The Grandfather

DON RODRIGO DE ARISTA-POTESTAD, Count of Albrit.

DOLLY (Dorothea)
NELL (Eleanor) — his nieces

LUCRECIA, Countess of Lain, the Count's niece, and mother of Nell and Dolly.

VENANCIO formerly a farmer of Albrit, afterwards owner of La Pardina.

GREGORIA his wife

DON PIO CORONADO tutor to the children

SENEN formerly a servant of Lain, afterwards a government official.

THE PRIEST (Don Carmelo)

THE DOCTOR (~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~) (Salvador Anguis)

THE MAYOR (Don Jose Monedero)

The action takes place in a sea town in the north of Spain, called by the conventional name of Jerusa. The principal scenes of the drama take place in La Pardina, a manor house belonging to the estates of Albrit. XIX century.

Traducción de "El Abuelo"
de Dn Benito Pérez Galdós

Propiedad de Salvador de Madariaga

THE GRANDFATHER.

Act I.

A leafy grove in the domain of La Pardina. In the background a wide avenue which is the main entrance to the estate; to the right the portico of the house of ancient, venerable and noble architecture, bearing the escutcheons of Lain and Postestad; to the left a hedge of trimmed cypresses with a rustic gate, beyond which is a kitchen garden. Wide spreading trees with thick trunks make an awning of dense foliage and throw a shade over the whole scene. Beside the door a round stone table and chairs or rustic seats. It is daytime and summer.

Scene I.

GREGORIA sweeping a pile of vegetables off the table into a basket. VENANCIO enters from the background.

Gregor. Ah, Venancio, here you are.

Venan. (Out of breath, wiping the sweat from his forehead) Brrr! What heat!

Gregor. Take a rest. (inquisitively) Well, what news? Is it true what they are saying? Are we to have the Countess in Jerusa?

Venan. (Crossly) Of course. Is bad news ever untrue?

Gregor. (In suspense) And when does she arrive?

Venan. To-day ..... But don't be alarmed ... She is going to stay with the Mayor.

Gregor. Thank heaven! For think! His lordship coming too! it would be water meeting fire. And what I want to know is, Are they running up against each other by chance, or have they arranged a meeting to talk over family affairs?.. For the young Count's death must have caused a few entrangle-ments.

Venan. What do I know? The Countess Lucrecia will be coming as usual to have a look at her two daughters.

Gregor. Contemptible creature!..... Keeping them in this

exile here so that she may be free to go about and play her pranks in those Parises and Englands of God or the devil. Hussy! I tell you, Venancio, I can understand why her father-in-law, Count Albrit, who is the first gentleman in Spain ..... and let them deny it if they can ..... has such a dislike of this wicked foreigner whom the young Count (God rest his soul) fell head over ears in love with .... but what I can't get into my head is how he can appear here knowing that he is bound to knock up against her ... or do you think he doesn't know? What do you say, you?

Venan. (Turning over the vegetables in the basket) I think that both of them have their nails sharp enough. Believe me we shall see tufts of white beard and fair hair and strips of skin on the ground ... For if Don Rodrigo loves his daughter-in-law as he does the toothache she pays him in the same coin.

Gregor. I suppose we shall have to give his lordship a room.

Venan. And meals too ... of course!

Gregor. One thing is certain, he has not brought back from America that gold dust that he went out to find.

Venan. He has brought back just night and day. When he embarked for over there he had lost his whole fortune. He was hoping to get another which the Government of Peru offered him for the gold mines which his grandfather had out there ... the one who was Viceroy .... But he got nothing but trouble and he has come back as poor as a rat, ill, almost blind, with no other cargo than his years ... and that's over seventy now. Then his son, whom he worshipped, died.

Gregor. Poor old man. Venancio, we must help him.

Venan. Surely, surely. It mustn't be said that we are not christians. Who would ever have thought it, Gregoria, us

to be keeping the great and powerful Count Albrit, who has a ~~tribe~~ host of kings and princes as kinsfolk, and who, not twenty years ago, was still master of the lands of Laín, Jerusa and Polan. And let them say after that, that the world does not turn round.

Gregor. It strikes me now, Venancio, that the Count is coming just to see his granddaughters; yes, he is looking for some affection as a comfort for his lonely soul.

Venan. Maybe ... (suddenly remembering) Do you know who might bring us out of this sea of doubt and confusion? Senén.

Gregor. He arrived in Jerusa last night. The children told me they had seen him and that he has become quite a gentleman.

Venan. A civil servant! An official, no less! A man who was once valet to the Countess. (pointedly) Such is the price of good service.

Gregor. She protects him, by all accounts, because he served as go-between and ...

Venan. Hush, Gregoria.

Gregor. Etcetera .... in her love affairs. The fact remains, that every time the lady visits us, Senén lands here and gives her no sort of a life with his impudent begging ... 'will she recommend him, will she give him a card to the Chief ... a line to the Minister or to the devil himself'.

Venan. Senén is cunning. He would slip through the eye of a needle all right.

Gregor. (Sharply) I think I hear his voice.

Venancio Yes, it is he. (looking towards the background) There he goes, chatting away with José Maria. What a slowcoach. And he promised to come and tell me...

Gregor. Call him, man, call him. (Both turn towards the background)

Venan. (Calling) Senén ... Senén. Confound you!

Gregor. (Impatiently) He's taking no notice. There goes a sluggard for you! Fetch him, for heaven's sake.

(VENANCIO goes away. GREGORIA remains in the background, her back to the public. NELL and DOLLY appear coming from the kitchen garden. They do not want to be seen by Venancio and Gregoria and approach on tiptoe, DOLLY in front as if exploring the ground.)

Scene II.

NELL and DOLLY; in the background VENANCIO and GREGORIA.

Nell Take care, Dolly, ... if they see us.

Dolly They will make us go into the house.

Nell (In a low voice) Listen, couldn't we come out into the wood by the courtyard?

Dolly It would be better to go by the avenue.

Nell But those stupid creatures are in our way.

Dolly Wait a moment.

Nell (Watching Gregoria) If they would only go!

Dolly (Who has gone forward exploring and has come back alarmed They are coming!

Nell Come back! (With the utmost speed they return to the kitchen garden)

Dolly This way. Let us go to the new wood.

Nell Yes, away,away! (They run out to the left)

Scene III.

GREGORIA, VENANCIO, SENÉN.

Venan. (Drawing him along by the arm) Truant! You were running away from me.

Gregor. Yes. This fellow when once he begins to talk ...

Senén My cousin kept me, telling me about his mother-in-law's pranks ... Hullo Gregoria, as blooming as ever!

Gregor. And you, how fine! And how nice you smell ... bless me ... like a prince.

Senén. One must look the part. I am a slave to my position.

Venen. (Impatiently) Come, out with your news.

Senén The Countess arrives at Laín by the 12.5 train. I had a wire. I took it to the Mayor, who did not know the hour.

Venan. And the municipality? Eh? They will be preparing a grand reception.

Senén An enthusiastic ovation. (He is careful to use the most refined language) It would be a nice thing if they did not pay due respect to the illustrious lady to whose influence Jerusa owes its telegraph station and the Forbes road, not to mention other benefits.

Gregor. Yes, yes. It is quite right to have festivities.

Senén. His lordship ought to have arrived at Polan last night, or by the first train this morning ... so that I don't understand, my dear Venancio, why he is not already in your house.

Venan. Well,now, Senén; you who know everything ... naturally .. you have lived on intimate terms with the family, you know their ways, the manner of thinking of each one, their discords and quarrels ... tell us ... Are Don Rodrigo and his daughter-in-law meeting here by chance or is it ...?

Senén. (confidently, giving himself airs) I know for certain that old Albrit, who, since the death of his son, has not moved till now from Valencia, wrote to the Countess ...

Venan. (Laughing) ... Asking for money.

Senén Lord! No. He proposed an interview to discuss grave matters ...

Gregor. Family matters, of course ... And as the Countess does not want quarrels in Madrid, for there it might make a noise and everyone would get to know and even the papers might get hold of it, she has made an appointment with him in this hole of a Jerusa, where only we four simpletons live, so that if there is a row here it stops, and the dirty linen is washed at home. Eh, Sir Courtier, isn't that it? Do I not know my lady and gentleman?

Venan. Say ... my wife's a clever one, isn't she?

Senén (Smiling and galant) She knows Greek and Latin. There's a head for you.

Gregor. Come now, my son, why don't you tell us the whys and wherefores of this ill-feeling between the widowed Countess and the grandfather. You know all about it. I suppose it's only a tale, all that people say about your former mistress ... just gossip, isn't?

Senén. (Emphatically) You will allow me, my dear friends, to speak no ill of my benefactress. I shall only say this, that she is tender-hearted, generous and frank beyond measure. Don't expect her to be a prude -- that she is not -- She is a woman who will always follow her own bent. She has a soft heart for the unhappy and afflicted -- and as for education -- no one can better her: she speaks four languages and can say things that charm and captivate in all of them.

Venan. All these languages, and more too, are not enough to tell the horrible things that aresaid about her in plain Spanish.

Gregor. Come, Venancio, we must not forget, if his lordship is coming we must set about preparing his rooms.

Senén (with a worried air, remembering something he had forgotten) There! There! What a head I have. Lord, what a

head!

Venan. What is it?

Senén All this talk has made me forget the message from his worship the mayor.

Gregor. For us?

Senén Yes... You are to take the two girls to him immediately, so that the countess can see them as soon as she arrives.

Venan. Of course .... and they will dine there.

Senén Are they at their lessons?

Gregor. No, their lessons were cut short this morning. Poor don Pio had to stop the class because a message came that his daughters were pulling each other's hair out.

Venan. They will be in the kitchen-garden.

Gregor. No.

Venan. (Turning to the left) Let us go and look.

Gregor. I tell you they are not there. I have been in the kitchen garden the whole morning... they are almost certain to be on the hill. It is their favourite walk. (She points to the right.)

Venan. We must make haste to find them.

Senén. I'll go, if you like. Don't they know yet that their mother is coming to-day?

Gregor. No, they don't ... poor dears.

Senén Well, I'll tell them. I'll go this minute.

Venan. You are sure to find them up near the wood on the path to Polan.

Gregor. (Picking up the basket of vegetables.) Go, and bring them quickly.

Venan. As for us, we'll go in.

Gregor. Yes, for it's late andwe have to get ready.

Senén Good-bye then. (Goes out by backyard).

Venan. (Watching him go) There's a fox for you!

Gregor. And no small one.

VENANCIO gathers the vegetables that are left on the table into another basket and BOTH go into the house.)

Scene IV.

NELL and DOLLY appear beyond the hedge and wait until GREGORIA and VENANCIO have disappeared before coming on the scene.)

Nell Thank heaven they are leaving the way clear.

Dolly And what shall we do? Shall we go to the wood?

Nell Oh no ... I am tired. (Sits down on the ground.)

Dolly And I am numb. I want to run. (She runs and jumps swiftly up and down the stage).

Nell You are never tired, Dolly.

Dolly I'd like this very minute to climb up this great oak-tree and sit upon the highest branch.

Nell You would tear your dress.

Dolly I would sew it up ... I can sew as well as you. What do you bet I don't go up it?

Nell No, you can't, Dolly. We shall be taken for village girls.

Dolly (Swinging on a branch) Well, what does it matter to me, to look like a village girl, or to be one? Tell me, Nell, would you go barefoot?

Nell Never.

Dolly I would .. and I should laugh at the shoemakers. What are you doing? (Seeing NELL draw out a small book.)

Nell I want to go over my history lesson. We have run about enough; let's work a little now. Remember, Dolly, yesterday don Pio said you didn't know a word of history, either ancient or modern and he politely called you an ass.

Dolly. It's <u>he</u> who is an ass. I know one thing better than he

does. I know that I don't know anything, and poor don Pio doesn't know that he doesn't know a single jot.

Nell That is quite true. But we ought to study a little if only to see the face he will make if we answer him rightly. He is a good soul. Come, let's work a little. You know those Gothic Kings are terribly muddling.

Dolly (Letting go the branch) The devil take them. There are hundreds of them, and with names that prick like brambles when you want to try to learn them.

Nell Not one of them is as bad as that awful Mr MAUREGATO

Dolly A perfect brute! (Sits down beside her sister)

Nell Just fancy. They had to provide him with a hundred damsels a year to keep him in a good temper.

Dolly And just for a beginning too, as don Carmelo says. The truth is, that blessed history is nothing but gossip and stories that don't matter to me in the least.

Nell But child, what about your education? Don't you want to be educated?

Dolly The truth is that I hate education since I have found that Senén too has become educated. Do you remember when he was here two months ago thinking that Mama was coming?

Nell Yes: every minute he was dragging in the Middle Ages and I don't know what besides.

Dolly What have we got to do with ages, middle or anything else? One of these days they will be telling us that Cleopatra had toothache.

Nell Or that Queen Urraca's chilblains are burning.

Dolly Still, let's do a little, since Mamma tells us in all her letters to work hard and learn a lot.

Nell Mamma adores us, but she does not take us with her. (Sadly) Why, I wonder?

Dolly Because, because ... she told us. As we were so delicate when we were little, she wants us to get fat in the

country air.

Nell — Mamma knows what she is about. She is sure to take us with her when we are bigger. But we are wasting time talking and we have not studied a single word.

Dolly — It's such a lovely day!

Nell — (Giving her sister the little history book) Here, read aloud, so that we can both follow at the same time.

Dolly — (Takes the book and leaps to her feet) Give it to me. Do you know what strikes me? That the birds should be educated too. The whole of knowledge ought not to be for us only. (Throws the book high into the air. It describes a curve and is apparently caught in a branch.)

Nell — What are you doing, silly?

Dolly — You see.

Nell — That's a nice thing to do. And how are we to get it now?

Dolly — We shan't. The birds will learn what Sir Alexander the Great and Mr Attila did.

Nell — You really are mad! If only a boy would pass by now who could get it down.

Dolly — (Preparing to climb the tree) I'll go up.

Nell — (Holding her back by her skirt) No, no, you may break your neck.

Dolly — Wait. I'll throw some stones up and see if it will lose its head and fall.

Nell — It's windy. Perhaps the book will blow away.

Dolly — ~~Oh no~~ Not it. It's far too heavy! (Throwing stones) Come to me, rascal. Down! Come here!

Nell — (Hearing footsteps) Stop, Dolly. Someone is coming. How disgraceful! They will take us for some ragamuffins from the village.

Dolly — What do I care?

Nell — Will you be quiet. (Looking towards the background)

Here comes a gentleman ... a man ... Look, look. (COUNT ALBRIT approaches slowly down the avenue in the background)

Dolly I can't see him.

Nell Look.. There he is like a statue; he stopped when he saw us. He has not taken his eyes off us. (The COUNT stands motionless in the background, looking at them.).

Scene V.

NELL, DOLLY, COUNT ALBRIT, a handsome and noble looking old man with a long white beard. His well built figure has a slight stopp. His travelling clothes are good but much worn; he wears heavy boots and leans on a knotted club. Everything about him reveals the unhappy downfall of an illustrious personality.

Nell (Watching him apprehensively) It is a poor old man. Why is he looking at us like that? Do you think he will hurt us? I am afraid.

Dolly So am I. Can it be a beggar?

Nell If we had some money we would give it to him. Look, he doesn't even move.

Dolly How he is staring at us.

Nell Let's speak to him. You speak to him. Say "Mr Beggar"..

Dolly He is not a beggar.. He looks more like ... Oh Nell. I know that face.

Nell So do I. I have seen him somewhere. (Seeing that the COUNT advances a few steps holding out his hands to them) Oh! Oh! he is coming towards us -- He is beckoning to us. (The two draw closer together as if to protect one another.)

Dolly And he seems to be crying. Poor man!

Count (Coming forward: in a grave voice) My precious children, do not be afraid of me. You are Leonor and Dorothy?

Nell Yes, Sir, those are our names.

Count (Coming up to them) Then kiss me. I am your grandfather. Do you not know me? Ah! some years have passed since

you last saw me. You were quite tiny then and so sweet. I was quite mad over your grace and your little angel ways. (Kisses them on the forehead.)

Dolly Grandfather dear!

Nell I said I knew him.

Dolly We know you by your portrait.

Count And I know you by your voices. I do not know what it is in your voices that stirs my soul so. And how is it that they sound like one voice to me? Let me look at you well. Are your little faces as much alike as your little voices? (Looks closely at their faces) No, no. I cannot see you clearly, my beloved children. I am almost blind.

Nell Imagine, grandfather, we were afraid of you.

Count Afraid of me! I, who worship you?

Dolly. Senén told us last night you were coming? but we did not think you would arrive quite so soon.

Nell Why did you not come by the Polan coach?

Count I preferred to make my way on foot, with the help of this stick -- brooding, thinking of the old times. Ah! All the roads and footpaths of this country know me! the bushes, rocks, trees, all know me. Even the birds, I believe, are the ones that were here in my childhood. This beautiful countryside was my nurse. With what anguish and what joy I bring to life again, as I pass, persons and events. It is as if everything around me sees me and knows me again; ... and, from the great sea to the little insect almost invisible, everything that is alive here is waiting in suspense .. I hardly know how to express it ... still and watching ... to see the unhappy Count Albrit pass. (The two children sigh.)

Dolly Lean on my arm, grandfather dear. (Each takes him by an arm.)

Nell And let us go in.

Count (With intense emotion) Ah. I am in Pardina. Oh the

unutterable sadness and bitterness of things. (He stands still, rapt, as if in prayer.)

Scene VI.

COUNT, NELL, DOLLY, SENÉN hurrying from the background.

Senén — The Count here ... with the children! And I have been looking for them on the hill. Welcome, Sire, to the lands of your forefathers. What a splendid picture you make between these two angels.

Count — Who is speaking to me?

Nell — Senén, grandfather.

Dolly — Don't you remember him?

Senén — Senén Corchado, sir ... who used to be ... I am not ashamed to say it ... valet to the Count of Laín.

Count — (Brightly) Ah yes, yes. You are ... of course. I am glad to see you here.

Senén — I have come from Durante, where I am employed, to offer my respects to you and to the Countess of Laín, who also arrives to-day.

Nell — Mamma is coming? (Both let go of the Count and leap about with joy.)

