GUILLÉN DE CASTRO

UNHAPPILY MARRIED IN VALENCIA

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The Comedia in Context

The “Golden Age” of Spain offers one of the most vibrant theatrical repertoires ever produced. At the same time that England saw the flourishing of Shakespeare on the Elizabethan stage, Spain produced prodigious talents such as Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón de la Barca. Although those names may not resonate with the force of the Bard in the Anglophone world, the hundreds of entertaining, complex plays they wrote, and the stage tradition they helped develop, deserve to be better known.

The Diversifying the Classics project at UCLA brings these plays to the public by offering English versions of Hispanic classical theater. Our translations are designed to make this rich tradition accessible to students, teachers, and theater professionals. This brief introduction to the comedia in its context suggests what we might discover and create when we begin to look beyond Shakespeare.

Comedia at a Glance

The Spanish comedia developed in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As Madrid grew into a sophisticated imperial capital, the theater provided a space to perform the customs, concerns, desires, and anxieties of its citizens. Though the form was influenced by the Italian troupes that brought commedia dell’arte to Spain in the sixteenth century, the expansive corpus of the Spanish comedia includes not only comic plays, but also histories, tragedies, and tragicomedies. The varied dramatic template of the comedia is as diverse as the contemporary social sphere it reflects.

While the plays offer a range of dramatic scenarios and theatrical effects, they share structural and linguistic similarities. Roughly three thousand lines, they are usually divided into
three different jornadas, or acts. Plots move quickly across time and space, without much regard for the Aristotelian unities of action, time, and place. The plays are written in verse, and employ different forms for different characters and situations: a lover may deliver an ornate sonnet in honor of the beloved, while a servant offers a shaggy-dog story in rhymed couplets. The plays’ language is designed for the ear rather than the eye, with the objective of pleasing an audience.

The comedia was performed in rectangular courtyard spaces known as corrales. Built between houses of two or three stories, the corral offered seating based on social position, including space for the nobles in the balconies, women in the cazuela, or stewpot, and mosqueteros, or groundlings, on patio benches. This cross-section of society enjoyed a truly popular art, which reflected onstage their varied social positions. A comedia performance would have included the play as well as songs, dances, and entremeses, or short comic interludes, before, after, and between the acts. As the first real commercial theater, the corral was the place where a diverse urban society found its dramatic entertainment.

What’s at Stake on the Comedia Stage?

Comedias offer a range of possibilities for the twenty-first-century reader, actor, and audience. The plays often envision the social ambitions and conflicts of the rapidly-growing cities where they were performed, allowing a community to simultaneously witness and create a collective culture. In many comedias, the anonymity and wealth that the city affords allows the clever to transcend their social position, while wit, rather than force, frequently carries the day, creating an urban theater that itself performs urbanity. An important subset of comedias deal with topics from national history, exploring violence, state power, the role of the nobility, and religious and racial difference.
The comedia often examines social hierarchies that may be less rigid than they first appear. Whether the dominant mode of the play is comic, tragic, historical, or a mixture, its dramatic progression often depends on a balancing act of order and liberty, authority and transgression, stasis and transformation. The title of Lope de Vega’s recently rediscovered Women and Servants, in which two sisters scheme to marry the servant-men they love rather than the noble-men who woo them, makes explicit its concerns with gender and class and provides a view of what is at stake in many of the plays. Individuals disadvantaged by class or gender often challenge the social hierarchy and patriarchy by way of their own cleverness. The gracioso (comic sidekick), the barba (older male blocking figure), and the lovers appear repeatedly in these plays, and yet are often much more than stock types. At their most remarkable, they reflect larger cultural possibilities. The comedia stages the conflicting demands of desire and reputation, dramatizing the tension between our identities as they are and as we wish them to be.

Among the many forms of passion and aspiration present in the comedia, female desire and agency are central. In contrast to its English counterpart, the Spanish stage permitted actresses to play female roles, thus giving playwrights the opportunity to develop a variety of characters for them. While actresses became famous, the powerful roles they played onstage often portrayed the force of female desire. In Lope’s The Widow of Valencia, for example, the beautiful young widow Leonarda brings a masked lover into her home so as not to reveal her identity and risk her reputation or independence.

The presence of actresses, however, did not diminish the appeal of the cross-dressing plot. One of Tirso’s most famous plays, Don Gil of the Green Breeches, features Doña Juana assuming a false identity and dressing as a man in order to foil the plans of her former lover, who is also in disguise. Dizzying deceptions and the performance of identity are both dramatic tech-
niques and thematic concerns in these plays. Gender, like class, becomes part of the structure the *comedia* examines and dismantles, offering a powerful reflection on how we come to be who we are.

