  
Then "yes ma'am" I reply, and curtsy thus  
Meekly and daintily thus. Oh! I'm a maid  
One in a thousand for a dainty curtsy.  
But when I get to be a lady—when  
I wed the apothecary—oh, then it will be  
A different thing—a different thing indeed!  
I'll play my lady to a T, that will I.  
I'll be all dignity, and I'll talk thus  
"Ugo, you villain!" (Ugo shall be my servant).



*(During this part of the soliloquy UGO enters unperceived and in his astonishment treads upon the bandbox, and remains with his foot in it, as if stupified)*

"Ugo you villain!—look you here, you rascal!  
 You good-for-nothing, idle, lazy scoundrel!  
 What are you doing here? Begone, you ugly  
 You silly, sulky, dirty, stupid idiot!  
 Begone I say, this minute—get out, you viper.  
 Get out, you jackass!—out, you vagabond!"  
 And *then* if he's not gone in half a moment  
 I'll turn about and let him have it (*seeing UGO, whom she  
 encounters in turning round*)—who's this?  
 It's he, by all that's good, it is himself!  
 I'll turn about and let him have it so—(*striking him.*)  
 It's as well now as any other time—  
 Thus—thus—I'll let him have it thus—thus—thus.  
 You wretch! what are you doing with your foot  
 Stuffed in that bandbox? I'll let him have it thus  
 Thus—thus—

*(Exit UGO, followed by JACINTA who throws the bandbox after him)*

## SCENE IX

*(The suburbs. POLITIAN alone)*

POLITIAN. This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,  
 And much I fear me ill—it will not do  
 To die ere I have lived!—Stay—stay thy hand,  
 O Azrael, yet awhile!—Prince of the Powers  
 Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me!  
 O pity me! let me not perish now,  
 In the budding of my hopes—give me to live,  
 Give me to live yet—yet a little while:  
 'Tis I who pray for life—I who so late  
 Demanded but to die!—what sayeth the Count?

*(Enter BALDAZZAR)*

BALDAZZAR. That knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud  
 Between the Earl Politian and himself,  
 He doth decline your cartel.

POLITIAN. *What didst thou say?*  
 What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?  
 With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes  
 Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,

Or one more worthy Italy, methinks  
No mortal eyes have seen!—*what* said the Count?

BALDAZZAR. That he, Castiglione, not being aware  
Of any feud existing, or any cause  
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself  
Cannot accept the challenge.

POLITIAN. It is most true—  
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,  
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid  
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,  
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free  
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did *say*?

BALDAZZAR. No more, my Lord, than I have told you, sir:  
The Count Castiglione will not fight,  
Having no cause for quarrel.

POLITIAN. Now this is true—  
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,  
And I have not forgotten it—thou'lt do me  
A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say  
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,  
Hold him a villain?—thus much, I prythee, say  
Unto the Count—it is exceeding just  
He should have cause for quarrel.

BALDAZZAR. My lord!—my friend!—

POLITIAN. (*aside*) 'Tis he—he comes himself!  
(*aloud*) thou reasonest well.  
I know what thou wouldst say—not send the message—  
Well!—I will think of it—I will not send it.  
Now prithee, leave me—hither doth come a person  
With whom affairs of a most private nature  
I would adjust.

BALDAZZAR. I go—to-morrow we meet,  
Do we not?—at the Vatican.

POLITIAN. If that we meet at all, it were as well  
That I should meet him in the Vatican—  
Within the holy walls of the Vatican.

(*exit* BALDAZZAR. *Enter* CASTIGLIONE)

CASTIGLIONE. The Earl of Leicester here!

POLITIAN. I *am* the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,  
Dost thou not? that I am here.

CASTIGLIONE. My lord, some strange,  
Some singular mistake—misunderstanding—  
Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged

Thereby, in heat of anger, to address  
 Some words most unaccountable, in writing  
 To me, Castiglione. I am aware  
 Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,  
 Having given thee no offence. Ha!—am I right?  
 'Twas a mistake?—undoubtedly—we all  
 Do err at times.

POLITIAN. Draw, villain, and prate no more!