Dolly — Oh, how joyful.

Nell — We knew nothing about it. Did <u>you</u> know, Grandfather?

Count — (Thoughtfully) Yes.

Dolly — (Taking his arm again) Come, let's be quick.

Nell — (Busily) We must tidy ourselves.

Senén — The young ladies are to go to the house of the mayor to await their mamma. I run meanwhile to fetch Venancio to come and and receive your lordship.

Nell — But is Mamma going to the mayor's house?

Count So it seems.

Dolly Why doesn't she come to Pardina, to us?

Count Perhaps this old rambling house is not comfortable enough for your mother.

Scene VII.

COUNT, NELL, DOLLY, VENANCIO, GREGORIA, SENÉN.

Venan. (Humbly, kissing his hand) Oh my lord! And you sent us no word so that we could come to meet you.

Gregor (Kissing his hand) Welcome, my lord.

Venan. A blessing on your arrival home.

Count Thanks, thanks, my good Venancio, my faithful Gregoria. I am glad to see you so flourishing ... (Looking at them closely) ... See? But no, no .. I can only see big things now.

Venan. Will you come in, my lord?

Count No, stay. I will rest here. (They bring him a rustic armchair: he sits down; the rest stand round him) Let me call to remembrance and refresh ancient friendships. (Contemplating the foliage above him) Once again I am amongst you, oh royal trees, who threw your shade over my childhood's games. You are older than I, far older -- but time does not lessen your beauty and grandeur. The generations who have grown up under your shadow wither away and vanish, while you remain, changeless,..watching us pass,..watching us fall,.. watching us die. (He falls into a profound meditation. All sigh.)

Gregor. My lord, I do not forget that your lordship likes good coffee ... I shall have it ready in a moment.

Nell And serve it here.

Dolly Yes, yes, quickly.

Gregor. At once. (Goes into the house.)

Senén What a pity we did not know sooner that your lordship was coming. The village would have prepared a fitting reception.

Count For me? For me? The village of Jerusa?

Senén We should have had a band, the town choir, a triumphal arch and afterwards an entertainment in the town hall.

Count (With bitter disdain) I know these honours with which they used to flatter me in other days when it was worth their while. To-day they would be simply a cruel jest. Before I was as old and poor as I am now I had occasion to appreciate the ingratitude of my fellow-citizens of Jerusa. The last time I was here, twenty years ago, the crofters, who, Heaven only knows how, had become owners of my lands -- the young gentlemen born of my cooks and stableboys -- received me with a cold contempt that filled me with melancholy. They said the village had become vivilized -- A false and spurious civilization like the frock coat which the country clodhopper buys ready-made at a fair.

Nell Grandfather dear, your town does not forget the benefits it has received from you.

Dolly How can you say it forgets? The chief street of Jerusa is called after you.

Venan. The fountain beside the church is called "The Good Count's Fountain."

Senén. (Bombastically) And that it is unjust to accuse Jerusa of ingratitude, we have an eloquent proof this very day, Sir.

Count What?

Senén As they were aware in time of the arrival of her ladyship the Countess of Laín, they are preparing an enthusiastic reception for her.

Nell Really and truly?

Senén Such as befits one who has the prosperity of the town

so much at heart. The Mayor is going out to meet her.

Count — And they will send off fireworks. Quite in character, all this!

Dolly — Music! Fireworks! Heavens, what fun!

Count — Yes, yes. You will see it all. You will enjoy it ever so much.

Nell — Will you come too, Grandfather dear?

Count — I!

Dolly — Why don't you come?

Nell — Don't you want to see Mamma?

Count — Here, in Pardina, I shall be glad to see her.

Venan. — His lordship does not care to go down into the town, is it not so, my Lord?

Count — True.

Senén — Would your lordship not care to see and admire the improvements of these last years?

Count — (Grimly, alluding to his blindness) I should care more to see them than to admire them.

Venan. — (Pointing towards the left) The latest extensions of Jerusa reach almost to the walls of Pardina.

Count — In my time, part of the village could be seen from the little hill above the kitchen garden.

Nell — You can see it better now because they have trimmed the trees.

Senén — (Looking at his watch) If your lordship will pardon me, I would say that it is time the young ladies got ready if they want to be present at the triumphal entry of their mother.

Count — Yes, yes, children: it is time.

Nell — We shall be dressed in a twinkling.

Dolly — Shall we be there in time?

Nell — We shall be back soon, Grandfather dear.

Dolly — And we'll bring Mamma with us.

Count (Kisses them affectionately) Good-bye, my children, enjoy yourselves ... Good-bye.

Venan. (Hurrying them) Be quick, be quick.

Senén I also will go if your lordship has no orders for me ... (He approaches the Count familiarly).

Count I suppose you are one of these in charge of sending off the fireworks. Go quickly -- do not neglect your duty.

Senén If your Lordship requires me ...

Count No, many thanks. And I shall be glad of your absence -- not that I wish to offend you in any way, Seneca, -- or rather Senén. Shall I be frank with you?

Senén Nothing that your Lordship could say to me would offend me.

Count Well, I shall be glad when you go because ... my boy, you use a scent which makes me ill. Very strong perfumes make my head swim. Excuse me -- (giving him his hand) Forgive me for taking leave of you with an ungracious remark.

Senén (Disconcerted) Sir, a few drops of heliotrope ...

Count No offence ..... no offence ..... Ugh!

Senén (Aside, as he goes out) The old lion has come in a bad temper.

Scene VIII.

COUNT, VENANCIO.

Venan. (Affectionately) Is your lordship quite happy here?

Count (Breathing with difficulty) Not quite. The emotion I feel at being once again in Pardina hardly lets me breathe ... I want, yet dread, to enter the house. It is as if shadows of loved beings stand waiting for me in its rooms. (Passing his hand over his eyes) Memory overpowers me; grief lays hold of me; I ought not to have come ... no, no.

Venan. Surely your lordship has pleasant memories of this house?

Count Not to-day.

Venan. Here your lordship was born; here you passed your childhood.

Count Here I was great and powerful.

Venan. Rightly named 'the first gentleman of Spain'.

Count Well, to-day the first gentleman of Spain, he who once held open house for all, comes to beg your hospitality. Vicissitudes and upheavals that I do not care to think of, that never-ceasing turn of the wheel which makes and unmakes families and states, has brought you the throw of the dice and made you owners of Pardina. I enter it not as your master, but as a homeless man asking shelter, abandoned by all. If you give it to me, you know well that it will be of pure charity and not for pay or recompense. I am a poor man. I have lost everything.

Venan. Your lordship comes always to your own house. To-day, as yesterday, we are your servants.

Count I thank you ... believe me, I thank you from my heart ... Still, after all, if we look at it well, it is your duty, and you are doing only as a christian should. All you have become, all you have acquired, you owe to my protection.

Venan. No doubt of it. And first of all, in what room will your lordship sleep?

Count Upstairs, in the bedroom that was my mother's.

Venan. (Vexed) The one that opens on to the main corridor? It is full of lumber.

Count Well, turn out the lumber and put me in it.

Venan. Sir, it will be such an upheaval --

Count (Somewhat warmly) What. Beginning already!

Venan. We have turned it into a drying room: we hang the

beans there and ....

Count (Still more warmly) Put the beans somewhere else. Am I of so little importance that it is not worth while disturbing the precious vegetables?

Venan. (Not yet resigned) Very well, Sir -- Only ...

Count Still grumbling. Must I order you? ... Oh! Unhappy one! (Striking the arm of his chair) Forgetting so soon that I am the guest of my inferiors ... Venancio, I want to submit to my fate. I want to forget myself, and I cannot ... My haughty temper becomes daily more irritable with the loss of my sight ... Accustomed as I am to command I cannot curb my imperious ways. Authority is part of me. (Vehemently) For Christ's sake bear with me, or turn me out of my house, -- I mean out of your house.

Scene IX.

The COUNT, VENANCIO, the PRIEST; later GREGORIA. The Priest, don CARMELO, is fat and jovial. He enters by the background and goes towards the COUNT with open arms.

Priest Beloved friend and master, don Rodrigo! ...

Count (Putting a hand on his shoulder) Carmelo, my son, come to me.

Priest What a delightful surprise! How glad I am!

Count But, my dear lad, how fat and well you look.

Priest (Laughing) In this part of the world, sir, fasting has no effects.

Count Fasting! You! That would be a strange sight. Anyway so long as you please your parishioners .....

Venan. (Fawningly) We have a priest worth more than he weighs.

Count Good, Good, Carmelo. Sit down beside me. How they run and slip past, those treacherous years! Let me see, you must be in your fifties?

Priest I have been in them these two years.

Venan. Like me. We are the same age.

Count It cannot be less. You were 26 when ...

Priest. When my father died. And I owed it to your generosity, my Lord, that I was able to finish my career of Theology and Law.

Count (With natural delicacy) Well now, I did not remember that.

Priest. But I did.

Gregor. (Brings in the coffee service) Here is the coffee. (Putting it on the table).

Count Just in time. Carmelo, let me give you some.

Gregor. The young ladies are almost ready. We shall go at once.

Count Do not let them delay. It is high time. (To the Priest, helping him to sugar) You like it very sweet if I remember rightly.

Priest What a memory you have.

Count If it were not for the kindnesses I receive, I should have lost it like my sight.

Gregor. Can I get you anything more, Sir?

Count. No. .... Thank you.

(GREGORIA goes)

Priest (Tasting his coffee) Well? ... What do you think of your grandchildren, my Lord. You had not seen them since your return from America.

Count No.

Priest. They are angels -- and how winsome and full of fun. They steal into one's heart. (The COUNT is silent, self-

absorbed. During the pause DON CARMELO observes him.) God has made them a captivating couple to be the joy and pride of their mother --- and of you.

Count (As if coming back to himself) You were saying? ... Ah yes... the children ... they are fascinating little things.

Priest (Trying to elicit the Count's motive for being in Jerusa) I understand your impatience to see them ... To your fatherly desire to know and embrace the children we owe the honour of having you here in Jerusa.

Count I came to Jerusa mainly to --- (To Venancio in a tone of command but without haughtiness) You!

Venan. Sir.

Count Be so good as to leave us alone.

(Exit VENANCIO)

Scene X.

The COUNT, the PRIEST.

Priest Senén told me that you had arranged a meeting here with the Countess. (His curiosity urges him to try circuitous methods of getting at the Count's thoughts) Here you will be able to ventilate quietly the questions that interest you... (Pause. The COUNT is silent) .... or any other questions whatever.

Count To return to the children, my dear Carmelo, I must say that my first impression when I saw and heard them -- it was excellent of course. I felt, as you said, great joy and pride. There seemed to me to be a perfect likeness --- equality rather -- in the tone of their voices. As I cannot see their faces well they appeared to me to be exact

copies of one and the same type. But tell me, are their natures ... their souls ... also alike?

Priest (After a moment or so of perplexity) Oh no, don Rodrigo. Neither their voices nor their faces are alike, much less their characters.

Count (With great attention) Then, as they are different, one must be better than the other. Tell me, you who have been much with them, and have seen them closely, which is the cleverer, the best and most generous of the two?

Priest. By my faith, it is hard to say. They are both good, gentle, clever, noble-hearted; somewhat mischievous, yes, but modest, well principled and god-fearing.

Count Yes, of course -- these are the things they have in common. But in what do they differ?

Priest Well, they differ ... Let me see. Dolly takes the initiative in mischief. Nell appears more inclined to serious matters, more foresseeing. Dolly has a lively imagination, an impetuous will; Nell a more reflective nature. She is more fixed and constant in her leanings. But what is the use of my saying this to you, Don Rodrigo, seeing that, as soon as you see them daily and intimately, you will be able to know them and distinguish between them better than anyone.

Count (In his sincerity, giving himself away) That is just it ... that is what I have come for.

Priest You have come for?

Count To study them; to try to make a detailed analysis of their characters ... The reasons for this ... now is not the time to tell you. (Changing his tone) Listen, Carmelo, why don't you wait and lunch with me to-day?

Priest Oh no. To-day, my Lord, to-day you will come to my house and do penance with me.

Count I accept. Yes Sir, I accept. At what time?

Priest At one o'clock precisely.

Scene XI.

COUNT; PRIEST; DOCTOR (young, pleasant looking with a clever expression.)

Priest — Hullo, young doctor, come here .... (Presenting him) Salvador Angulo, our municipal doctor.

Count — (Holding out his hand) Much pleasure.

Doctor — I come to pay my respects to the lord of Jerusa and Polan.

Count — (Thinking) Angulo, Angulo; let me see.

Priest — Son of Bonifacio Angulo who, if I may say so, was called the puppy ... gamekeeper of Laín.

Count — Oh yes. The puppy; the puppy; a simple man, a faithful servant ... I remember him perfectly. (Gives his hand again to the doctor).

Priest — And your lordship will not have forgotten that you paid for this boy's career in Valladolid University?

Count — I?

Doctor — So that, whatever I may be, I owe to the Count.

Count — I did not remember; on my honour, I did not remember.

Priest — Well, let me tell you ... and not because he is here ... that this young man has made a name for himself in medical science.

Doctor — For Heaven's sake, don Carmelo!

Count — (Very affectionately) Good, my son, good. Give me your hand. ~~Allow me this familiarity~~.

Priest — (Remarking on his elegant attire) I know why you are so spick and span, young man.

Doctor — I am one of the delegation which is to receive the Countess.

Count — Ah. (To Priest) And are you not going?

Priest — Later. I shall have to put in an appearance there. The Countess must not be able to say that I am discourteous.

Count — Of course not. The town must not be bereft of so

important a figure at this kind of ceremony!

Priest Listen, Salvador. As soon as the function is over come straight back as fast as you can and you will have the honour of dining with his lordship and with me.

Doctor Very good ... I am honoured.

Count (Gladly) What an excellent opportunity for consulting you at leisure.

Doctor Some trouble?

Count No, it is not that. But you know my little grand-children; you must have attended them some time or other?

Doctor Nell and Dolly have the most robust and plebian health. I have visited them for slight ailments.

Count Which will have been enough to enable a quick observer like you to know their temperaments ...

Doctor I see ... the truth is, so far I have not had occasion to observe any noticeable difference between them.

Priest Well, then, in my house, after dinner, you will be able to discuss them at length. (A rocket is heard)

Count (Startled) She is already here!

Doctor She is arriving. (Music in the distance).

Priest (Going towards the left, to the place which overlooks the town of Jerusa) You can see the crowd from here. What a multitude! They seem mad. (COUNT rises in great agitation and tries to see what is going on in the town.)

Doctor Can you see, Sir? (Leading him.)

Count No, no, I cannot see ... but I can hear, I can hear.

Priest The carriages are arriving now at the Mayor's house. (The music and the noises of the crowd sound nearer.)

Count (With sudden passion, apostrophising the town) Ah! She comes! She is entering Jerusa, Lucrecia Richmond! At last you are here ... How I have longed for this occasion. You and I alone, face to face ... I do not know which is worse; you who flaunt your shame unpunished in the face of

of the world, or the servile and degraded town which fêtes and flatters you. (Bells are heard.) They peal for you ... and afterwards they will ring for oration. (Furiously, raising his voice) Senseless people, she who is now arriving in your midst is a monster of lewdness, a false and infamous one. Do not cheer her, do not honour her. Stone her, spit on her! (The PRIEST and the DOCTOR, appalled at the Count's vehement language, remain speechless. They try to draw him away from the place and lead him into the house.)

Act II.

A drawing room in Pardina. The left side of the stage and part of the background is occupied by a large corner window with plateresque pillars. Through the windows a view of trees and sky. In the background a large door opening on to the entrance hall of the house. A small door on the right. The whole has an air of ancient and shabby grandeur. Chests, tables, chairs and other furniture of walnut and oak blackened by age. Daytime.

Scene I.

NELL, DOLLY, DON PIO CORONADO, seated round a large table on which are ink, paper and lesson books.

Dolly (Banging the table) I don't know a word? So much the better! Much use it will be to me!

Don Pio (Attempting rivalry) Nell will not say that. She wants to learn.

Nell Yes, Sir. I say that. "Much use it will be to me"!

Don Pio (With feigned severity that does not convince) Very good, very good. Here I have two young ladies who are to go into society one day and who are determined to be country wenches.

Dolly Yes, Sir, we want to be country wenches.

Nell We want to be savages.

Don Pio What! I never did! The heiresses of the lands of Albrit and Laín, savages!

Dolly (Pulling him gently by an ear) Yes, yes, my clever little master.

Don Pio Come. Let us go on. Dolly, another little bit of history.

Dolly (Putting her elbows on the table and leaning her face on her hands, looks at him smilingly.) Little Pio, how goodlooking you are!

Don Pio (Cracking his fingers) Miss Dolly, be sensible.

Nell Your face is like a rose. If you were not old and we

did not know you, we should say you painted.

Don Pio — Nell, behave. I paint! Great Heavens!

Dolly — Tell us something else. Is it true that when you were a young man you were a great lady killer?

Don Pio — (Cracking his fingers more rapidly, which is his peculiar way of calling to order) Behave, children. Let us go on with the lesson.

Nell — They say that you used to kill them noiselessly.

Dolly — And that you had lovers by the dozen.

Don Pio — Lovers. Oh no, you can acquit me of that! Women are no good.

Nell — (Hitting him gently on the neck) Men are worse. Do not speak evil of us!

Don Pio — Look here... You are absolutely nonsensical and mischievous to-day. (Trying to be angry) Upon my word ... if you don't say your lesson ... I tell you and I mean it ... I swear it.

Nell — What?

Don Pio — I shall be angry.

Dolly — We knew it. We are trembling.

Nell — Go on; crack your fingers.

Don Pio — (Determined to go on with the lesson) Order! Behave.' Come now, tell me something about Themistocles.

Dolly — Yes: the one who cut off the head of a bad woman called Medusa.

Don Pio — (Lifting his hands to his head) Lord! Saints alive! Do not mix up history with mythology.

Nell — The one is as much a lie as the other.

Dolly — And they are all ~~alike~~ one to us.

Don Pio — Oh dear! Oh dear! What is wrong with you to-day? Silence! Attention! Tell me quickly the principal events in the life of Themistocles.

Dolly — We don't like to meddle in other people's lives.