Remaking Plays in Our Time

In Lope’s witty manifesto, the *New Art of Making Plays in Our Time*, he advises playwrights to stick to what works onstage, including plots of honor and love, strong subplots, and—whenever possible—cross-dressing. For Lope, the delight of the audience drives the process of composition, and there is little sense in a craft that does not entertain the public. Lope’s contemporaries followed this formula, developing dramas that simultaneously explore the dynamics of their society and produce spectacle. For this reason, early modern Hispanic drama remains an engaging, suspenseful, often comic—and new—art to audiences even four hundred years later.

The *Diversifying the Classics* project at UCLA, engaged in translation, adaptation, and outreach to promote the *comedia* tradition, aims to bring the entertaining spirit of Lope and his contemporaries to our work. Rather than strictly adhering to the verse forms of the plays, we seek to render the power of their language in a modern idiom; rather than limiting the drama as a historical or cultural artifact, we hope to bring out what remains vibrant for our contemporary society. Given that these vital texts merit a place onstage, we have sought to facilitate production by carefully noting entrances, exits, and asides, and by adding locations for scenes whenever possible. Although we have translated every line, we assume directors will cut as appropriate for their own productions. We hope that actors, directors, and readers will translate our work further into new productions, bringing both the social inquiry and theatrical delight of the *comedia* to future generations of audiences.
A Note on the Playwright

Guillén de Castro y Belvis (1569–1631) was a Valencian playwright whose theatrical oeuvre developed right alongside the *comedia* itself. He was highly involved with the literary world in Valencia, and at age 23 joined the *Academia de los Nocturnos* under the pseudonym *Secreto*. Castro submitted works of prose and poetry to the group, discovering his voice as part of one of the most renowned literary gatherings in Spain. The *Nocturnos* maintained Valencia’s position as a highly influential city in the changing literary and intellectual landscape at the turn of the century, and Castro’s theater owes much to his years in the *Academia*. Like many of his contemporaries, Castro was a military man as well as a poet; in addition to serving as a captain in the Valencian coast guard in 1593, he also had a brief governorship of a district of Naples. Not much is known about his time in Italy, although during his absence two of his plays, *El caballero bobo* and *El amor constante*, were published in a collection of *comedias* by Valencian dramatists. After failing to revive the literary circles of his youth with the short-lived *Academia de los montañeses del Parnaso*, Castro decided, like so many of his contemporaries, to try his luck in the capital city of Madrid. In preparation for this move, Castro published a collection of his plays with the last of his money, pinning all his hopes on selling these volumes to get him out of debt. The gamble paid off, allowing him to enter a thriving community where poets, playwrights, and novelists jostled for fame. The care he took to publish his own creations and adaptations of some of the most popular works of the period, including Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, present us with a playwright who was not only interested in developing his craft but also deeply invested in succeeding in the emerging commercial theatrical market. He published a
second volume of plays in 1625, and remained active in literary circles in Madrid until his death in 1631.

Although only twenty-six of his plays were published in his lifetime, most scholars agree that the total number of works produced by Castro is closer to thirty-five. His plays vary in genre, from the mythological to the urban, and yet across Castro’s works there are certain characteristics which signal the influences of a Valencian tradition existing alongside the developing *comedia*, as well as dramatic techniques, themes, and characters that are unique to his theater. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Castro was not afraid to tackle subjects which were thought to be highly taboo in Spanish society on the stage, in particular regicide, bigamy, and sexuality. The major themes explored across Castro’s works include: the formation of identity, including gender; power and authority, especially between rulers and their subjects; the troubled domestic relationships of husbands and wives; and center and periphery, examining the social dynamics between Valencia and Castile, and Valencia and its closest Mediterranean neighbors.