CASTIGLIONE. Ha!—draw?—and villain? have at thee then at once,

Proud Earl! *(draws)*

POLITIAN. *(drawing)* Thus to the expiatory tomb,  
 Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee  
 In the name of Lalage!

CASTIGLIONE. *(dropping his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the stage)* Of Lalage!

Hold off—thy sacred hand!—avaunt, I say!

Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

POLITIAN. Thou wilt not fight with me didst say, Sir Count?  
 Shall I be baffled thus?—now this is well;  
 Exceeding well!—thou darest not fight with me?

CASTIGLIONE. Hold off thy hand. With that beloved name  
 So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—  
 I cannot—dare not.

POLITIAN. Now by my halidom  
 I do believe thee!—coward, I do believe thee!  
 Thou darest not!

CASTIGLIONE. Ha!—coward!—this may not be!  
*(clutches his sword and staggers toward POLITIAN, but his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl)*

Alas! alas!

It is—it is—most true. In such a cause

I am the veriest coward. O pity me!

POLITIAN. *(greatly softened)* Alas!—I do—indeed I pity thee.

CASTIGLIONE. And Lalage—

POLITIAN. *Scoundrel!—arise and die!*

CASTIGLIONE. It needeth not be—thus—thus—O let me die

Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting

That in this deep humiliation I perish.

For in the fight I will not raise a hand

Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home—

*(baring his bosom)*

Here is not let or hindrance to thy weapon—  
Strike home. I *will not* fight thee.

POLITIAN.

Now s'Death and Hell!

Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted  
To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir!  
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare  
For public insult in the streets—before  
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee—  
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee  
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—  
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,—I'll taunt thee,  
Dost hear? with *cowardice*—thou *wilt not* fight me?  
Thou liest! thou *shalt!*

(*exit*)

CASTIGLIONE.

Now this indeed is just!

Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!

## SCENE X

(*The Hall of Di Broglio's Palace. SAN OZZO and UGO, lying on the floor*)

SAN OZZO. What is it you mean? is it your fixed intention  
To lie all day in that especial manner?  
If so, pray let me know!

UGO. I'll let you know  
Nothing about it, and for the best of reasons  
In the first place, Sir, I did not hear a word  
Your honour said, and in the second, sir,  
I cannot talk at all. It's very strange  
You can't perceive I'm dead!

SAN OZZO.

It's very strange

I can't perceive you're dead? soho! I see!

(*aside*) I've heard before that such ideas as these  
Have seized on human brains, still not believing  
The matter possible. Ha! ha! I have it!  
I wish to see the Count—he'll not admit me—  
Being in the dumps about this little matter  
Touching Politian, who in the public streets  
Called him a coward on yesterday forenoon,  
Set him a laughing once, and he'll forget  
Both the Earl and himself. I'd bet a trifle now  
I'll make this idiot go and tell the Count  
That's he's deceased—if so the game is up.

(*aloud*) So—so—you're dead, eh? come now—come now, Ugo!

Be candid with me—is it indeed a fact  
And are you really dead?

UGO. Not, sir, exactly

Dead, so to say, but having just committed  
*Felo de se*, I'm what they call deceased.

SAN OZZO. Ah! I perceive—it's positively so  
Poor soul he's gone! But now I think of it  
Deceased is not the word. What say you, Ugo?  
"Deceased" is not the proper word to express  
Your case with due exactitude. Perhaps  
"Defunct" would suit it better.

UGO. Sir!—I'm defunct.

SAN OZZO.. Ah—very well!—then I shall tell your master  
That you're defunct—or stop, suppose I say—  
I think there would be more of dignity  
In saying "Sir Count, your worthy servant Ugo  
Not being dead, nor yet to say deceased,  
Nor yet defunct, but having unluckily  
Made way with himself—that's *felo de se* you know—  
Hath now departed this life."

UGO. Say that, sir, say that!  
For now, upon consideration, I think  
I have—departed this life.

SAN OZZO. I will—I'll say it!  
I will inform the Count—but not so fast—  
I'm wrong—I must not do it—it were against  
All rules of etiquette. This is a matter  
Demanding due consideration, Ugo,  
One of the last importance. Do you not think  
(You see I yield unto your better judgment)  
Do you not think it were more fitting, sir,  
More decorous, you know,—you understand me?  
More delicate, more proper, and all that—  
That you should tell the circumstance yourself  
Unto the Count—ha!—do you take me, sir!  
'Tis the better plan, is it not?