Don Pio (Reciting) Themistocles, a great man of Greece, native of Thebes, conqueror of the Macedonians (correcting himself) Oh no. I am confusing him with Epaminondas... What a head I have to-day!

Nell He doesn't know it! He doesn't know it!

Dolly What a fraud of a teacher.

Don Pio (Grieved) It is you who drive me mad with your pranks and nonsense. (Seriously) We cannot go on like this.

Nell That is what I say. We cannot go on like this.

Dolly Let us be donkeys and go out and graze in the fields.

Don Pio My conscience will not allow me to deceive the Countess who doubtless thinks that I am teaching you something and that you are learning.

Dolly (Putting on Coronado's spectacles which are on the table) Pio dear, we are dreadfully bored.

Don Pio (Trying to get his glasses back) You will break them, my child.

Nell Pio, dear, wouldn't it be better if we all three went for a walk along the shore?

Don Pio Very good, very good indeed -- splendid! To gad about the whole blessed day, even in the hours dedicated to education. Very fine, young ladies, very fine ... And here am I, a figurehead, a ridiculous puppet, I who represent science, I who am here to inculcate in you ...

Dolly Little Pio, don't inculcate anything and let's go.

Nell We'll go on with the lesson on the shore.

Dolly Looking at the sea we'll study the voyage of Columbus to America.

Don Pio (Sighing dispiritedly) What children! No one can hold out against them. Very well, I give in... But first let us go over a little bit of grammar.

Nell (Cracking her fingers) Hurrah for Coronado.

Dolly (By heart) Grammar is the art of speaking Spanish

correctly.

Don Pio — Go on ... Dolly, tell me what is the participle?

Dolly — (Lazily) I don't want to.

Nell — The participle? A thing which is parted.

Don Pio — (With gesticulations which take the place of energy) Dolts, featherheads, who have not even the pride that I see in other children ... Good Lord ... in other well-behaved and diligent children, who learn in order to come out high in their examinations so that their parents may look at them open-mouthed when they hear them!

Dolly — We don't want to come out high; Mamma would not be open-mouthed. Did you ever see such a funny little master!

Nell — Coronado dear, if you are not good we shall make you go down on your knees.

Don Pio — Well, upon my word ... But what trouble is it to you to remember such easy things? Presently you will be young ladies of the aristocracy and when your illustrious Mamma takes you to receptions, you will make a fine exhibition of yourselves -- as Heaven is above! Imagine if, at an evening party, they speak of the participle and you do not know what it is. A pretty part my little girls will play! People will ask "From what mountain has the Countess brought this pair of mules?" That is what they will say and they will laugh at you and young men will not fall in love with you.

Dolly — Young men will fall in love with us even if we don't know the participle or the conjunction or any of those things.

Nell — We have only to be pretty and elegant and you will see whether they won't like us.

Don Pio — Yes, yes; you will be dainty little donkeys.

Nell — (Leaning indolently on the table, looking at him with a mocking air) Do you know, I am noticing one thing, master. You have very fine eyes.

Dolly — They are like two suns with ever such a lot of mischief

in them.

Pio (Crossing his arms) Go on; mock me as much as you like.

Nell It is not mockery, it is friendliness.

Dolly It is only that we love you, little master, because you are very kind and never bear malice.

Nell (Caressing his chin) He is a good soul, this don Pio. That is why the children of Albrit plague you, because they are your little friends.

Pio (Gazing at them enraptured) Wheedlers! Coaxers! Flatterers!

Dolly Tell me one thing. Is it true that you have a lot of daughters.

Pio (Heaving a deep sigh) Ever so many.

Nell Are they pretty?

Pio Not so pretty as you are.

Dolly Do they love you?

Pio (With another deep sigh which, however, is cut short by emotion) Love me! They!

Nell I have heard that they don't love you very much. If that is true, never mind, for we love you dearly.

Dolly And you, do you love us? (Don PIO, whose intense emotion renders him speechless, makes a sign of assent.)

Nell He adores us ... and that is why we shall work when we feel like it and when we don't, we shall play.

Dolly And that is what we are going to do to-day.

Nell First a little walk ... then to see Mamma.

Dolly (Hearing voices in the background) I think I hear grandfather's voice.

Nell (Looking towards the background) No; it is don Carmelo.

Dolly (Looking too) And the Mayor. They have come to look for us to take us to Mamma.

Scene II.

The same -- PRIEST, DOCTOR, MAYOR.

Priest (Smilingly) Come, young ladies, you have worked enough for the present.

Doctor (Sorry for the teacher who is collecting books and papers) Yes, let poor don Pio breathe a little now.

Nell (Curtseying very elegantly and gracefully to the Mayor) Sir. (Dolly also curtseys.)

Mayor (Bows in return.) Young ladies.

Dolly Tell us: are you taking us to Mamma's house?

Priest No, Miss Dolly.

Dolly Why not?

Priest Because her ladyship is coming to Pardina.

Nell Oh, how splendid!

Dolly When?

Priest In a little while.

Nell Impatient to go out) And can't we go to meet her?

Priest A little pretext for running about, eh? But, my children, you are old enough now to settle down.

Dolly What a nuisance! To be shut up all day ...!

Doctor Leave them alone, dear Carmelo... let them go out and run about.

Dolly (Gracefully) Come, my father, you run about too. When you are not out fishing you are out hunting. And in the afternoons no one can keep you from your little game of skittles.

Priest (Laughing) Ha! ha! ha! What little devils. Well, well, go and leave us alone.

Doctor Go and meet your mother.

Dolly) Let us run.
Nell) (Together) Let us go. (They run out by the background, dragging don Pio by the arm -- who follows them as quickly as his years permit.)

Scene III.

PRIEST, DOCTOR, MAYOR, VENANCIO.

Venan. (Bowing respectfully to the Mayor) Sir ... what an honour for my house.

Mayor My dear Venancio, obligations of friendship bring me here. It is not as mayor that I come.

Venan. As a friend, of course, of his lordship, Count Albrit, once my master, to-day my guest.

Mayor And I must say we are disappointed not to find him here.

Venan. He will not be long coming back from his walk. He waited for you until ten o'clock. The whole morning he was in a great state of agitation, walking up and down here like a lion in a cage.

Doctor I hope he will calm down at the little message we bring him from the Countess.

Venan. What ... my lady consents?

Mayor (Fatuously) Thanks to me.

Priest The interview will take place here...

Venan. At what hour?

Doctor Twelve.

Mayor Grave ... most grave ... must be the cause of dissension between them, when a woman as bold as Lucrecia at braving the world on matters of conduct, shrinks and trembles before a poor old man, ill and almost blind.

Priest And who is to know that it is a question of conduct? We must discount all that envy, malice and gossip may have added to the stories told about her.

Doctor Discount all you like, but there will always remain ...

Priest What?

Doctor The naked fact.

Venan. (Who has been looking towards the background) Hush! They are coming.

Priest Who?

Venan. The Countess and her daughters.

Scene IV.

The same. LUCRECIA, NELL, DOLLY.

Venan. (Kissing her hand) Welcome, my lady.

Lucrecia I am glad to see you ... but don't expect me ~~me~~ to enter ~~gladly~~ with pleasure this dismal house. (Looks round the scene with a nervous glance.)

Nell Mother dear, it is our home.

Lucrecia Yes, yes -- what am I saying? This old ~~home~~ house is very dear to me since my adored children have their nest in it. (She sits down on the arm chair. The Children stand on either side of her.)

Nell A lovely nest, if only we are able by our affection to attract you to it.

Dolly And to keep you here with our kisses.

Mayor These adorable little beings would imprison their illustrious mother ...

Priest And we congratulate them on it.

Lucrecia I, too, should enjoy being imprisoned here, provided I could escape public manifestations.

Priest My lady, one must resign oneself to the public manifestations of a grateful town. You must not think that we of Jerusa are treating you badly.

Mayor There are bound to be public rejoicings when the Countess of Laín comes here.

Doctor You see, Madam ... we have overcome your repugnance to enter Pardina, and I do not hesitate to assure you that you will be grateful to us for it.

Lucrecia (Sighing) Yes. I am in Pardina. I have taken the first step and ... (Unwilling to express her thought before the children) ... I would ask 'Is not Count Albrit who

seemed so anxious to speak to me at home?'

Mayor He is not; but he will soon return from his walk.

Doctor It would be better to inform him.

Mayor Yes ... let him know that the Countess is waiting.

Dolly Mamma, would you like us to go and look for him?

Lucrecia You might have to go a long way.

Nell No, No; he is sure to be at the entrance to the wood.

Venan. They are sure to find him there.

Dolly Let's go. (Kisses her mother.)

Doctor I will go with them.

Lucrecia Thank you, doctor.

Nell (Kisses her mother) You will see how quickly we shall bring him to you.

(EXEUNT Doctor and Children, and behind them Venancio.)

Scene V.

LUCRECIA, PRIEST, MAYOR;

Lucrecia. (Restless, preoccupied, with lively concern) Tell me, don Carmelo, have you seen him to-day?

Priest No, madam.

Mayor Rid yourself, my dear lady, of this puerile fear ... it is better for you to speak to one another and to quarrel like good friends.

Priest From the discussion, from the dispute itself, there may come a frank compromise.

Lucrecia. (Looking at the ground) I hardly think so ... (with a penetrating look at the priest) The parish priest of Jerusa does not use the frankness towards me which I deserve ... He does not dare to repeat the outrageous things which my father-in-law has told him about me.

Priest Outrageous! On my honour, no. Yesterday, at dinner in my house ... (hesitatingly, undecided whether to be sincere or not) he spoke a little of his dead son .. your ladyship's most worthy husband ... praised his virtues, his uncommon merit ... he wept.

Lucrecia (Anxiously) And what else?

Priest He evinced a glowing affection for his grandchildren. When he spoke of them, Angulo and I both noticed a certain excitement in his fatherly affection.

Lucrecia It would not be strange if his misfortunes, embittering a soul which is all pride and haughtiness, were to drive him mad.

Priest I should not say that quite. I would only point out that his lordship deserves and requires the very greatest care.

Lucrecia And he shall have it. I shall direct Venancio to care for and to wait on him with every possible attention so long as he is in Pardina.

Mayor And as far as is in my power ...

Lucrecia (To Priest) Go on, don Carmelo.

Priest There is no more, my lady. The Count ended the conversation by urging me most warmly to beg an interview with you and, as it was not possible to see you last night, I relegated my commission to the mayor and the doctor ... You have had the goodness to consent.

Mayor And on arriving here to notify his Excellency, we are told that he is out walking.

Lucrecia (With some concern and still very uneasy) Alone?

Priest I think not.

Lucrecia Who is with him?

Priest I do not remember. (Enter VENANCIO from the right.) Tell me -- who did you say was walking with the Count?

Scene VI.

(The same ... VENANCIO; afterwards SENÉN.)

Venan. Senén ... But before they reached the Calvary, his lordship sent him away, saying that he wanted to be alone. Senén came back and ...

Lucrecia (Quickly) Is he here?

Venan. I was just coming to say that he desires to be received by your ladyship.

Lucrecia (With surprise and aversion) Now? (Changing her mind) Very well, I will receive him.

(Senén appears from the right. He bows and remains at the door.)

Mayor (Aside to Priest) Who is this bird?

Priest (Aside) A former valet of Laín.

Mayor I see ... a possessor of secrets ... Hadn't we better be moving?

Priest I think we had.

Mayor (Aloud to Lucrecia) Madam, don Rodrigo cannot be long now.

Lucrecia What, are you going? Abandoning me?

Priest We shall not leave Pardina.

Mayor We shall return.

Priest Courage, madam. Do not fear the lion.

Lucrecia (Indicating Senén) I shall speak first to this dog.

(The MAYOR and PRIEST go out by the background followed by VENENCIO.)

Scene VII.

LUCRECIA; SENÉN, who remains at a respectful distance.

Lucrecia (Standing, questions him closely without hiding her contempt.) I know that you have seen the old man, that you have been speaking to him ...

Senén (Still from a distance) He comes for no good.

Lucrecia (Dissimulating her fear) What does it matter to me? It will be necessary to give him something so that he can live and leave me in peace.

Senén I doubt it. Proud as he is, he will not want alms; Susceptible and fastidious and irrascible as he is, he will want a scandal.

Lucrecia (Tremulously) A scandal! What! Has he said so?

Senén (Trying to be mysterious) Not to me. A friend of mine who lived with his lordship in Valencia told me that, ever since the death of his son -- God keep his soul -- he does nothing but rake up the past, the refuse of the past ...

Lucrecia Like scavengers on rubbish heaps. (Very uneasily) He would rake round in you ... he will have asked you a thousand questions .. He knows that you were my servant, that ...

Senén (Coming nearer) In me her ladyship had and always will have a faithful servant.

Lucrecia (Trying to escape the strong perfume which issues from Senén's clothing, she sniffs at her handkerchief as if she had a cold.)) I know it ... I trust you.

Senén I serve my lady disinterestedly in whatsoever it pleases her to command me ... but her ladyship will not forget that her humble servant, poor Senén, does not deserve to be left half way through his career.

Lucrecia What! What! You want more? Insufferable beggar!

Senén (Coming nearer. The Countess steps back.) Permit me, madam ... my requirements which increase daily force me to trouble you ...

Lucrecia Is it promotion you ask?

Senén Yes, madam.

Lucrecia (Fretfully) But I can't give it. I!...

Senén (Calmly) My lord Marquis of Pescara, who has great influence, will give me my promotion. Your ladyship has only to suggest it ... or to order it.

Lucrecia What you are asking is absurd, preposterous! (Aside, moving furtheraway) To have to put up with this reptile. to listen to him, to smell him ... only because I am afraid of him.

Senén (As cool in his servility as in his demands) If madam does not want to grant a favour to her faithful servant, I have said nothing.

Lucrecia (Wanting to end the interview) Good. It shall be done. But it is doubtful whether I shall be able to see Richard.

Senén You will see him to-morrow.

Lucrecia (With sudden interest, approaching him without fear of the heliotrope scent) Where? What are you saying? Where?

Senén In Veralba. Is not your ladyship going to-morrow to the country seat of the Senor~~s~~ Donesteve?

Lucrecia Yes, ... and there ... How do you know that Ricardo is in Veralba ...?

Senén If I say it, it is because I know ... I can prove it.

Lucrecia Ah, you have it from his valet, your cousin ... Are you sure?

Senén Absolutely certain. Will your ladyship promise to beg my promotion of the Marquis?

Lucrecia (Draws back again, ashamed of holding such intimate conversation with her servant) Yes , yes : I promise not to forget the matter. I shall keep it in mind .. provided you return my ~~protection~~ favour with a loyalty beyond all proof.

Senén (With a gesture of loyal assent) Madam!

Lucrecia (Covering her nose). Now go. Your perfumed demands give me a headache.

Venanc (Hurrying from the background). Madam, his lordship is this moment entering Pardina.

Lucrec (With sudden consternation) Good God!

Venanc (Looking towards the background) He is coming this way.

Lucrec (To Senen) Go quickly.

Venanc Go out this way.(He sends him out by the right). Would your ladyship like me to delay him a little...to tell him...

Lucrec (With great trepidation) Yes...Yes. Don't let him pass...Tell him that ...that it would be better tomorrow...

Venanc Here he is!

Lucrec (Resigning herself). There is no help then. I must face it. (Pulling herself together). Let him come. I must not fear him, no,no. (She sits down feighing calmness)The Count is seen at the door . He takes off his hat.Pause.As he enters Venancio retires and shuts the door.)

Scene VIII.

Lucrecia. Count.

Count Madam.(He bows respectfully. She responds with cold politeness.) I am grateful to you for hour kindness in granting me this interview.

Lucrec For me it is a sacred duty to grant your request here or anywhere else....duty I say...but at one time you used to call me your daughter.

Count Those times are past.You were I might say a casual daughter... transitory. A foreigner by birth, still more by feeling...you never identified yourself with my family or with my race. Against my will my beloved Rafael chose as his wife the daughter of an Irishman established in the United States who had come over here on business....A dire calamity America has been for me! Well, as everyone knows, I opposed the marriage. I fought blindly, stubbornly. I was defeated... Time and you have proved me right.. You, yes...by making my son wretched and hastening his death.

Lucere (~~Fearful~~ Furious but still somewhat fearful). Sir...that is not true.

Duroc (Lowering her hand). Sir yes. Your performance demands give me a handsome.

Vesuvio (Hurrying from the sofa-cushion). Madam, his insolently is this amount entering proclaim.

Duroc (With a gesture conciliation) Come down!

Vesuvio (Looking towards the background). He is coming this way.

Duroc (To Vesuvio) Do quickly.

Vesuvio (Out this way.(He pushes him out of the right). Go in your bedroom like me to delay him a little...to tell him...

Duroc (With great tranquillation) Yes...Yes. Don't let him pass...Tell him that ...that it would be better tomorrow...

Vesuvio Here he is!

Duroc (Resuming herself). There is no help them. I must face it. (Hurriedly to Vesuvio) Let him come. I must not fear him. No,no! (She sits down full of her authority)The count is seen at the door . He takes off his hat.Pauses.As he enters Vesuvio retires and opens the door.)

Rome Mill.

Duroc. Count.

Count (He bows respectfully). Who responds with cold politeness.) I am grateful to you for your kindness in granting me this interview.

Duroc For me it is a sacred duty to grant your request late or anywhere else...but I say...but at one time you been to call me your mother.

Count These times are past.You were I might say a general favorite...Immediately. A relations by birth, still more by feeling...You never identified yourself with by family or with my race. Against my will my beloved Rafael chose as his wife the daughter of an Irishman established in the United States who has come over here on business...A fire calamity America has been for me full. As regards Anna, I opposed the marriage. I found disdainfully, authoritarily. I was defeated... Time and you have proved me right... ...By making my son miserable and darkening his death.

Duroc (Smiling but still somewhat fearful). Sir...that is not true.

Count Madam, what I say is true. My unhappy son was worn out by the shame caused by the unbridled behaviour of his wife. It is common knowledge.

Lucrec (Loftily, rising). Take care what you say. You are making yourself the echo of low calumnies.

Count (With some gentleness.) Lucrecia...it may still be that I am mistaken...that you are better than I think...You would confirm my error if you would only be strong enough to confess the truth.