Like many of his Valencian contemporaries, much of Castro’s theater portrays the dramatic lives of high-born nobility, and often used legendary figures from Iberian history and ballads, adapting them to the stage as in his best-known play, *Las mocedades del Cid*. Castro’s works also tend toward the tragic, and even his urban plays, like *Los mal casados de Valencia*, are full of dark humor. His works clearly show a playwright fully engaged with his contemporaries across literary genres, and his skill in translating popular stories, like the ballad of the Cid or Don Quijote’s exploits, as well as his unflinching presentation of urban life make him one of the most interesting playwrights of Spanish *comedia*.
Introduction

The typical finale of a seventeenth-century Spanish play is a wedding, and often multiple, simultaneous marriages are the recipe for resolution. Not so with Guillén de Castro’s *Unhappily Married in Valencia* (*Los mal casados de Valencia*, c. 1595–1604), an amazingly modern, biting comedy which looks past “happily ever after” and challenges the traditional marriage ending. Two married couples, Ipólita and Don Álvaro and Eugenia and Valerián, are disillusioned with their respective marriages and look outside of their conjugal vows to try to realize their fantasies of a better match. Eugenia heats up the stage in her effort to seduce Don Álvaro, yet is unaware that her husband Valerián is in pursuit of his friend’s wife, Ipólita. Don Álvaro brings his mistress Elvira into the home he shares with his long-suffering—and to him insufferable—wife Ipólita. Innuendo, accusations, and revenge steal the show while the cross-dressed Elvira merrily manipulates one and all.

The Plot

The play opens in the home of Don Álvaro and Ipólita, where much of the action takes place, as members of the upper class test the limits of social norms. We meet the two couples and their respective love interests, including a mistress. While his friend Don Álvaro is out of town on business, Valerián is knee-deep in his attempt to woo Ipólita. Just as it seems Valerián will overwhelm Ipólita despite her protests, the old squire Galíndez appears, announcing the return of his master Don Álvaro. Outside, Don Álvaro has just finished explaining to his mistress Elvira, who is dressed as a boy, that she must continue the pretense of being a man because he is married. Before she can respond, Ipólita and Valerián appear to greet the new arrivals. Almost immediately, Ipólita suspiciously questions her husband about the women she assumes he met
while in Zaragoza. Valerián excuses himself, and the discussion between the married couple intensifies. Don Álvaro expresses his disgust for Ipólita’s jealousy and denies any missteps while his mistress watches on in amazement. Unsatisfied by her husband’s platitudes, Ipólita exits crying. Elvira, for her part, is not the suffering type. Once she and Don Álvaro are finally alone, she calls him a traitor and a liar, but agrees to continue their relationship when Don Álvaro smooth-talks and woos her.

Valerián returns with his wife Eugenia, who feigns exhaustion in order to remain with Don Álvaro while her husband takes the opportunity to speak to Ipólita alone. Eugenia uses her malaise as an excuse to tempt Don Álvaro with her heaving bosom, but the blatant flirtation accomplishes nothing. As he continues to rebuff Eugenia’s advances, Valerián and Ipólita enter having a similar conversation. The couples see each other and momentarily face the prospect that their respective spouses have heard the attempts at seduction. Before the accusations can fly, they are distracted by Elvira, now as “Antonio” the page, who runs in fleeing from an infuriated Galíndez, as they blame each other for their behavior. Eventually the two couples decide to spend the evening playing a word game; they invite the servants, including Galíndez, Elvira/Antonio, and a foreign servant named Pierres, to play. The game consists of choosing a letter and then crafting a story to go along with it, including the name of a person they met on a trip and what they dined on, etc. Before long, it becomes clear that the couples are using the game to express their true feelings, as they each pick the letter that corresponds to the person they desire. Among the servants, Elvira displays her cunning by creating an allegorical story, while both Galíndez and Pierres entertain everyone with their foolish responses. The game ends with a punishment for those who made mistakes: Valerián and Eugenia must declare their love for Ipólita and Don Álvaro, respectively. Although nominally this is in jest, Elvira realizes that the game
has come far closer to the truth than anything that came before. Valerián and Eugenia retire for the night, promising to visit the next day.

The second act opens the next morning at the house of Valerián and Eugenia. Valerián gets ready for the day, lamenting the sleepless night he spent and wondering how he will deliver the love letter he has written to Ipólita. He enlists the help of Elvira/Antonio, but before she can leave, Eugenia (not realizing Valerián has written a letter to Ipólita) decides to entrust her with a letter, too, declaring her love for Don Álvaro. Letters in hand, Elvira takes advantage of her role as messenger. Adding two letters from Galíndez and Pierres, she plans to manipulate all the other characters. Don Álvaro appears and is immediately trapped by Eugenia’s amorous advances, while Elvira watches astounded at Eugenia’s shamelessness. As Don Álvaro rejects her once again Eugenia’s pleas become a threat. Just then, Ipólita and Valerián enter the room, surprised to find their spouses looking upset. While Valerián escorts his crying wife away, Ipólita begins another jealous argument with her husband, this time demanding to know what is going on between him and Eugenia. The argument ends with Ipólita storming off, but before Don Álvaro can catch his breath Elvira begins denouncing him and the disguise he is making her wear. Once again Don Álvaro uses his charms to soothe Elvira’s feelings, although this time he gives her an ultimatum: either she stops acting like a jealous wife or he will leave her for good. Tired of the jealousies of his wife and mistress, Don Álvaro walks out, leaving Elvira more determined than ever to complicate matters for the deceitful married couples. Eugenia, angered by rejection, tells her husband that Don Álvaro has made a move on her; Valerián vows to pursue Ipólita both for his own pleasure and as revenge against his friend.