UGO. Why yes, it is.

SAN OZZO. Undoubtedly—it is—you are right—get up!  
And lose no time about it—be quick—get up!

UGO. Get up? I can't—Sir, I've been dead an hour  
And am stiff, as you perceive.

SAN OZZO. Well, yes, I do.  
You are a little—stiff—all very true.  
I most sincerely pity you—but, sir,  
Could you not, think you, by a desperate effort,

Contrive to stir a little? let me help you?  
 Paugh! this will never do!—why, bless me, sir,  
 Perhaps you're not aware that—that—in short  
 The day is very sultry—and that a corpse  
 In very hot weather won't—keep, you take me, Sir?  
 My nose is delicate, and to be plain  
 You smell, sir, yes you smell—come now, be quick!  
 Indeed I cannot, will not answer for  
 The consequence of any longer stay.  
 Sir, you may drop to pieces!

UGO.

Good God! that's true!

Lend me your hand, Sir, do!

SAN OZZO.

Ah, that is well!

Extremely well attempted!—Sir, I am glad  
 To see you on your legs,—a little stiff  
 No matter!—not ungraceful in a corpse.  
 Now sir, this leg—a little farther—that's it!  
 Most excellent!—ah! that is exquisite!  
 Now sir, the left—you have a genius, Ugo,  
 For putting out a leg! Pray sir, proceed!  
 Superlative!—now that's what I call walking!  
 Magnificent!—a little farther, Sir!  
 Farewell!—now recollect you tell  
 The Count as I directed—you've departed  
 This life—you're dead, deceased, defunct,  
 And all that sort of thing—ha! ha! ha! ha!

## SCENE XI

*(Interior of the Coliseum. POLITIAN entering from behind  
 —moonlight)*

POLITIAN. Shall meet me here within the Coliseum!  
 Lone ampitheatre! Gray Coliseum!

### [THE COLISEUM]

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary  
 Of lofty contemplation left to Time  
 By buried centuries of pomp and power!  
 At length—at length—after so many days  
 Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,  
 (Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)  
 I kneel, an altered and an humble man,  
 Amid thy shadows, and so drink within  
 My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!  
 Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!  
 Gaunt vestibules and phantom-peopled aisles  
 I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—  
 O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king  
 Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!  
 O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee  
 Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!  
 Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,  
 A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!  
 Here, where the dames of Rome their yellow hair  
 Wav'd to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!  
 Here, where on ivory couch the Caesar sat  
 On bed of moss lies gloating the foul adder.

Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,  
 Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,  
 Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,  
 The swift and silent lizard of the stones!

These crumbling walls; these tottering arcades  
 These mouldering plinths—these sad and blacken'd shafts—  
 These vague entablatures—this broken frieze—  
 These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—  
 These stones—alas! these gray stones—are they all—  
 All of the great, and the colossal left  
 By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

“Not all”—the Echoes answer me—“not all!  
 “Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever  
 “From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,  
 “As in old days from Memnon to the Sun.  
 “We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule  
 “With a despotic sway all giant minds.  
 “We are not desolate—we pallid stones.  
 “Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—  
 “Not all the magic of our high renown—  
 “Not all the wonder that encircles us—  
 “Not all the mysteries that in us lie—  
 “Not all the memories that hang upon  
 “And cling around about us now and ever  
 “And clothe us in a robe of more than glory.”

[1833]

(Enter LALAGE wildly)

She comes.

LALAGE. I come. And now the hour is come  
For vengeance or will never. So! the priest  
Is standing by the altar—the robed priest!  
And by him the bride—so beautiful—the bride  
And in a bride's array! and by the bride  
The bridegroom—where art thou?

POLITIAN. 'Tis true, where am I?  
Not where I should be?—By the God of Heaven  
I'll mar this bridal if at the altar's foot  
The bridegroom dies. (Exit)

LALAGE. Away—Away—farewell!  
Farewell Castiglione and farewell  
My hope in Heaven! (Exit) [December, 1835]