Lucrec (Perturbed). The truth?

Count Yes...it is a most delicate matter on which I would question you.

Lucrec When?

Count Now.

Lucrec (Terrified). Question me? Am I a criminal?

Count I believe so.

Lucrec (In a panic). This is beyond everything. I can stand no more.

Count No. No. You cannot refuse to answer me. It is a grave matter. The question is solemn and the answer must be solemn...It is not I who am speaking now...it is the husband of the woman listening to me...It is my son who lives again in me. (Pause) ...sit down.

Lucrec For pity's sake, you are torturing me.

Count (Sits down facing Lucrecia). Pardon me...It is necessary. One has to suffer somewhat, Lucrecia. (Pause. Lucrecia, apprehensive does not dare to look at him). When I returned to Cadiz from my fruitless journey, I was given a letter from Rafael in which he told me all his grief, his deep bitterness. Life had lost all interest for him. He was ill and in his despair he did not want to recover. Sorrow...the loss of all his illusions...the shame of seeing his name dishonoured...were consuming him.

Lucrec (Turning to him). Sir!

Count My son had been living apart from his wife for a year.

Lucrec And who can say that it was my fault?

Count Do not interrupt me. Listen to me just now... Rafael told me nothing definite. He simply gave expression to his state of

Count Madam, why I say it is true. My husband was worn out by the
crimes caused by his unbridled indulgence of his wife. It is con-
non anywhere.

Duchesse (Coldly, rising). This only that you say. You are making yourself
not only of **low** criminals.

Count (With some hesitation.) Duchesse...I may still be that I am
mistaken...that you are better than I think...You would con-
fess my error if you would only be strong enough to confess the
truth.

Duchesse (Impatient). The truth!

Count Yes...it is a most reliable matter on which I would question
you.

Duchesse Why?

Count Why.

Duchesse (Faintly). Because I am a criminal!

Count I believe so.

Duchesse (In a panic). This is beyond everything. I can stand no more.

Count No. No. You cannot refuse to answer me. It is a grave matter.
The question is solemn but the answer must be solemn...It is
not I who am troubling you...it is the Madame of the Palace
illustrious...If it be you who lives again in me.(Pause)
...out down.

Duchesse For pity's sake, you are hurting me.

Count (With some trouble Duchesse). Forgive me...It is necessary. One
has to suffer somewhat. Duchesse.(Pause. Duchesse, a prisoner
does not dare to look at him). When I returned to Paris from
my Italian journey, I was given a letter from Belgium which
told me all this story. Madame Duchesse. Life has lost all
interest for him. He was ill and in this despair he did not want
to recover. Poor...the idea of all his delusions...the shame
of seeing his name dishonored...were consuming him.

Duchesse (Turning to him). What

Count I can not have lived from this date for a year.

Duchesse And you are sure of this? Count?

Count Do not take my word. Listen to me Madame...Perhaps you
nothing believe. My simply mere conversation is his state or

mind , without mentioning the causes...Of course on receiving that letter I went to Valencia.

Lucrec Alas!

Count (With strong emotion) Two hours before I arrived my beloved son had died. An overwhelming attack of ...collapse... death. All in a few hours.(He weeps .Pause.) He died in a room in a Hotel ...dressed...on the bed...with only the scant attention that paid help could give him...God!..what anguish!.

Lucrec (Much affected, sobbing)...Oh my lord...Though you may not believe it...I loved him.

Count (Furiously drying his tears). A lie! If you had loved him why did you not hasten to him when you knew he was ill?

Lucrec (Not knowing what to say)...Because...I don't know... the complications of life...I ...

Count Let me finish...You will easily understand mydesolation at findnim dead. (He crosses his hands with a sob). Oh immeasurable woe, oh lingering agony of my old age...more horrible than all the ills I have ever suffered! To see him, dead , to speak to him and get no answer... not a movement...not a look...not a sound for my caresses...To find that he had taken all with him to that silent abyss...death. (Lucrecia possesed with intense emotion weeps with her handkerchief to her eyes.) H Horrible!awful ! You have no heart; you do not know what this is. You weep. (He looks at her crying . Pause.)How beautiful it would be if, at this moment, we could weep...you and I... for that beloved being. (Lucrecia takes a few steps towards him: they are on the point of embracing. They hesitate ...The Count repulses her.)

Lucrec (Going back to her chair). My tears are sincere.

Count Naturally,..seeing my grief. You are not made of bronze. (Lucrecia with bent head and eyes on the ground is silent) Ah you are silent. (He rises) Now I see her now, at last, I see the wretched Lucrecia in the attitude in which she ought to be...awaiting with resignation a sentence of judgment.(Pause). Do you admit that your behaviour to my son , at certain times of his life at least, was not right?

mind, without mentioning the contents of another or receiving that letter I send to Valandre.

Moreno (Aside)

Count (with strong emotion) Two hours before I arrived, Valandre was dead. An overwhelming attack of ...apoplexy... death. All in a few hours. (He rises.) He died in a room in a Hotel ...dressed...on the bed...with only his recent attention that paid half to [illegible] ...[illegible] confusion.

Moreno (With affection, rising ...Count ...though I do not believe it...I love you.

Count (Intensely drying the tears. Will I [illegible] him my [illegible] NOT LEAVE YOUR WORK, OR GIVE UP YOUR [illegible]

Moreno (Not knowing what to say)...because...I don't know... the complications of life...!...

Count Let me finish...You will always be a hard proposition as [illegible] case. (He crosses his hands with a sob). Oh! [illegible] woe, or liberating agent of my life...[illegible] all the time I have never suffered to [illegible], [illegible] to run and get in answer... and a [illegible] ...[illegible] a sound for my defense...To find that he [illegible] with him [illegible] ...[illegible]. [illegible] with [illegible] working with [illegible] (Aside.) H [illegible] Nothing! ! You have no heart; you do not [illegible] you. You weep. (He leaps to his crying. [illegible] it would go to it, at this moment, we could [illegible] ...I... for that beloved child. (Throwing [illegible] a few [illegible] that they are on the point of [illegible]. They [illegible] ...the [illegible] (Aside.)

Moreno (Going back for [illegible]). My [illegible] are [illegible].

Count Naturally...[illegible] you are but [illegible] of [illegible]. (Insensible with pain [illegible] even on the ground in [illegible]) [illegible] are [illegible]. (He rises) Now I see her now, at last, I see the [illegible] Moreno in the attitude in which she [illegible] to be...[illegible] with resignation a [illegible] of [illegible]. (Pause). [illegible] that your behaviour to my son, at certain times of his life at least, was not right?

Lucrec (Timidly). I do...But I have something to say on my side too...

Count I am listening.

Lucrec My disagreements with Rafael were of long standing.

Count They date from the second or third year of your marriage... At the end of the first year, your eldest son was born, to whom you gave my name. He died when three or four months old.

Lucrec That is so.

Count Some time after, I cannot be quite precise as this took place during my stay in America, the Countess of Lain began to follow a wrong road.

Lucrec (Constrained, fighting a desperate retreat.) Oh, Sir, if you had found your son alive, assuredly Rafael, if he had judged me, would not have been so harsh.

Count He was more than harsh...he was implacable.

Lucrec In his last moments?

Count In his last moments. Mark well what I say.

Lucrec (Astounded) But you have just told me...!

Count That I found him dead. Yes.

Lucrec ~~(Pause)~~ (Pause. They look at one another.) Then...

Count The dead speak.

Lucrec (Hesitating between credulity and superstitious fear). Rafael!

Count Hopeless, mad, I stayed I know not how many hours before the dead body of my poor son, conscious of nothing but him and the immense mystery of death. After a time I began to notice the things around me, his clothes, the furniture he had used, the room...(Pause. Lucrecia listens with tense expectation.) There was a table in the room with books and papers on it and among them a letter.

Lucrec (Tremblingly.) A letter!

Count Yes. Rafael was in the act of writing it when he was taken ill. Death came to him rudely and attacked him with fury! He cried out...they came...all in vain...The letter remained there half written...There it was...alone...speaking...it was he...I read it without picking it up, without touching it, bending over the table as I should have bent over his bed had I found him

Inorse (Thinking). I do...But I have something to say, on my side too...

Count I am listening.

Inorse My disagreements will prevent here or long explains.

Count Your date from the account of three years of your marriage... At the end of the first year, your client and my friend, who, you say, died. He died when three of four months old.

Inorse That is so.

Count So - time after, I cannot be quite certain he died shortly my stay in America, the courtesy of Italy began to follow a wrong road.

Inorse (constrained, fighting a desperate refusal.) Oh, sir, if you had found your son alive, seemingly future, if he had judged me, would not have been so harsh.

Count He was more than harsh...he was ignoble.

Inorse In his own country

Count In his land respects. Have you what was I say.

Inorse (astounded) Sir you have just told me...!

Count That I found his dead. Yes.

Inorse (Pause. They look at one another.) Sir...

Count The same speak.

Inorse (setting between crushing and determination fear). Murder!

Count Murder, yes, I stated I know not what more before the dead master by poor, confusion of mind, but the sight the same mystery of death. After a time I began to realize the things around me. His brother, the furniture he had used, the room...(Pause. Inorse's attention with some determination. There was a table in the room with books and papers on it and around them a letter.

Inorse (Trembling). A letter

Count Yes. Half of me in the act of writing it when he died. I have come to the room suddenly and startled him with fright. He stood out...they came...all in vain...The letter remains there written...There is something...something...it was he... read it without picking it up, without touching it, leaning over the table as I should have done over his bed had I found him

alive. The letter says...

Lucrec (Almost fainting, her lips dry). Was it for me?

Count Yes.

Lucrec Give it to me. (The Count shakes his head). Then how am I to know...

Count It will be enough for me to repeat the contents. I know it by heart.

Lucrec ~~It Lucrec~~ It is not enough...I must read it ...recognize the writing...

Count It is not necessary. I do not lie. Too well you know it...It begins with a bitter lamentation which paints the matrimonial discord. There follow these solemn words...(Repeating it word by word) "I warn you that if you do not send me my daughter soon, I shall claim her. I want to have her beside me....The other child ...the one who is not my daughter, as you yourself avow in your letter to your lover, the painter Charles Eraul, who died a year ago... I leave you...I hand her over to you...I throw her in your face... (Pause).

Lucrec (With amazement which is almost stupefaction)...He said that... He says...

Count Do you doubt it.?.

Lucrec I do not doubt ...I do not know...(An idea seizing her.) The letter may be false. An enemy of mine may have written it to slander me....

Count (With a gesture as if to produce the latter.) My son wrote it.

Lucrec (Rebelliously). No, I don't want to see it. What an abomination.

Count But you will not deny it.

Lucrec (Deciding to deny it). Yes...I deny it utterly.

Count And I, fool that I was, hoped to find you great enough of soul to complete my son's revelation by telling me...

Lucrec (Scared) What?

Count (With austere simplicity). By telling me which of the two daughters usurps my name, which personifies my dishonour.

Lucrec Infamous idea! It is not true.

Count (With stern command). Tell me at once, at once, which is the false.

which the true.It is all one. I need to know it...I have a right to know it as head of the house of Albrit. This historical house with its great past,once mother of kings and princes , rich in noble men and warriors and in saintly women, has hitherto kept the honour of its name untouched.Today, alas, I cannot avert this shameful case of legal bastardy, I cannot prevent my name from passing by law to my two heirs, these innocent children. But to the one that is of my own blood, to the true one alone,I desire to give my spiritual heritage. It is she who will be my heir. It is she who will carry my honour and my pedigree to posterity. The other...No...False branch of Albrit! I repudiate her! I curse her low birth and her usurping existence!

Lucrec For pity's sake! I can bear no more. (Terrified she falls sobbing on her chair.Long pause.)

Count Lucrecia , do you recognize at last how right I am?You weep. (Thinking that gentle methods may be more effectibve). Perhaps I express my wrongs too strongly. Perhaps I question you too haughtily. I cannot overcome the violence of my nature...Pardon me ...(gently) I am not commanding you now;I am not accusing you. I am not the judge...I am your friend...your father...and,as such I implore you to bring me out of this horrible doubt. (Lucrecia is silent biting her handkerchief.) Be brave. One word will suffice...Once I have heard it I shall say no more. Truth, Lucrecia, truth is what saves.

Lucrecia (After a terrible struggle rises brusquely and goes wildly up and down the room.) Oh it is more than I can bear! I must escape, fly, hide myself! Let me go!

Count You will not answer me?

Lucrec Never! I shall die first.

Count (With calm authority). Very well then. What you will not tell me I shall find out for myself.

Lucrec How?

Count Ah...I shall know how.

Lucrec Miserable old man! Your madness fills me with compassion.

Count Yours does not even fill me with pity. One does not commiserate corrupt beings wallowing in evil.

Lucrec (Furiously, beside herself). Ah! You dare to insult me! Albrit! Race of madmen!...Of ludicrous chivalry...Of sham honour! Where would the old lion be if I did not shelter him? But I am generous. I forgive his insults. I shall see that he does not die in the workhouse, or drag his white mane along the roads.

Count (With supreme disdain). Lucrecia Richmond, God may perhaps forgive you...I, too, might forgive you, if forgiveness and contempt could go together.

Lucrec /Turning to the door) Enough. (To the children who open the door a little way without daring to enter). You may come in.

Scene IX.

Lucrecia, Count; Nell and Dolly, who run to embrace their mother; behind them Gregoria and Venancio ; afterwards the priest and doctor.

Lucrec My precious jewels, give me a thousand kisses. (They kiss her).

Nell (Noticing her face) Mother dear you have been crying!

Lucrec Your grandfather and I have been calling up sad memories.

Dolly (Looking at the Count who remains motionless.) Grandfather has been crying too. (Approaches him.)

Count Come ...kiss me...(The two run to him and hug and kiss him).

Lucrec (Aside to Gregoria and Venancio.) Wait on him, take care of him, but watch him, watch him all the time...

Dolly (To Count). Let us go for a walk this afternoon.

Count Yes, yes, I shall not leave you...we shall talk and do lessons together.

Nell You will teach us arithmetic and history.

Count History!...No you must teach me that.(Priest and doctor enter by background ; both go towards Lucrecia.)

Priest (Well, is it reconciliation?

Lucrec Impossible! But he must be watched. You, Doctor Angulo, I charge you to watch him closely, I cannot repeat it too often.

Priest Unhappy gentleman!

Doctor Do not be anxious...I shall keep him under observation...(Passes on to speak to the Count.)

Priest You insist on leaving us?

Lucrec I must be at Veralba this very day.(Making a movement to withdraw.)

Nell Mother dear shall we go with you to the house or stay a little with Grandfather?

Count If your Mother is leaving this afternoon you ought to stay with her until she goes.

Doctor How are you my lord?

Count Not well.

Doctor The eyesight?

Count Yes. All day I have noticed a kind of darkness, a vagueness about objects. (Looking round him with eyes that strain to see) ...I can hardly distinguish...(Noticing Lucrecia who stares at him haughtily.)...Lucrecia is the only one I see clearly...Yes I see her...There she is...My increasing blindness only allows me to see big things...the sky, the sea...and she is big...as big as the sea. She is another sea...immense...unfathomable.(His voice dies away . He remains motionless and rigid. Profound silence. All look at him.)

ACT III

Same Scenery as in Act II.

Scene I.

Gregoria arranging furniture ;Count seated,lost in thought;Nell and Dolly.

Gregoria Sir... (The Count does not hear; he remains self absorbed, speaking to himself. Gregoria comes close to him) Sir... He does not hear me... His thoughts are in the clouds.

Count (To himself) The truth, the truth... I want the truth.

Gregoria (Raising her voice) My lord... (Nell and Dolly run in from the right; behind them, Don Pio)

Nell Grandfather dear.

Dolly Are you coming for a walk with us? (Both kiss him)

Count (Coming back frpm his abtstaction) No. You cannot go for a walk to day, my children. The storm is above us. (Looking towards the window) It is raining already. (The sky darkens; a far off peal of thunder is heard)

Nell It sounds like thunder.

Don Pio (Coming forward with great respect and timidity) Good day, your Lordship.

Count Poor Coronado. How these little imps plague you. Well? Did they know their lessons?

Don Pio (With noble sincerity) Sir, not a word. Believe me.

Count (Gaily) What dears!.. Kiss me again, you precious little donkeys

Dolly You hear him, Don Pio.

Don Pio Yes, I hear ... And I do not forget what his Lordsip said to me last night, that I was not to put any more straw into the young ladies' heads.

Nell And that what we need is to have our wills educated.

Count Right. That is what I said.

Dolly So that, for my part, I dont want to know anything about books; I only want to know about things.

Count Very good.

Don Pio And if his lordship will permit me, I ask "What are things?" Miss Dolly?

Dolly Well .... things.

Nell Things.

Count There, there. The art of living, my children, will be taught you by a less kindly master than Don Pio ... by hard experience .. (In a different tone) Come ... lessons are over for to-day. Sênor Coronado, you may go.

Don Pio It might be as well to go over a little history in the afternoon.

Count (Rising and taking Don Pio aside) No... you and I will go over history together ... Come back presently. I have to speak to you. (Don Pio bows and retires. Count waves to Gregoria to withdraw.

Scene (2).

Count, Nell and Dolly.

Nell Now we three are alone. (Dolly runs to the window)

Count We two ... I say two, because you ... What are you doing, Dolly ?

Dolly Looking at the sky. How black it is ! There is going to be a deluge.

Count So much the better. A small deluge would not be a bad thing.

Nell What were you saying ?

Count Come here, Dolly. (Dolly comes nearer). I was saying that although you are two ... two ... (He points to one and then the other) you always seem to me to be one. (Children look perplexed) What do you think of that ? I mean that in you there is something too much.

Dolly Too much ? I understand still less now.

Nell Grandfather means that in both of us, not in one only, there is good and bad.

Dolly And what is too much is the bad ?

Count And it must be cut off and thrown away.

Nell Or perhaps it is that one of us is good and the other bad.

Count Perhaps.

Nell In that case I am the bad one and Dolly is the good one.

Dolly No, no; I am the bad one; I am always inventing mischief.