On the way back home Elvira teases Galíndez, who leaves the two women alone. Ipólita then asks Elvira/Antonio to confirm her suspicions that her husband has been unfaithful while he
was away, and that he is now pursuing Eugenia. Elvira uses the opportunity to give her Valerián’s letter, saying that it is from her husband Don Álvaro to Eugenia. Just then Don Álvaro enters and Ipólita confronts Don Álvaro with the note, which he reads and realizes immediately was meant for her instead. He demands to know how far Valerián has gone with Ipólita, while she denies everything; Don Álvaro considers taking Eugenia as revenge, but decides instead to feign ignorance until he has proof.

Eugenia arrives, having made plans with Ipólita earlier to see a play, and invites Don Álvaro to go with them. While they wait for Valerián to join them, Elvira decides to stir up some mischief with the other servants and pretends to give Galíndez and Pierres notes from the servant girls they want to seduce. She then sees Valerián and entangles him further, giving him the note his wife wrote for Don Álvaro and claiming it is for him from Ipólita. He joins the others, elated because he believes that Ipólita is finally succumbing to his advances.

On the way to the play, everyone hides their true state. The men escort each other’s wives as an act of “good faith,” which is really a test to see how everyone reacts. Meanwhile Elvira plays a trick on Galíndez, tying him up and painting his face with the help of Pierres and his foreign friends. The couples are interrupted by Galíndez’s cries for help, but once they untie him they realize it was all a trick by Elvira/Antonio and continue on their way, amused by the antics of the servants.

Act III begins with Don Álvaro demanding to know who gave Elvira the letter for Ipólita, threatening her if she refuses to answer. She tells him that Valerián wrote the note, but that she lied to Ipólita because her love for Don Álvaro had made her so jealous. He laments Valerián’s betrayal, stating that no man he has met is as loyal as he is, and vows to kill his old friend. Elvira pleads with him to calm down, and they enter his study for some privacy. Galíndez arrives in
time to hear Don Álvaro praise his cross-dressed lover’s beauty and to see them embrace; as he spies through the keyhole, he becomes convinced that they have a homosexual relationship. Ipólita enters and Galínzdez tells her what he has just seen, then invites her to see for herself. Horrified, Ipólita begs Galínzdez to get her brother immediately, although she pretends to know nothing when Elvira/Antonio enters. Elvira apologizes for the trick with the letter and convinces Ipólita that Don Álvaro plans to kill her, his own wife, that night, advising her to leave her room as soon as her husband leaves the house. Ipólita is at her wit’s end when her brother Leonardo arrives, leaving Elvira free to set up Galínzdez for her final trick.

Ipólita tells Leonardo what she thinks she saw, and he proposes to take her marriage contract to a judge to have the marriage annulled, suggesting that Ipólita hide in a room other than her own while she waits. Elvira goes to Eugenia and tells her that she can arrange a secret meeting between her and Don Álvaro, and then promises to do the same for Valerián with Ipólita. With that arranged, Elvira must answer to an angry Pierres, upset because he has received a note which Elvira claims is from the servant girl Rafaela, but is actually from Galínzdez. Elvira convinces Pierres that his love will be waiting to meet him that night, when in fact it will be Galínzdez. With her traps set, Elvira escorts Eugenia to Ipólita’s room, where she has also sent Valerián. Her trick serves a double purpose: not only will the cheating spouses end up being “unfaithful” to each other, Don Álvaro will believe that his wife has been seduced by Valerián. Elvira sets her plans in motion, first escorting Pierres, dressed as a woman, to Galínzdez’s quarters, then making sure that Valerián enters the room where his wife is.

The confusion culminates when Leonardo returns with officers of the law to settle the matter of the “illegal” marriage, only to find Don Álvaro, dressed in a nightshirt, ready to kill Valerián after finding him in Ipólita’s room. Leonardo and the officers stop him from killing
Valerián, with everyone thoroughly confused when Eugenia exits the room in fear. Just then Pierres, still dressed as a woman, enters fighting with Galíndez, each trying to kill the other for the trick played on them. Ipólita comes out to investigate the noise, and the officer in charge demands an explanation.