Count (Tormented with an idea). Little ones, come near me; put your faces close to me so that I can see you clearly (They place themselves one on each side of him; the Count puts his arm round them. The three heads are almost touching) So, so. (Looking at them with fixed attention). I cannot see, I cannot see.

(Dejectedly) This cursed sight is going from me, it is escaping me just when I need it most. However closely I look at you I see no difference in your faces.

Nell They say that we are alike, but Dolly is a little darker than I am. Less fair.

Count (With great attention). And you have both of you black hair, very black, very black ?

Dolly Mine is darker than Nell's.

Nell There is another difference between us. My nose is a little bit flatter.

Dolly And my mouth is larger than yours.

Count And your teeth ?

Nell We have both splendid teeth .... I don't say it from conceit.

Dolly But I have this eye tooth a little more sticking out ... kind of twisted ... Feel, grandfather. (Lifting the Count's finger to her mouth.)

Count It is true ... the eye tooth twisted .

Nell There are other differences between us ....

Count Your eyes now - when I look at them with my short sight they seem to me equally beautiful ... Nell, please look at the colour of your sister's eyes. And you, Dolly, look well at Nell's. Tell me the exact colour.

Nell Dolly's eyes are black.

Dolly Nell's are black; but mine are blacker.

Count (Intensely) Blacker ... yours, Dolly. Have they by any chance a greenish look ?

Nell I think so ... between green and blue.

Dolly (Looking closely into her sister's eyes). Yours have golden rays ... Yes, yes, a little greenish, too.

Count But they are black. Your father's eyes, my beloved son, were as black as a raven's wing.

Nell Papa was very handsome.

Count (Sighing) Do you remember him ?

Dolly I should think we do !

Nell Poor Papa; how he loved us.

Dolly He adored us.

Count When did you see him last ?

Nell I think ... two years ago, when he went to Paris. He took us away from school then.

Count Did he say good-bye to you ?

Dolly Yes, yes; he said he was coming back soon, and he never came back again. Afterwards he went to Valencia.

Nell Mamma started for Paris too, but she stopped at Barcelona. She did not take us with her.

Dolly When she came back to Madrid she was very much distressed, probably ~~her~~ because papa was not there.

Count How did you know she was distressed ?

Nell Because she was always going out, a sign that she was dull. We had our meals alone.

Count And it was then that you were brought here ?

Dolly Yes, sir.

Count Tell me something else; were you very fond of your father ?

Nell Very.

Count One of you, I imagine, cared less for him than the other ?

The two (Protesting) No, no, no ... both alike.

Count (After a pause, fixing his eyes, which see little, on them) And do you think that he cared for you both equally ?

Dolly Both the same.

Count Are you quite sure ?

Nell Quite sure ! Why he wrote us letters from Paris.

Count To each of you separately ?

Dolly No, to us both on the same paper, and he said "Little flowers of my heart, the only stars in my sky".... But from Valencia he never wrote to us at all.

Nell We had no letters from Valencia. We wrote to him and he did not answer. (~~They~~ Long pause. The Count rests his forehead on his hands, which are grasping his stick, and remains for a while in profound thought).

Dolly Grandfather dear, are you sleepy ?

Count (With a sigh raises his head and rubs his eyes) No ... this is not sleeping, it is thinking. (Noise of the storm. Rain beats on the window panes; peals of thunder are heard nearer)

Nell (Running to the window) What a storm !

Count (Aside, meditating) The features tell me nothing. (More hopefully) Their natures will speak. (Aloud) Little ones ...

Dolly Grandfather, may I go out on to the balcony to gather the hail ?

Nell (Quickly) No, no; I am cold: don't open.

Dolly (Mockingly) How shivery the child has become ! (To Count) Shall I open ?

Count Do as your sister says.

Nell Don't let her open it. This winter I caught a tremendous cold through her fault.

Dolly It was she who insisted on going out the day we had that great snow storm.

Nell (Angrily) It was she, it was she. She kept me two hours in the wood making snow-balls.

Dolly (Aggressively) What you call snow-balls !

Nell And another two hours in the square sketching the church tower and the trees covered with snow.

Dolly Nonsense, it was you ...

Nell (Quickly) I am speaking the truth.

Dolly (Both of them piqued) Not now ... It is just your pride.

Nell Grandfather, she says I am telling a lie.

Count And you never lie: it is not in your nature.

Dolly She called me a liar yesterday.

Count And what did you do ?

Dolly I laughed.

Nell (Whimpering) Well I won't stand anyone calling me a liar.

Count Are you crying, Nell ?

Dolly (Laughing) It is all nonsense, grandfather.

Nell I am very sensitive. The least thing hurts my dignity.

Count Your dignity !

Dolly What is wrong with you is jealousy.

Count Of what ?

Dolly (With playful mischief) Because everyone likes me best.

Nell I am not jealous.

Count Come, Nell, don't cry. You have nothing to cry for. And you, Dolly, stop laughing. Don't you see that you have hurt her?

Nell It is always the same: she laughs at everything.

Count (To himself) Nell has dignity. She is the true one. (To Dolly, a little severely) Dolly, I have told you not to laugh.

Dolly She is so funny.

Count (To Nell) You are noble, Nell. I see your race in you, your blood. Come, make friends.

Nell I don't want to.

Dolly (Banteringly) I don't want to !

Count This laughter of yours, Dolly, is a little ill-bred.

Dolly Very well, very well. (Her face changes and she goes quickly towards the background, where she sits down in a chair, and, leaning her elbows on a small table beside her, remains quite still, in a depressed attitude and with an expression of shame or penitence).

Nell (In a low voice to Count) Dolly is vexed. You called her ill-bred and that goes to her heart. Poor thing.

Count Tell me, my child, have you noticed her behave like that before ?

Nell Like what ?

Count In an ill-bred way ?

Nell No, grandfather ! What an idea! Dolly is not ill-bred. I thought you said it in fun. Dolly is very good.

Count Do you love her ?

Nell With all my heart.

Count But were you not angry with her because she told you you were telling lies ?

Nell No, no... it is only our way. We quarrel and make up at once. Dolly is an angel. She is just a little wild ... I love her .. we love each other... I want to kiss her now and ask her to forgive me.

Count (Aside) Nobleness again... (Aloud) Nell you are noble. Come to me. (He puts his arm round her) And this mad-cap, where is she ?

Nell Over there ... She is offended. Call her and forgive her.

Count First explain ~~everything~~ one. You were saying something about paintings or sketches.

Nell It is she who draws. She has great talent for it.

Count (With amazement) She draws !

Nell Didn't you know it ? She is a painter.

Count What !

Nell She sketches and does the lovliest watercolours. Haven't you seen the album ?

Count Dolly, Dolly, come here, my child. (Dolly approaches slowly, Nell holding her by the hand) So you .....

Dolly (Childishly, in a plaintive voice). It is nothing, grandfather. They are just scrawls ... We used to go out into the fields and I copied all I saw in the album ... trees, cottages, animals.

Count Who taught you ? (Dolly shrugs her shoulders)

Nell No-one. All she knows she learnt alone just looking at things.

Count (With great agitation which he tries to hide) Tell me: do you feel a great longing, an intense desire to paint ? Does it come

from the depths of your heart, this eagerness to reproduce what you see ?

Dolly Yes, grandfather dear.

Nell She has scribbled ever since she was tiny.

Count (To Nell) And don't you draw ?

Nell I am stupider ... I am no good ... I don't succeed ... It bores me.

Count (Quickly and bitterly) You are a painter, Dolly; you ..! Then .. (Holds his head with his hands)

Nell You will see ! You will see the album. (She runs out by the right).

Count (Rising in great agitation, walking up and down the room). It is she ! She is the false one .. ! Cursed painting ! Infamous art !

Dolly (Frightened, going after him). Grandfather dear, what is it

Count Let me alone ! Miserable one ! Why were you born ?

Dolly (In suspense) Why was I born ? (Much grieved) You are right .. if you do not love me, what does poor Dolly live for

Count (Stopping short, takes hold of her by the arms and looks steadily at her) Do you feel that you live for me .. for the old and unfortunate Albrit ?

Dolly I do. ~~Now it~~.

Count Do you love me ?

Dolly Do I love you ? Give me a chance to prove it.

Count (Aside)(Continuing to walk) Ah! Trying to gain my affection by cajoling (Aloud) Very well, my child .. I await the proof .. You love me, you really love me ?

Dolly More than you think.

Count More than your sister ?

Dolly No, not more. That would hurt her, poor Nell, if I said I loved you more than she did. We are both your grandchildren and we love you equally.

Count (Aside) (Meditating) Well, this is nobleness ... true nobleness.

Nell (Entering in a hurry with the album) Here it is.

Count (Aside) Can this be the legitimate one and Nell the intruder ? My God, light, light ! (The two children turn the pages of the album).

Nell No, not this one, it is not finished.

Dolly Nor this one either. It is the worst I ever did.

Count (Absent-mindedly) This matter of painting may be a false scent. (Perplexed and pained) Lord, light ! (Bright flash of lightning).

Nell Look at this one, the church tower.

Count (Uneasily, going away from them) Leave me ... I do not want to see anything. Keep your book. (A loud thunderclap near at hand. Rain and hail beat furiously on the windows).

Nell (Letting the book fall) Heaven help me !

Dolly I am frightened. (The room becomes dark)

Count (Distractedly, walking round the room) Which of the two is afraid of the thunder ?

Nell I ... (The children stand close together at some distance from the Count)

Dolly I ...

Count (In great agitation straining to hear the voices of his grandchildren) Which of you is speaking to me ?

Nell I, grandfather) The two voices sound simultaneously
Dolly I ...)

Count It is one, one only.

Nell I am)
) simultaneously
I am)

Count (Irritated, taking a few steps in the direction from which come the children's voices) Who is it ? Which is it ? For Heaven's sake. Your voices are one voice. Which of you said "I am ! "

Dolly (Alarmed, going closer to her sister and moving away from the Count) Grandfather, do not be angry with us. (Peals of thunder are heard again gradually becoming more distant)

Nell We are afraid of you.

Count (Angrily) Which of you is afraid of me ?

Nell)
) I am (simultaneously)
Dolly)

Count (Distracted) Which, which, I ask !

Nell (Tremblingly) .. We are afraid of the storm.

Dolly Not of you ...

Count (His excitement dies down from sheer fatigue. He falls exhausted into an arm chair.) The storm is in my soul. (The two run to his side) Do you know what a storm I have here ? ... It is called doubt ... doubt. Come, my children, innocent angels ... Come to me.

Scene III.

Count, Nell, DOlly; Priest, Doctor, Venancio and Gregoria.

Priest How do you find yourself my lord?

Count Well, my friend,well.

Doctor (Looking at the sky.) Thank Heaven it is passing...

Count What?

Venanc The storm,Sir, it is passing over to the east.

Count It is not passing...No...It is now at its height.

Priest (From the window). The sky is clearing; the sun is shining again.

Count For me it is dark night illuminated now and again by flashes of lightening.

Venanc (Aside to priest.)You see how he wanders.

Doctor My lord, I advise you once more to put out of your mind all idea of...

Count (With bitterness, cutting him short.)Be quiet. Do you want to take away from me all that remains of my ancient state?

Priest Oh, no!

Count You would forbid me to think; you would out-do the wise policy of restrictions which these two here (pointing to Venancio and Gregoria) practise on me.

Venanc Sir, we...

Priest What is this, Venancio?

Count Let me continue...Listen to this instance of perfect administration. When I arrived at Pardina,my good friend and former servant,Venancio,put a young and clever lad at my orders as valet. All my life I have had a manservant of that class.I should have thought it impossible to do without one...Well, I do without one...yes I do without one; for today my young servant has been taken from me and you see...I am quite all right.

Nell He will come back.

Dolly I should just think so.

Venanc (Mumbling his words) Sir... I must explain ...

Gregor (Trying to exculpate herself) We had to send him to bring in hay. (Priest and doctor look at one another displeased.)

Count Which you are bringing in no doubt for my sustenance and comfort. Good. You keep saying that you are poor. In my opinion you will soon be very rich. I see you on the way to opulence particularly if Gregoria continues to apply to me her sublime art of housekeeping.

Gregor (Taken aback) Sir, what are you saying?

Priest What has happened?

Count Nothing: only that Gregoria,always on the look-out to save , has stopped my favourite beveridge..good coffee.

Gregor Allow me to say , your lordship that...

Count Yes, that you served coffee to me this morning...It was some bitter, warmed -up,decoction and tepid. I could not swallow it. The beveridge, the dirty coarse cup, in which it was served

turned me.

Priest Oh!that must not be!

Nell. Gregoria! I cannot believe.~~ixix~~...

Dolly (Indignant) What a shame!

Venanc (Taken aback, trying to excuse himself) Gentlemen, the truth is that...

Doctor You must serve good coffee to his lordship. It is my order.

Priest And mine.

Doctor It is the Countess's wish.

Priest Or else the coffee will be made in my house and sent over.

Dolly It is not necessary, don Carmelo, so long as I am here. ..Is it true grandfather dear that you have not breakfasted? (With determination). I am going , I am going to the kitchen this very instant!

Gregor (Holding her back) I am here for that. The young ladies have to get dressed.

Count For what?

Venanc They are going to the house of the Mayoress. She has invited them.

Gregor She is keeping her birthday today.

Nell Yes , let's go.

Dolly I am not going. I have something to do at home.

Priest Oh, no you must go. The Mayor told me he would come to fetch the young ladies.

Dolly I have said I am not going.

Nell I am going.

Count (Aside to priest and doctor).You see:they are not alike. The difference in their choice indicates perhaps a greater difference in their souls . (Aloud) Leave them alone; leave them alone; let each one obey the impulses of her heart.(Taking leave of them affectionately). My children, do what pleases you best. No more discipline, no more control. I declare you free and complete mistresses of your wills.

Dolly Come. (The children go out by the right.)

Count (To Gregoria) And you, stay here... I have something more to say to you.

Priest (Aside to doctor) The children are going.This is the moment

to try to reduce him.

Scene ~~XX~~ Iv.

Count, Priest, Doctor, Venancio and Gregoria.

Count I am sending them away because I do not want these innocent angels to be grieved by my complaints. Yes. Yes. (To Venancio and Gregoria, with stern dignity.) Hard is the bread of your house...as hard indeed as your hearts.

Venanc When your lordship asked shelter from us you ought to have considered....

Count I consider that you have not a spark of generosity in your souls blackened by greed; you are not Christians; you are not noble; for even those of humble origin know how to be noble. You ha have no delicacy ; for instead of assuaging my fallen greatness you trample it under foot, you, who in the warmth and shelter of my house have become persons! You are rich, yet do not know how to be rich. I shall know how to be poor; and since you turn me out with your uncivil ways, I shall leave this house in which there is not a stone which does not weep the misfortunes of Albrit.

Priest Ah no!

Doctor What does it matter if we have ~~ready~~ a more dignified lodging ready for his lordship?

Venanc His lordship does not forget that Pardina...is my property.

Count (With a certain affectation of society manners). Yours, yes. You do not need to remind me of it. You will have the pleasure of seeing me depart. But that will not be until I have found the truth I am seeking.

Venanc (With lively interest in which all share) Is your lordship looking for a truth in Pardina?

Count Yes. A truth which is no concern of yours.

Venanc And can his lordship not look for it elsewhere?

Count No. For truth has hidden itself in the house of ingratitude and in this hiding hole I must pursue it.

Venanc A good hunter is the lion of Albrit, but this ground is for-

bidden.

Count Who forbids it?

Venanc First ,her ladyship the Countess of Lain, the legal guardian of her daughters who own the land we cultivate; next...I, master of this house.

Count (Sternly). What do you mean?

Venanc Your lordship understands me. I say no more.

Priest (Aside to Venancio) For Heaven's sake be careful!

Count (Angry),rising). Be silent. It is not becoming in you to speak discourteously to your master.

Venanc I have no master.

Doctor (Aside to Venancio restraining him) Take care!

Venanc I am speaking to my guest...and I must warn him without offence without malice, with the greatest respect...

Count What?

Venanc That the gentlemen here present,his good friends,and this humble servant, propose to take his lordship...

Count Where?

Venanc To a more comfortable lodging than Pardina.

Count (In a passion) Ah! Now I understand you! My heart warned me of this low trick. You want to shut me up in a retreat,perhaps in ~~an asylum~~ a mad_house!

Priest (Conciliatingly) My lord, do not excite yourself and listen to us.

Doctor ~~(Soothingly)~~ Keep calm...

Count Prison...Solitude...And for what? So that the ignominious truth...the dishonour...may not come to light! They do not dare to behead me, so they would shut me up ~~for life~~...bury me for life.

Doctor (Trying to appease him) It is not that...We are trying ,my lord, to secure you a physical and moral rest.

Count And to that end you would take away my liberty?

Venanc (With coarse disrespect) And what does your lordship want your liberty for,I ask, at your age, ill...

Count What di I want my liberty for? Do you perchance,claim to deprive me of it?

Venanc (Not daring to answer affirmatively, takes a step towards the Count.) I...

Count (In a commanding voice,keeping him off with a gesture) Back!

lacquey lacquey...And you accomplices in this villany...Respect an old man. Do not bind these hands that drew you out of poverty. (Threatening them) They are still strong...(In a firm and vigorous voice) Who dares to lay hands on me , who defiles these grey hairs, who touches these bones, I shall stretch him at my feet...I shall tear him asunder! (To ths priest who, having taken up a position near the door ,bars his way) Stand back!...(To Venancio who stands st the other side as if to bar his exit there too)...Let pass!.. (Dumb and awed the p priest and Venancio move aside.)

ACT.IV.

Scenery of Acts II and III.

Scene I.

Priest and doctor seated consulting together .They are just finishing their cigarettes;Venancio at the door in the background,looking into the room. Afterwards Gregoria.

Doctor Yes. Then we are agreed .

Priest No violence. You saw the state he got into at the mere suggestion ...(to Venancio) Tell me Venancio,is he still in his room?

Venancio (Seeing Gregoria approach) Gregoria will tell us.

Greg (From the background).He is in his room alone with his rage.

Doctor Solitude will have calmed him down.

Priest He has had half an hour of solitude now.(Rises impapiently).How time goes!And here we are with nothing decided yet. (Senen enters by background carrying a bag in his hand.)

Scene II.

The same. Senen.

Senen Here I am back again!(Leaves the bag on a chair)

Priest Senen,by all the devils, you come just in time.

Venanc Have you come from Veralba?

Gregor What news?

Senen Fat news.

Priest Well,come,out with it;

Doctor Is the Countess coming back?

Senen Tomorrow. Things are happening. You must know that the Reverend Prior of Zaratay...

Priest (Quickly) Yes we know...He wants to catechise the Countess and bring her back to the right road.Proceed...

Senen Further...the holy man consents to admit Count Albrit into his monastery. They are preparing a splendid cell for him.

Priest Where he will live like Charles V.at Yuste.

D

Doctor Good, good. So now we have a cage.

Priest A gilded cage as befits so noble a wild animal.

Venanc. And what more?

Senen Isn't that enough? Your mistress, the Countess of Lain snatched from the burning by the Holy Prior...two whole hours yesterday shut up together in the chapel and this morning not much less...

Priest (Mysteriously). My information is that the true cause of what you call conversion was a furious quarrel with...(looking at Senen) What does this man say?

Senen With the Marquis of Pescara.

Gregor And do you think after this your mistress will continue to protect you?

Senen She will continue ...for her own sake.

Venanc It was high time to break with the Marquis...

Gregor If only to give her daughters a good example.

Senen (Remembering). And by the way, the Countess is taking the children away.

Gregor Is it true?

Senen And I know more...

Priest All this is little concern of ours for the moment. Let us get on with our affair.

Doctor Yes. Come. Since the Community of Zaratay consents to receive the Count, let us inform the Mayor .

Priest And let us arrange with him the easiest manner of conveying the poor old man to his retreat.

Doctor We must waste no time.

Priest Come! (Taking leave). Goodbye.

Senen Goodbye for the present gentlemen. (Priest and doctor go out by background)

Scene III.

Senen, Venancio and Gregoria.

Gregor (Taking the small case which Senen had left on a chair) We'll put

you up ,Senen.

Senen For a couple of nights days , no more.

Venanc For as long as you like.

Gregor Is this your luggage that you always carry about with you?

Senen Yes...And I earnestly beg my amiable hostess to use her five wits in looking after it.

Gregor What the Devil do you carry about in this?What a weight it is!

Senen It is my reliquary.

Gregor Rascal!

Senen You, Gregoria, will answer to me for this treasure...

Gregor Be easy. I'll take it up to your room.(Exit by background.Nell appears on the right).

Scene IV.

Senen,Venancio,and Nell.

Venanc Here is Nell.(Going towards her). Are you young ladies not getting ready yet?

Nell (Annoyed). Dolly does not want to go...She has gone to the kitchen...And how can I dress when she has the keys of the wardrobe and won't give them to me!!

Venanc Well there is no time to lose.

Nell (Walking about the room) Heavens! What a nuisance!

Senen (Aside to Venancio). Leave me alone with her for a moment.

Venanc Secrets...hey? All right. Here you are. (Exit by background;)

Scene V.

Senen. Nell;

Senen How is this? My young lady knows that I have come from Veralba and does not think of asking for news of her Mama?

Nell Oh yes! When is she coming?

Senen Tomorrow.

Nell (Joyfully) Really and truly?

Senen And it is certain that when she goes back

to Madrid...she will take her children with her...

Nell (Clapping her hands). Hurray!

Senen To bring them out in Society.

Nell You are deceiving me, bad Senen...Well, if this is true and you turn out to be right ...you shall have a better tie pin than the one you are wearing.

Senen (Radiant with vanity).If my young lady will promise me to keep a secret , I shall tell her ...But she must promise me that it will remain between us two...Word of honour?

Nell Word of honour...And the pin too,if you don't disappoint me. (Senen holds back waiting to be pressed). Speak quickly.

Senen Well...But you must tell noone.

Nell Oh! What a slow coach!

Senen A marriage has been arranged for my young lady.

Nell (Surprised,colouring). For me?

Senen For you...with the eldest son of the duke of Utrech...you know ...young Utrech , Marquis of Breda...that has been his title for the last six months...There's a match for you! The young man is rich, handsome,elegant...

Nell (Affecting incredulity,restraining a smile that her satisfaction may not be seen in her face).Fine tales these that you bring! Go away! Do you think I am a fool?

Senen (With a pompous ~~curtsey~~ inclination). I salute Her Excellency the Marchioness of Breda.

Nell ~~Fool!~~ Don't be foolish! (Wanting more information) But tell me ...(The voice of the Count is heard from within calling Nell and Dolly).

Senen I hear Albrit snorting.I do not want him to see me.

Nell Go out this way. (Sending him out by the right).

Scene VI.

Nell; Count in background;

Count Nell...But where have you been you two?I have been looking for you,calling you...And Dolly?

Nell (Crossly).She will neither dress nor let me get dressed.

Count Where is she?

Nell You will find her in the kitchen making messes.Isn't it absurd, I told Gregoria she was to do her best for your meals.

Count But don't you know? When I went up to my room I was surprised to find everything magically changed. They have put back the washing stand which they took from me yesterday; the carpet, the curtains ...(With enthusiasm) You! You! Heavenly daughter of Albrit have brought this marvel to pass. Bless you!

Nell (Surprised and disconcerted). I don't deserve your blessing this time. It is all Dolly's doing. She is playing at cooking and housekeeping today.

Count Well, but there was another surprise!

Nell Another?

Count It was like a fairy tale! ...The young lad who was my valet appears suddenly with the most delicious coffee served in fine china.

Nell It is she! It is Dolly!

Count Dolly!

Nell You can't think! ...Dolly is very clever; she knows how to cook and to make ever so many things...And she is so ~~strong willed~~ bent on having her own way. Poor Dolly! She thinks you are angry with her and wants to win back your favour again.

Count I angry?...Tell her to come ,to come at once.

Nell (Calling to the background on right) Dolly!...Venancio, tell Dolly to come...(Answering Dolly from within)...He says he is not angry...You can come...(To Count). Here she comes.

Scene VII.

Count,Nell,Dolly wearing a long coarse apron with her sleeves turned up).

Dolly I did not want to come in to you like this , Grandfather.

Count Your little sister is going to make herself very fine this after

Nell (Screamed). She said he was a spy! (Pleasantly.)

Gwynn Murderer, then!

Nell I'm not in the kitchen making up, I'm asking.

Gwynn Nobody, you mean, to be hung by the neck.

Gwynn Sure don't you know? Nobody! Nobody! Nobody! Nobody! Find everybody guilty when, they have not been the worse by being worse off. Look from the window, the country, the country ... (With effort) and just forget, charge of that. Have been it's merely ... (Pause.)

Mari (Surprised and disconcerted). I don't deserve your charge this time. It is all today's nature. He's going to a doctor for a change of temper.

Gwynn Oh, but there's another matter!

Nell Another?

Gwynn It's the fairy tale! ... The young man's story! Strange coincidence, isn't the said relation of the novel in the opinion.

Nell It is true! It's true!

Gwynn Really?

Nell You can't think! ... Really he was very sincere. He kissed me. He's good. He promise very, very, ... and he ... Does so by his own say. For quite the time. You are an ... with her and ... Never ever ever forget ...

Gwynn I swear? ... Will he to do it? Make it sure.

Nell (Will in the same manner as an) Solemn ... Immediately to ... (Immediately ... from ...) ... He says he ... in ... (In ...) ... Gwynn ...

Scene VII.

Gwynn, Nell, Polly walking in the distance arrive at Gwynn turned up.

Polly I do not want to know in the ... Gwynn ...

Gwynn Your ... to be ... Polly ...

—noon...And you?...Are you not going to dress?...

Dolly Do you order me to?

Count No, no, I do not order you. Do as you like.

Dolly Well if you will allow me I shall stay at home. (To Nell)And you ?

Nell You know quite well...Will you give me the key of the wardrobe or not?

Dolly (As if compromising). Very well. (Putting her hand into a large pocket which she has under her apron,she takes out the key and gives it to Nell.) Here!

Nell I'll be ready in a whiff. (Exit by right)

Scene VIII.

Count; Dolly;

Count Dolly,come here. (Passing his hands over her)...Little kitchen apron! How elegant you are! (Kisses her). I am not angry with you. If I said anything to hurt you forgive me.

Dolly Forgive you! You! You who ought to forgive us all for treating you so badly !

Count I am not so abandonned of God as I thought. (Holding her back) Do not go away...Give me your hands, these angel hands.

Dolly And how do you like the transformation in your room?It took me only a moment to do it.

Count Marvellous! Tell me , have you finished your cooking yet?

Dolly Not yet. If Gregoria will let me, I shall make you something delicious for tonight that yot will like very much.

Count Well done my angel.

Dolly But you don't love me.

Count (Taken aback). Yes, I love you...It is that...

Dolly Don't think that I am doing these things so that you may love me. Strike me and you will find me the same. I am doing it because it is my duty, because I am your grand-daughter and I cannot bear to see a man like you , once powerful and master of all this countryside treated with neglect by coarse people who are

noy

no not worth the dust on the soles of your shoes.

Count (With intense emotion)...Let me kiss you a thousand and one times...little thing...So you...think...you say...

Dolly And I know how to do what I say...This very night after supper I shall begin to mend your clothes...which need a good deal of attention. That lazy Gregoria doesn't put a stitch in them.

Count (Crosses his hands and gazes at her fascinated, straining his failing eyes to see her). And you do it for me, for me.

Dolly Though I know that you love me less than Nell. I recognize that Nell deserves your love more than I do...She is finer...and very kind too.

Count (Somewhat disturbed). But I love you too...It is that ...I don't know how to say it...(In great confusion).Listen...I thought I saw a certain selfishness in your sister, a certain hardness of heart...No it cannot be Nell...(Approaching his face to Dolly's to see it). If only it were you!

Dolly (Taken aback and perplexed). I...what?...

Count If only it were you!(With intense emotion) You !

Dolly (Not understanding).Grandfather dear,what are you saying?What are you thinking?

Count (In despair throws himself into an armchair).I am not thinking; I am struggling through waves of doubt. (Tenderly) Dolly, where are you? Come to me; embrace me. If only it were you! (In terrible perplexity). I do not know...I do not know...God, Providence will tell me the truth(Senen enters from the right) Who is it?

Dollt Not Providence grandfather dear; it is Senen.

Scene IX.

Count. Dolly. Senen.

Senen... Sir...Senen Corchado.

Count Approach.

Senen I hear that your lordship, knowing of my return, manifested a desire to speak to me.

C

Count (Quickly). Yes yes I sent for you.(To Dolly) My child go back to your little kitchen...work away... we shall have a fine supper tonight.

Dolly I hope so...Goodbye just now.(Kisses him and runs away).

Scene X.

Count. Senen.

Count Come nearer,I must speak to you.

Senen (Approaching) . I am at your lordship's orders.

Count (Suspiciously). Can anyone hear us?(Senen examinesthe doors and shuts them). These wretches here stand listening at the doors.

Senen Noone can hear us.

Count (Rises and goes towards Senen). I doubt if you are sufficiently attached to me personally to answer all I ask you.

Senen I shall answer everything...provided your lordship does not ask anything contrary to my dignity.

Count Your dignity!

Senen My lord, although humble I...

Count ~~Excuse me~~ I beg your pardon! I shall not ask you any questions; because, if it comes out now that ~~you~~ we have dignity...

Senen If his lordship hopes that I will give away some secret of his daughter-in-law...

Count (Quickly, interrupting him). It is not that. We will leave Lucrecia aside. Let us respect the false modesty with which she veils her shame...I merely want precise information with regard to a ~~manmxan~~ man...

Senen I see.

Count Intimately related at one time...

Senen Quite so...

Count The painter Charles Eraul. You were in his service for a time after you left my son.(Vehemently). Senen...by all you hold most dear, by the memory of your Mother, tell me...

S

Senen (With an impulse of delicacy) ..My lord, don Rodrigo, by all your Lordship's glorious ancestors, I beg you not to ask me anything...

Count (With intense eagerness)...At least give me a little light.. some dates...personal details...Without hurting anyone ,with out failing in the respect you owe your mistress,you can tell me...Was he really a frivolous man, presumptious..?

Senen (Dryly). Somewhat...yes.

Count The son of a herdsman of Eraul in Navarre?(Senen nods affirmatively) . His genius for painting opened his way..Apart from his artistic education which he owed to himself and his study of Nature, he was a rough ignorant boor.(Senen remains dumb, rigid as if impenetrable;) Neither short nor tall, dark, with black eyes...vigorous...a powerful will...(Irrated by Senen's silence)...Answer...Lucrecia met him at one of those scuffles called kermesses. You were in Eraul's service when he died. (Senen nods his head affirmatively);. The day he died his friends carried off his sketches , drawings...(Senen's face darkens). They carried off also letters from Lucrecia ... photographs...objects... presents with affectionate dedications...(Senen pretends to be shocked and to deny it). Do not deny it...And you, you also kept something...I know it..Speak the truth...You possess... Tell me...(Senen guards a sulky silence.The count,irritated, takes him by the lapels of his coat and shakes him). Why are you silent, rascal?

Senen Sir!

Count Answer wretch.

Senen (With false dignity). Your lordship does not know me.

Count (Shaking him harder). Yes, I know you... Your discretion is not virtue; it is cowardly servility, complicity...You are not the honourable man keeping silent over another's sin; you are the slave,obedient to the promises or the whip of the master who has bought you.(Giving him a violent push. Senen goes back a few steps hesitatingly.) God curse you , scoundrel;;

May the light you deny me fail you!May your voice be silent for ever! May your eyes be blinded! May you live without possessing the truth in a world of darkness, in terrible eternal doubt. (With contempt and repugnance) Begone , begone from my presence!

Senen (From a distance moving backwards towards the door). The Devil! The lion is showing his claws. ..I'll make for safety. (As he goes out he meets don Pio entering timidly. Aside to him,) Take care my friend...He is in a fever.

Scene XI.

Count. Don Pio.

Don Pio (Advances fearfully, trembling). Sir..(The Count does not see or hear him). Most excellent Sir.

Count (Brusquely shouting). Eh! What!

Don Pio (Retreats terrified). Sir...Your lordship...commanded me to... to return this afternoon to...to go over History...

Count Ah yes...(With sad kindliness). Forgive me my good Coronado, most harmless and innocent being in the world...(He sits down). Come, come close to me . My heart wants comfort, relief, joy...I want to forget...I want to laugh...Entertain me ,Coronado.(He falls into a mood half humorous half melancholy).

Don Pio Are the young ladies not here?

Count Let them be ...What do we want with the young ladies? Let us go over history ourselves.

Don Pio Ourselves?

Count^ Let us study living history...which is the one that laughs. Dead history nearly always weeps.

Don Pio I don't understand.

Count^ Every living being is a hero for future history books.

Don Pio Ah, yes Sir, we are all...

Count Heros of the eternal and never ending History.Cursed be those who hide the truth! Blessed be those who,like you, carry an open heart

Ay, the lie that you speak is that you have been silent for everlasting years over the bitterness, by your live without proclaiming the truth to a world of darkness, in terrible eternal exile. (With contempt and reproaches) Before Time, begone from my presence!

(From a distance moving nearer towards the door). The Devil! The lion is coming! My slaves...!! Make for safety. (In the same breath he shouts for assistance. Exit). Late care by friend...Go! In a Forest.

Scene 2.

Count, Don Pio.

Don Pio (advances fearfully, trembling). ...(In broken deep voice or hoarse cry). Most excellency!

Count (irritably shouting). Why! Why!

Don Pio (stammers terrified). Sir...Your lordship...commanded me to return this afternoon to...to the other Mistress...

Count Ah yes...(With a sigh of relief). Tell the young Count that Barbara was innocent born in the world...(As with sound, come close to me.) Don't worry, support, relief. (Pause). I want to forget...I want to lose...entirely...forgetting (My life is like a good half-hourous half-nightmare).

Don Pio Are the young Ladies not here?

Count Let them be...Just do as I say to the Young Lady and by over his story yourselves.

Don Pio Yourselves?

Count^ Not be alone! Living alone...Man is the one lonely being...an dead history-hungry always weary.

Don Pio I don't understand.

Count^ Every living being is a hero for future history-writers.

Don Pio Ah, yes sir, we are all...

Count Hero of the eternal and never ending History...Those who dare the truth! Dressed be broke wa...like you, carry on over-heavy.

open heart , a naked soul.

Don Pio (Effusively). I have never hurt anyone , Sir.My rôle in the world comedy is to suffer always suffer.

Count They tell me you are the unhappiest mortal God has put into the world. He will know why.

Don Pio He will know. What I know is that he did not put me here for ~~xxxx~~ seed.

Count Ah, one never knows. The seed of kindness is invisible and bears fruit where one least expects it....Poor Coronado. People laugh at you when the y talk of your kindness.

Don Pio ~~So do I~~ I do so myself... ...For I am so kind, so kind, that I have ended by despising myself...and laughing at myself.(They look at each other and laugh).

Count And yours is the saying that has become a proverb in Jerusa? "What a bad thing it is to be good".

Don Pio Sir, the saying is mine. I pronounce it a hundred times a day.

Count Sit beside me.(Don Pio draws a chair near him and sits down). Tell me Pio ...So your wife died at last?

Don Pio (Snapping his fingers). At last, Sir, yes. It is two years since Hell claimed her...

Count How you have suffered poor Coronado!I tell you there is no more disorganizing vice in Society , none which has worse consequence than conjugal infidelity.

Don Pio It is true Sir.

Count Your wife,I believe, left you a good supply of daughters...

Don Pio Call them devils your lordship...~~Xxxxx~~

Count Allow me to speak to you with a frankness as great as your kindness of heart. Your daughters...are not your daughters?

Don Pio (Looking at the ground). Hard as it is to admit it,...it is as your lordship says.

Count If you are sure of that, why do you keep them with you?

Don Pio (Sighing, looking at the Count). Habit?.. that cloak for the misdoings of kindness. I have had them with me since they were born...I take the bread out of my mouth to give it to them.

I have seen them growing up, growing up. The worst is that , when they were children they were fond of me and I ...why deny it, was fond of them.I think I still am...I cannot help it.(Albrit laughs).I have no self respect...Is it not so my lord?

Count — You are an angel...the angel of...I don't know what.Your confessions give me a strange feeling of mirth.Forgive me my friend if I laugh while sympathising.

Don Pio — Let me continue my story so that you will end by despising me.

Count — Speak on . Misfortunes of this kind would make a skeleton laugh.

Don Pio — My wife...may the Devil keep her...ruled me; she made me tremble simply by looking at me.I...I might perhaps have been brave before a dozen tigers...before that monster I never was.As great as my patience was her wantonness...She brought me her children. They were born in my house...What could I do with the poor creatures? What fault was it of theirs? I couldn't throw them in the street!...They grew , they were amusing, they let me love them.

Count — (Gravely and sadly). Stop, stop, do not speak any more of your daughters...How burlesque history and tragic history are interwoven. Tragedy and farce are closer friends than they appear; friends ,yes , like you and me.

Don Pio — (Sighing) Unhappy we both are ,my lord...but what a difference! Your grandchildren adore you, they give you a thousand consolations.

Count — (Nervously). Speak to me about them , yes; for in my mind there is room for but one idea...There is nothing in the Universe but Nell and Dolly.

Don Pio — God bless them!

Count — Are you fond of them?

Don Pio — As if they were my own... No, yet no, I do not deserve such an honour. I love them because they are my pupils, and I see their innocent souls as I see your lordship now.

Count (With interest). You who know them so well, tell me which of the two seems to you the nobler, spiritually the more beautiful, the most worthy to be loved?

Don Pio (Meditating) It is not so easy to say...

Count Imagine that an inevitable law forces you to take one and to give up the other .(Don Pio looks surprised and taken aback). Suppose you cannot evade the terrible dilemma.

Don Pio (Scratching his head). A difficult proposition! I have to choose one...one...(Deciding after long hesitation). Well... with all her mischief, all her diabolical restlessness and if you will all her impudence, I should prefer Dolly.

Count And on what do you found your preference?

Don Pio (Non-plussed). I do not know...There is something in that child which seems to me better than anything I find in the world. I am much mistaken , my lord, if the angels did not bring her.

Count Your judjment is of course founded on observations.

Don Pio (With angelic innocence) Yes, Sir, it is so. When the whole family was here two years ago, I noticed in his lordship,the Count of Lain the same preference.

Count (Gladly, with much animation); Pio, great Pio, your views are mine and it fills me with joy. (Embraces him).

Scene XII.

Count, Don Pio , Dolly; afterwards Nell.

Dolly (Hurrying from the background). Grandfather dear,here come the priest , the Mayor and no end of people.

Count (Alarmed rises) What are they looking for?What do they want of me?

Nell (From the right in elegant dress and hat. Addresses the Count in a slightly ceremonious tone) What is happening?May I ask what is happening to my illustrious grandfather?

Count (Surprised at Nell's language). Little one I do not know you. You are advancing prodigiously in knowledge of the world.

COUNT (aside to Mirabel). You may know them so well, sir, as which of the two ladies is the better, or finally the more beautiful, the most worthy to be loved.

DON PEDRO (aside to Count). It is not easy to say...

COUNT. Because that you have into forces you to take one and to give up the other. (Don Pedro remained and taken aback). Because you cannot evade the terrible dilemma.

DON PEDRO (aside to Mirabel). A difficult proposition! I have to choose one...one...(Decisive after long deliberation). Well...with all her assembled, all her fabulous realities and if you want all her dreams, I choose prefer Polly.

COUNT. Oh, so that surprise your preference!

DON PEDRO (Mad-pleased). I cannot know...There is a "Ah" in that smile which seems to be better than anyth n. I mean as the world. I am much surprised, my lord, if the angels did not drive her.

COUNT. Your judgment is of course founded on observations.

DON PEDRO (With monkish innocence) Yes, sir, it is so, when the whole family was there for years, I noticed in a orphan, the number of her perfections.

COUNT. (Gaily, with sudden emotion). Yes, that is, your view are as much filled with love for (Everyone knows).

DON PEDRO. Polly! afternoon!

POLLY (Hurrying from the background). Tantalizing sir, have mercy on me (Pleadingly). Why should not be out of people.

MARY (Pleadingly) Why are they looking at me? do they want of her

NELL (From the midst in element Rhone and Nat. Address the Count. In a playfully reproachful tone) Why is happened? I ask what is happened. In my transient own affairs?

COUNT (Surprised at Nelle's language). Little one I do not know you. You are natural as truthfully in knowledge of the world.

(The persons above mentioned appear in the background . They group themselves cautiously contemplatiog the Countfrom a distance. The latter puts his arm round Dolly's waist and kisses her)

Don Pio (To Dolly). And Miss Dolly, is she not going to dress?She would look very pretty too...

Nell (To Count). Tell Dolly to get ready...I don't want to go alone?.

Count (Uneasy his attention fixed on those who have entered the room;) Who is it ? What do you want?

Scene XIII.

Count, Nell, Dolly, Priest, Doctor, Mayor, Venancio, Gregoria Don Pio, who remains apart.

Mayor (Coming forward.) My lord,my object in coming to Pardina is simply to fetch the young ladies whom I have had the honour to invite to my garden party this afternoon.I avail myself of the opportunity to say to your lordship that, in choosing for your stay the monastery of Zaratay,we believed and believe that we are lodging you worthily.

Count (Calmly.) The idea of shutting me up then is not yours...(To priest.)..nor yours Carmelo...

Priest (Hesitating) The idea is not mine no..' I cannot take the credit for that.

Mayor Nor mine. But I spoke to the Prior; we agreed that you should be taken in there for the rest of your days...and I have arranged everything with regard to the journey there, carriage, etc.

Count One thing remains for me to ask.. Are you arranging to take me there by force?

Doctor Oh, never!

All No! No!

Priest (In a conciliating tone coming nearer) Your lordship will be reasonable and will take into ~~account~~ consideration the value of what we are offering ~~him~~ you.

Doctor

(The parlour door opens and in the background, they from themselves, evidently contemplating the Countess's distance. The latter put her arm round Polly's waist and kisses her.)

(to Polly). And very pretty, too. Do not wonder at dressing would look very pretty, too...

Polly (to Count). Polly is not ready...I don't want to go alone.

Count (Dreamy manner fixed on those who have entered the room.) Who is it that go you want?

Gene with.

Count. Well, Polly, with whom, Mayor, Wenonic, Negroes for life, who remains short.

Mayor (Coming forward.) My lord, by subject in coming to Zarkina is entirely to take the ladies where I have had the honour to invite to by Jordan party this evening. I avail myself of the opportunity to say to your lordship that, in choosing for your city the anniversary of Saturday, we have and believe that we are looking you worthily.

Count (Gai ly.) The idea of spending an hour then is not yours...(To priest.)..nor yours Father...

Priest (Hesitating) The idea is not mine no...I cannot take the credit for that.

Mayor Nor mine. But I think in the first we agreed that you should be taken in there for the rest of your life...and I have arranged everything with regard to the journey there, carriage, etc.

Count One thing remains for me to ask...Are you arranging to take me there by force?

Doctor Oh, never!

All: No! No!

Priest (In a conciliating tone coming nearer) Your lordship will be reasonable and will take into mature consideration the value of what we are offering.

Doctor Do decide.

Count I decide ...that you will never take me there alive... nor dead either ...For I have given directions in my will to bury me in Polan.

Mayor My lord, submit to what your friends arrange.

Count (Contemptuously). And you...who are you?

Mayor (Showing his baton) I am a man who knows his duty.

Count Now I know you.(Turning to the priest and doctor). And you also. I do not need to see you Carmelo, Angulo... The smell of ingratitude hits me in the face.

Mayor (Po (Pompously)impatiently,taking Dolly by the arm). Miss Dolly make your grandfather inderstand that I am the mayor of Jerusa.

Dolly (Letting go the Count's arm breaks out indignantly).Well, to the Mayor of Jerusa and to the priest of Jerusa, and to all the mayors and all the priests there are or ever will be in the world, I say that what you are doing to my grandfather is an iniquity!

Nell Yes , yes.

Priest Miss Dolly!

Dolly You have failed in the respect you owe the destitute nobleman, the old man, the father of these towns. Why do you want to take away his liberty from him? There is no more madness in him than his love for us , and if those who have been brought up under his shadow slight and insult him , we, his grandchildren, are here to show the whole world the reverence due to him.

Count (Has risen on hearing Dolly) Lifts his hands to the sky). Lord, LOrd, it is she..(Turning to Don Pío who is behind the arm-chair). She is mine... Her fierceness shows it!

Priest (Appearing to yield). Well, well. ..Since you will not at present accdpt the honourable and peaceful retreat which is offered to you, we shall take you into my house.

Mayor Or to mine.

Dolly To your house!

Priest I say so because, owing to the disagreements of these last

Doctor. To Jessie.

Count. I mean ...that you will never take me there at us... nor

Lord Oliver. ...for I have given directions that my will be carried

out.

Mayor. My lord, what is what your friends arrange.

Count. (Certainly,Count!). Who are you...who are you?

Mayor. (Showing his badge) I am a man who knows his duty.

Count. You I know you. (Turning to the priest and Doctor). And you also. I do not need to see you Gabriele, Armelle... The pall of Imperfidiade hyve be in the face.

Mayor. (In confusion hesitantly,taking holly by the arm). Miss Holly make your grandfather understand that I am the mayor of Grass.

Holly. (Putting on the Count's arm breaks out triumphantly). Well, he the mayor of Jersey and in the present of Peters, and to all the people and all the friends there are or ever will be in the world. I say that what you are going to my grandfather is an injury!

Hall. Yes. Yes.

Priest. Holy Holly!!!

Holly. You have failed in the respect you owe the distinguished gentleman, the rich man, the future of these towns. Why do you want to take away my liberty from him? There is no more madness in him than in you. For me, and if there we have been brought up under Mayor Oliver, and their ideas, his strangulations are more to me than Holly which worth the reverence due to him.

Count. (Then rises on horse...Holly!!!. His hands to the sky). Lord, Lord, it is the...(turning to the Pr.who is behind the Quarter). The the sense... for Tarrymore shows!!!

Priest. (Leaning to Holly). Well, well. ...Have you will not at present the honest the honorable and prudent refusal which is offered to you, we should take you with us to Lunan.

Mayor. Not to Lunan.

Holly. To your house!

Priest. I only see Lunan, since it is the convenience of these last

few days there is a certain incompatibility between his lordship and Venancio.

Nell Incompatibility! We are in our own house!

Venanc (Coming forward followed by Gregoria). The young lady will pardon me...The young ladies as well as his lordship are in my house.

Nell (Daunted) It is true...but...

Dolly What are you saying?

Venanc I say that for this night we will put him up and serve him...

Dolly (With fierce haughtiness). Tonight! Do I understand you? Tonight and every night in the world so long as Nell and I are here. The house indeed, is yours ...but we are your mistresses my sister and I...

Nell We are your mistresses...

Dolly You hear it? Except for this orchard, the lands which you farm and which you have almost rent free, are ours... ours. We are the heirs of the House of Lain and you...Venancio, and you, Gregoria serve my Grandfather...not for charity...for charity you have none,....that is clear; but because I order you to...You hear it?...I order you to.

Venanc Noone can give orders but...

Gregor Her ladyship the Countess...

Dolly (Haughtily). Silence! Prepare the dinner! (To Gregoria) You...to the kitchen head first...Count Albrit lives with his grand-daughters. You are not keeping us for charity...He will dine with us ...here...(Strikes a hard blow on the table) at this table. He will sleep in his room which I arranged... And if you do not intend to go the kitchen, I shall go myself. And if you have dismantled his bedroom Nell will get it ready again. Quick! Be off!..(To Venancio and Gregoria) Lay the table Gentlemen you are invited.

Mayor (Coldly). Thank you.

Priest There's a temper for you!

Dolly I am an Albrit.

Count (With immense tenderness taking her in his arms) Yes, yes of my my blood, of my line.

Few days there is a certain incompatibility between his lordship and Vamanio.

Nell The-particularly we are in our own house!

Vamano (coming forward followed by Gregorio). The young lady will pardon me...The young ladies as well as his lordship are in my house.

Nell (Daunted) It is true...but...

Polly What are you saying?

Vamano I say that for this night we will put the up and serve him...

Polly (with fierce indignation). Indeed! Do I understand you?Indeed! every night in the month so long as Nell and I are here.The house indeed, is yours ...but we are your mistresses by a-lone

Nell We are your mistresses...

Polly You hear!Except for this evening,and the lords which you have and which you have almost left free,are ours...ours. We are the heirs of the House of Jain and you...Vamanio,and you,Gregorio serve by sufferance...not for charity,for simplicity you have none...that is clear, but because I order you to...You hear it...I order you to.

Vamano Noone can give orders but...

Gregor Her ladyship the countess...

Polly (Haughtily). Silence ! Prepare the dinner! (To Gregorio) You...to the kitchen home liar...Count Albert lives with his bread-dancators. You are not keeping us for charity...He will dine with us ...here...(Notice a hard blow on the table) at late table. He will sleep in the room which I arranged... And if you do not intend to be the kitchen,I shall do myself. And if you have dismantled his bedroom Nell will act in lady again. Quick! Be off!..Vamanio and Gregorio,by the table gentlemen ,you are invited.

Never (Politly). Thank you.

Priest There's a danger for you!

Polly I am Pa Albert.

Count (with immense tenderness taking her in his arms) Yes,yes of my blood, of my time.

ACT V.

Scene I.

A small square before a church in Jerusa, of Norman architecture; in the background, the door of the church; on the right in an angle of the building a smaller door leading to the sacristy. To the left a passage to two streets; to the right open country. In the centre a stone cross with a seat at its base. Lanterns at the entrances of the streets. It is night. Moonlight.

Scene I.

Senen coming from the street; Venancio coming out of the church.

Venanc Have you found him?

Senen No. I have searched every street in the town...every short cut every hiding hole...but I have not had the honour of coming across the Count.

Venanc I can vouch for it that he is not in any of the churches, hermitages or sanctuaries of Jerusa.

Senén At what time did you lose sight of him?

Venanc It must have been eightO'clock when he left the house in such a state of irritation and anger that we were afraid...

Senén That he would try to take his life? Do not believe it. The poor old man is searching for a truth and must live like you or me until he finds it.

Venanc And this truth, Senén,...?

Senén (Mischievously, holding out his closed fist) There are persons who hold the truth in the palm of their hands...and just by opening it..(He opens it).

Venanc Ah! You rascal. You know it and keep it dark. Let us rest here a bit. Be open with your friend Venancio.

Senén The ~~hour~~ time for egoism has come, for each one to look after himself.

Venanc Come, tell me all about our famous adventuress, the Countess of Lain, in there (pointing to the church) with her daughter Nell devouring the saints.

Senén The tragedy with Pescara was bound to end in a comedy of bigotry.

Venanc Do you know what her like do in the confessional? ...Empty their consciences of old sins so as to have room for new ones.

Senén (Angrily, shaking his fist at the church) Ah serpent, cursed reptile!.

Venanc Say, my son, has she withdrawn her protection from you?

Sénén (Coming back to the seat but without sitting down) Just before she went to confession I got her to receive me. Well, my friend, I went up to her roomand I had hardly mentioned my request when she broke out into insults against my humble self...To treat me like that ...I who have kept her secrets and guarded her honour as if it were my own. So be it Countess of Lain: you shall pay for it ...see if you don't.

Venanc Good. Good. Go for her. And now, for your guidance, I'll tell you that this morning as soon as she stepped out of her carriage the Countess ordered us to bring her daughters to her. Dolly would not go. Shortly afterwards the Mayor came on the scene with two policemen, demanded the young lady and carried her off little less than a prisoner...what a scene! The child has a lion'S temper, and shrieked to the Heavens!...The Count he heard it from his room; but they took her off in such a hurry that the good gentleman had no more than time to roar out vainly calling on Heaven and Hell.

Senén Unhappy man! I assure you, from today I am on his side. (Don Pio enters by the left and goes towards the church.)

Venanc Here comes Coronado. (Calling him) Hullo! don Pio! Here we are. (To Senén) Perhaps he will have had more luck than we have

Scene II.

Venancio; Senén; don Pio.

Senén Have you found him?

Don Pio Yes.

VERNON [illegible] ...

[illegible]

VERNON [illegible] ...

[illegible]

RENÉN [illegible] ...

VERNON [illegible] ...

RENÉN [illegible] ...

VERNON [illegible] ...

RENÉN [illegible] ...

VERNON [illegible] ...

Venanc Where?

Don Pio On the moor, roaming about like a lost soul.

Senén He is mad.

Don Pio I should rather say exasperated, for they have deprived him forcibly of Miss Dolly'S company.We returned to the town together. His Excellency entered the Mayor's houseto discuss matters with her ladyship the Countess abd to propose to her..

Both (Quickly, with curiosity) What? What?

Don Pio Seeing that both parent and grand-parent lay claim to the gentle pair,the Count, like Solomon, maintains that the disputed object should be divided. A child for each. A good idea, hey?

Venanc Hum....Hum.... They will tell him there that her ladyship is at her devotions here. You will see...The lion will lose no time in turning up.(Looking towards the street) He has had time to get there and back.

Senén I will wait for him here....

Venanc And I shall go in and warn her ladyship so that she may find a way of escape from this new ambush of the old man.

(The organ is heard. A number of people come out of the church and go down the streets. Venancio enters the church by the door which leads to the sacristy.)

Don Pio The sermon is over.

Scene III.

Senén, don Pio; afterwards the Count.

Senén (To don Pio who is looking to the left) Well is he coming?

Don Pio I do not see him.

Senén Can not you distinguish on the shady side of the street the great and unhappy Albrit approaching?

Don Pio (Looking closely) It seems to me...No, it is not he...Yes here he comes...Look at him.

Senén It is he. (The Count appears from the left)

Venice Wright

Don Pio On the door, remember about alms & lost souls.

Sereno He is dead.

Don Pio I should think they exaggerated. If the Duke objects, the
Foreign Office Doctor's Congress, we resident in the land be-
sieged. His Excellency Minister the Mayor's Opinion
matter with Her Majesty's Government to be
(quietly, with authority) shortly. Short
Bowels Sir. Good patient and friend-patient my dear so that
mentis pair, the doctor, Miss Bolsover, mentioning that the sin-
gular object should be divided. A child for such. A good
idea, hey?

Venice Hum...hum... The well said. Mr. Clare Sir. Not laughing is
at the relations here. The without...the have this time my
time in turning by (loudly, loudly the street) to the bed
time to get there and back.

Sereno I will write to Pio Pio...

Venice And I shall be in and with her laughing so that one may find
a way of escape from this new Sodom, of the old Adam.
(The organ is heard. Sereno at Venice take out of view
behind the pillars. Venice at interest. Venice enters the Church
by the door which leads to the country.)
Don Pio The Mr. Wright is dead.

Scene III.

Sereno, Don Pio, Miss Bolsover and Venice.

Sereno (To Don Pio who is leaning in the left) Here is the doctor.
Don Pio I do not see it.
Sereno The lady is stationing on the middle aisle of the street
the front and behind, about approaching.
Don Pio (looking carefully) It seems to me...No, I do not...see
note the Sunday...look at them.
Sereno It is so. (The Sunday separate from the left)

(Both go to meet him)

Count Who is here?

Don Pio Sir.

Count (Recognizing him by his voice) Ah! Coronado my good friend. ...And you , who are you?

Senén Another of your lordship's good friends...the best perhaps.

Count By scent and sound I know you...perfumed reptile...Vade retro.

Senén Your lordship is very unjust.

Count Is it true that your mistress is in the church?

Senén In the Presbitery occupying your lordship's seat of honour.

Count I desire to speak to her this instant. Which way do I enter?

Senén It would be more to your lordship's advantage to speak to me.

Count To you! What have you to say to me?

Senén First of all, that that she-devil, repudiated by her devil, is now going through the farce of repentance before God Himself.

Count (To don Pio) Is it true?

Don Pio Sir, I do not know.

Count Lucrecia rePentant! I should have to see it to believe it. If what you say is true, I do not doubt she will agree to what I propose. ....Coronado my friend...

Don Pio Yes Sir.

Count I beg you to go to the Mayor's house. Try to get in on any pretext whatsoever, where Dolly is: speak to her.

Don Pio I will go Sir.

Count And tell her that I am not losing heart...that she will be mine...mine...I have sworn it . (Don Pio goes. The Count walks about in agitation.)

Scene IV.

Count; Senén.

Count Confessed or unconfessed, I do not believe that God will forgive her.

(SOUND OF THE MOTOR CAR)

COUNT Who is that?

DON RIO Eh?

COUNT (Recognizing him by his voice) And Commander My Good Friend...And you, Who are you?

SARGÈN Another of your Lordship's good friends...and very faithful.

COUNT My secret has come I know you...perfumed lady...very rich.

SARGÈN Your lordship is very malicious.

COUNT Is it true that you mistress is in the country?

SARGÈN It has already occupied your lordship's mind, of honour.

COUNT I desire to speak to her this instant. Where may I meet her?

SARGÈN It would be wrong to your lordship's conscience to speak to me.

COUNT To you? What have you to say to me?

SARGÈN Right of air, that the air-devil, represented by M. Del Devil, is now going through the terrs of Tejeringos before Don Rioseil.

COUNT (To Don Rio) Is it true?

DON RIO Sir, I do not know. Madam

COUNT Madam Marquise, I always have to see it to be believe it. If who you say is true. I do not know who will be where to meet I propose....I Commend My friend...

DON RIO Yes Sir.

COUNT I was a voyage to the Mayor's house. They are a in on my return whatever, where Dolly is! speak to her.

DON RIO I will go sir.

COUNT And test her that I am not feeling bad...that she will be mine...mine...I have secret it . (Don Rio goes. She comes back about in agitation.)

SCENE IV.

COUNT. SARGÈN.

COUNT Dolly...my sweetheart, I do not believe that you will forgive-me.

Senén Neither God nor man will forgive her.

Count Leave me I despise you.

Senén One word , my lord, and the truth that you are seeking will pass from my keeping to yours.

Count (Excitedly coming up to him and seizing the lapels of his coat) Speak! Speak! If you are a sewew into which a precious stone has fallen open quickly...deliver your treasure!

Senén I have always been loyal and discreet...

Count And now you are not...Well...give me this truth...give it me even though it comes stained from your lips...Are you the sole possessor of it?

Senén The sole possessor.

Count (Shaking him energetically) But if you deceive me...prepare to die by my hands.

Senén Your lordship will have the truth...with proofs.

Count Quick! Quick!

Senén With proofs , Sir...(Puts his hand into his breast pocket) I believe I am doing your lordship a great service by keeping you from falling into a grave error. (Count fixes his eyes on him) The false daughter...the spurious one ...is Dolly.

Count (Appalled) Oh no! No! You lie! (Suddenly possessed by a trafgic frenzy(Vile lacquey...You lie!and this very moment I'll...(Throws himself on him seizing him with both hands) I I'll choke you , you ruffian. (Struggles with him) The Count though old is much stronger than Senén . He throws him violently against the steps of the Cross.) Villain!...reptile ! I'll throttle you. I'll crush you.

Senén (Rising) What a fury. And this is how he repays my services, ...I have proofs.

Count Forger...traitor...Dolly is of my blood.

Senébn h (Tremblingly, his face and hair dishevelled, looks through his pocket books.) Here is the truth...as true as there is a God. (He draws out a small packet of papers)

Count Come. (He snatches the packet and undoes it) In his repugnance and horror he hands it back to Senén.) No...No...

...take your vile papers...keep them all in your dirty bosom.

Senén Keep them my lord...The proofs are yours by right as much as the truth which I have just revealed to you. (Nell comes out of the sacristy with a bevy of young ladies all wearing the white cowl.) Sir here comes Nell. (He goes away from the Count).

Scene V.

Count. Nell. Senén apart on the left.

Nell Grandfather dear, why did you not come in? Your seat is up there close to the altar.

Count (Looking closely at her) Nell. How lovely you are! I can see your white cowl.

Nell This belonged to my grandmother, the Countess Adelaide , your sainted wife.

Count (Reverently kissing the edge of it) Oh, my most precious jewel! (Putting his face still closer to Nell's) I see your face...radiant with beauty and majesty.

Nell (Surprised at the old man's emotion) Sir...Why do you look at me like that? Why are your hands trembling? Are you crying?

Count (His soul, already deeply moved, seems submerged in a wave of emotion.It is the conviction that he holds in his hands the hands of the lawful successor of Lain and Albrit) ~~Ah bless~~ ~~you~~ Blossoming branch of Albrit, God bless you

Nell (Pained, attributing the old man's words to his disordered mind) Grandfather dear go back to Pardina. Tomorrow, before we leave my sister and I will come to see you.

COunt (Much agitated) Do not come, for you will not find me.

Nell What! Are you running away from us?

Count You are Albrit's successor , ...the future Marchioness of Breda... Go your bright way and leave me to my path of darkness.

Nell (Perplexed) Grandfather dear, what reason is there for such

...Have the vile people...they come up in vast array, Queen.

Duke: Keep them at bay...the people are right on the side of such as the King's role, I have just received in you. Your grace is of the people, with a lot of people and be having the W. Dee world. The more power will. (Pulls your very life and Country).

SCENE V.

Queen, Mary, Duke, Duke on the left.

Mary: Grandfather dear, Why did you not come and have dinner with us there since in the world.

Duke: (Looking closely at Mary) What, Mr. Lyndsay, [illegible] see your waiting out.

Mary: This delivered to my grandfather, the Countess Margaret, Lady Barbara Villa.

Duke: (Recognizing Mary's face or 1st) Oh, My dear grandchildren Jewel! (Pulling the face still closer to Mary) [illegible] face...Pulling with Deeply and sadly.

Mary: (Straight at the old man's question) [illegible] look as he also dear! Why are your Majesty! Are you crying!

Count: (The poet, allowed deeply moved) Queen Elizabeth is a Queen of Scotland. In the Countryside that he looking in Scotland the Queen of the Queen's Queen of Scots and Queen? [illegible] Mary Queen Queen of Scots. You dare you

Mary: (Pulling) Grandfather, you may be wrong to see the disturbed Queen Elizabeth. Don't go out to Prudence Lindsay, Daughter to leave my sister and I will come (Tries to go).

Count: (Half Laughing) Oh, it seems, for you that not [illegible].

Mary: Must! Are you running away from me?

Duke: You are Scotti's Queen!...the Queen Elizabeth is Queen... In your [illegible] and [illegible] your [illegible] of Queen-Queen.

Mary: (Pulling) Grandfather dear, that Queen is [illegible] for such

sadness? We love you as much as ever. I promise you we shall come and see you and that we shall be very angry with Mamma if she does not bring us.

Count She will not bring you... Why should she? ...What am I?... An unhappy wreck. The old trunk dies; but you remain the gallant new tree which will perpetuate my name and race.

Nell (Tenderly) Grandfather , mine, if you love me so much, why do you not do what I say,..what I advise you? ...Accept the offer of Zaratay?

Count (Wounded to the quick). Goodbye, Nell. Go with your Mother.

Nell You would be very comfortable in Zaratay. We should come and see you.

Count (With deep dejection) Goodbye, Nell.

Nell Grandfather...(Kisses his hands)

Count Goodbye. (Turns resolutely away from her. Nell with the young ladies who accompany her disappears up the street.)

Scene VI.

The same. Afterwards Venancio who comes out of the church; behind him Lucrecia dressed in black.

Count (In anguish) Horrible, horrible! She does not want to live in my company. Like her Mother and my faithless friends, she wants to shut me up. ..No...This one is not the true one; she cannot be...All, all are deceiving me.

Senén Except me.

Venanc Sir, my lady the Countess.

Count (Hastening towards the Countess) Ah! Lucrecia...Pardon me for detaining you!

Lucrec Sir.

Count I speak to a soul which has tried (correcting himself) which has redeemed itself by repentance...

Lucrec I hope to show the world that my endeavours to reform are sincere.

Count Then if truth has penetrated your soul, do not refuse me the truth I beg...By all that you hold most dear in the world, do

not refuse me. With that truth you will give me peace , you will give me back my lost reason.

Lucrec Again the terrible question surges up before me!

Count Before you...! Always, as long as I live. Lucrecia , courage sincerity!...

Lucrec Sincerity is in my spirit ; but it has not yet strength to pass from the spirit to speech.

Count Oh! Empty modesty of words! (In consternation) Will you still keep silent?

Lucrec No.

Count At last...The truth!...

Lucrec (Deeply moved) I have just authorized my confessor to reveal to my husband's father the truth he seeks.

Count Oh thank you!...(He kisses her hand gratefully. Lucrecia withdraws by the right. The Count stands a moment dazed. As As soon as he sees Lucrecia disappear he cries out in quick anxiety) This Confessor...where is he!

Venanc (Points to the door leading to the sacristy.) The Holy Prior ...

Count Truth...at last I have you...at last!(Runs hurriedly towards the church and enters the sacristy.

Scene VII.

Venancio. Senén. Afterwards don Pio.

Venanc This will turn his mind.

Senén The disillusionment will exhaust his powers; his good friends will be able to do what they will with him.

Venanc Let us go and inform them so that they can agree all together on the best way of running him down quietly....

Senén And they might take him before dawn to the Monastery.

Don Pio (Entering hurriedly by the left) His lordship?

Venanc Wait here for him ... You are certain to see him come out beside himself, completely out of his mind...Watch him ...& notice which way the poor wounded animal takes and let us know.

Don Pio Where will you be?

Venanc In the Mayor's office. Keep your eyes open. (Exeunt Venen and Senen).

Don Pio Goodbye...(Alone , bewildered) What did he say? That the wounded lion would come out? ... That I was to watch him? .. to follow his footsteps?...Wait for him?...I do not understand.. Here...in the sacristy?...(Looking into the interior of the building, through the sacristy door) Heavens! (Alarmed) Here he comes!

Scene VIII.

Don Pio: the Count comes out of the sacristy terribly upset.

Count Is there no lightening from Heaven to burn me to ashes! Nell is the true one; the false is Dolly, the one who loves me ...Vanity of the world...pride of lineage...what mockery! (Becoming aware of Don Pio without recognizing him) who goes there? Who is here?

DOn Pio Sir!

Count (With disgust, not recognizing him) Ah, Senén!

Don Pio I am not Senén...

Count (Continuing in his blunder) Do not touch me reptile...Your touch is cold...Keep your truths to yourself...deceive me... Let me live...Give me back my doubts. I doubt no longer... I live no longer. This that you see in not the person of Albrit it is his body.

Don Pio Sir! What terrible things are you saying? Do you really not know me? I am Coronado.

Count (Remembering) Coronado...

Don Pio I went to the Mayor's house as you told me to.....I succeeded in seeing the child. I told her...

Count (Trembling) Do not speak of the Albrit children!...How ugly they are!..repulsive ...like poisonous worms...The true one does not love me ...She sends me to the Asylum. Dolly, who loves me, is not my grandchild...Tell me, where is

the deepest pit of refuse and mire that I may make my everlasting bed in it.

Don Pio (affectionately, compassionately) Alfric . . .my ~~xxx~~ lord, my friend!..... do.not.think such things. If my lord has no one in the world to love him, I shall love him. (Embraces him with intense feeling)

Count (sharing Don Pio's emotion) Ah! . . .Now I know you .. . heroic Coronado, friend of my soul. (Embraces him) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Give me your hand, great philosopher. I can no longer stand up. My bones weigh like lead.

Don Pio (supporting him) Rest my lord, let us sit down here. (leads him to the stone seat at the foot of the cross. Both sit down).

Count There is nothing in me but bitterness and sorrow. . I have no longer any grandchildren. I have no longer any love.

Don Pio Love mankind, my lord; like ~~HIM~~, God, who loves all creatures equally.

Count That is why He is so great. He creates, He loves, He knows no rank. And I should like you, great ~~philosopher~~ philosopher, to tell me, what do you think of honour?

Don Pio (taken aback) Honour . . .honour . . .I thought always that honour was . . . well , something like decorations ...there are also what are called funeral honours, national honour, the field of honour...after all, Sir, really I don't know what it is ...

Count I am speaking of the honour of families, purity of race, the lustre of names...I have come to think, to-night ...and I say it to you openly ... that if honour could be turned into something material it would be a good stuff for manuring the fields.

Don Pio (sharpening up his wits) Now . .honour...unless it is virtue, love of one's neighbour, willing no

harm to anyone, not even to our enemies... by Jupiter's beard, I don't know what it is.

Count — It seems to me, my good Coronado, that you are ~~xxxxxx~~ discovering a world, a world still far off ... you see it through a mist ...

Don Pio — (uneasily) What I do see, Sir, is that your lordship is not safe here. (Looks from side to side)

Count — Why?

Don Pio — (mysteriously) They are wanting to lay hold of your lordship.

Count — I assure you they will not take the lion alive.

Don Pio — If your lordship wants freedom, leave Jeruba. Let us fly... for I too want to escape.

Count — Keep calm. We shall go.~~xxx~~ There is not a village on these lands where I have not old friends... farmers of Albrit ... ready to take me in.

Don Pio — Then let us flee, Sir. (Impatient and disturbed) Let us go far away, far away ...I'm afraid they may come (He gets up and looks at different parts of the street)

Count — I'm afraid of nothing. But is anyone coming?

Don Pio — I don't see anyone...Ah! yes... I see a figure over there...

Count — It will be a vagabond.(pause) In the solemn silence of the night, Dolly's voice sounds far away, crying "Grandfather".)

Don Pio — (Listening) It is Dolly's voice.

LAST SCENE

Count. Don Pio. Dolly.

Count — Dolly's voice. No, no ...it is the moaning of the wind ...My God...what a strange sensation.(Dolly's cries are heard nearer).

Don Pio — I believe it is Dolly.

Count — Dolly! What! Will the earth not swallow me!

Dolly (appears on the left, limping a little) Grandfather dear...! I thought I should never find you. You know, I ran away from the Mayor's house...I ran to Faruma... and they told me there at the door that they had seen you coming towards the church ...(coming closer to him) But what is it? Why do you turn your face away? (Count grasps Don Pio so tightly that he appears almost to strangle him).

Don Pio Go on, child. You say you ran away...

Dolly I had to jump over the railing...I hurt a foot...the Mayor shut me up in his study, because I told Mamma that I wanted at all costs to stay in Jerusa with Grandfather, to live with him always...Oh! how I have run!

Count (overcome by amazement) I see ignominy ..I see sublimity. I know not what I see. Is heaven falling, the world coming to an end, or what is happening?

Dolly (sorrowfully) Grandfather dear, why will you not look at your Dolly? What do you say? Do you not care for Dolly any more?

Count (not knowing what to say) You are my ignominy, why do you love me?

Dolly What a question? (Caressing him) Why, I told you this morning that your Dolly would never be separated from you ...Where you go, I go. My sister can go with Mamma, if she likes. I want to share your poverty, to take care of you, be your own little daughter,

Count (most agitated) Oh! Dolly, Dolly!

Dolly What is wrong with you?

Count I seem to be suffocating. It is as if God were opening my heart with his hands to enter into me...He is so great, so great. Ah! He cannot get in ...

Dolly If God enters into your heart He will find Dolly there with her lame paw...Grandfather, Grandfather mine,

when they all abandon you I am with you.(embraces and kisses him)

Count (doting) When they all spurn me, you come to me. The whole world tramples on a fallen tree and Dolly makes her nest in it.

Dolly Yes, yes... take me with you wherever you want to go, or I shall die of grief.

Count (raising his hands to the skies) Lord, from the heart of disaster comes forth Thy blessing to me... I see now that the thoughts, schemes and resolutions of human beings avail nought. They are all rust which corrupts. That which is within is that which endures. The soul is incorruptible.

Don Pio (with beautiful simplicity) Sir, whereabouts in Heaven or the Abyss is honour to be found? Where is truth?

Count (embracing Dolly) Here. Let us fly. God will protect us. Dolly does not mind poverty.

Dolly I shall make you rich and happy with my love.

Count Come to me... (moving as if to take her in his arms and carry her) God brought you to me...Child, child, love...Eternal ~~TXXXXX~~ Truth .(they go towards the right)

End.