Elvira steps forward and confesses that she is a woman, and responsible for the confusion. Valerián seizes the chance to reveal that he paid for Eugenia’s first husband to be killed so they could marry. The constables agree with Valerián’s claim that this is enough to nullify the marriage, freeing him from any obligation to her. The officer in charge, a bailiff of the Archbishop, then informs Don Álvaro and Ipólita that their marriage has been annulled because they never had the necessary paperwork to make it legally binding. With the marriages dissolved, Elvira surprises everyone, especially Don Álvaro, by declaring that she will return to Zaragoza. After witnessing first hand the awful deceit and disillusion of married life, she decides she would rather be a nun and avoid the whole mess.

Closed Marriages, Open Secrets

*Unhappily Married* humorously imagines the ins and outs of unrequited love, jealousy, and betrayal, and puts them in motion via various theatrical tools. Guillon de Castro creates a hilarious, action-packed, and quick-witted platform for telling the truth about our hearts’ desires in the context of marriage and strict social norms. At a time when society’s rules favored men, and disorder was punished by sword or sheriff, Castro gives female characters the agency to confuse their counterparts in the quest for love, and even to reject marriage. Women and servants are afforded the tools of irony and revelation, allowing an audience to discover the systematic injust-
tices of patriarchy that the play charts. Castro juxtaposes dialogues, asides, and wordplay that toy with notions of honor, commitment, and the institution of marriage.

The characters openly hate their marriages and simultaneously hatch secret schemes against their spouses, so that it becomes difficult to determine just how much each character knows about the others. The constant asides offer different levels of insight into the spousal relationships and the dexterity of Elvira’s scheming throughout. In early modern Spanish theater, asides are an important theatrical practice: they add psychological depth, playfully engage the audience with a character, and offer social commentary about the events of the play as they unfold. The characters in *Unhappily Married* are not exactly likeable, yet they are profoundly relatable, a feat that Castro accomplishes in large part by having them speak their minds in the asides. These moments give us insight into past hurts, current jealousies, and motivations for how the characters react, as well as conveying joy, dismay, or anger, often solely expressed through asides.

Beyond the asides, Castro conveys motivation, psychological depth, and complex relationships through staging and dialogue. Many of the most important scenes are staged as juxtaposed duologues, where pairs of characters hold entirely separate, often parallel conversations on different parts of the stage. In Act I, for example, the characters become separated from their spouses and instead are paired with each other’s, Valerián with Ipólita and Eugenia with Don Álvaro, with the former attempting to seduce the latter. This scene ends when both couples, each having its own exchange of seduction and refusal, end up in the same room:

*Enter* VALERIÁN and IPÓLITA *without seeing the others*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPÓLITA</th>
<th>Stop, on your life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALERIÁN</td>
<td>My love will not allow me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON ÁLVARO</td>
<td>Let go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EUGENIA: Wait.
DON ÁLVARO: Who says so?
VALERIÁN: I’m crazy for you.
DON ÁLVARO: You’re not yourself.
IPÓLITA: If you insist, I will let the whole world know.
EUGENIA: My lord!
IPÓLITA: (Aside) Oh, heavens!

They all see each other (421–431)

Before the two pairs see each other, their dialogue plays like a game of ping-pong. When the stage directions finally indicate that the spousal pairs become aware of the other’s presence, we can imagine them on opposite ends of the stage, each one eyeing his or her respective spouse nervously as they all make their way toward center stage. This is one of Castro’s favorite staging and dialogue techniques, used to great effect to map out the complicated set of relationships between the characters. Such scenes also increase the ambiguity of the marriages and their secrets. How much does each character know? How much do they suspect? While the audience ponders these questions, it becomes clear that the best informed, or at least the most vocal about her knowledge, is the mistress Elvira.

Elvira has access to information and secrets because, as far as most of the others are concerned, she is merely a servant and thus poses no threat: she is asked to deliver adulterous love letters, she is there when Eugenia declares her love to Don Álvaro the second time, and she witnesses all of Ipólita and Don Álvaro’s fights. Her status as a servant also makes her a confidante to the other characters—someone with whom they can share their secrets and woes, without having to worry these will be used against them. Ipólita continues to trust her even after witnessing the love scene between “Antonio” and her husband, believing the disguised mistress when Elvira says that Don Álvaro plans to kill poor Ipólita. And yet, there is some indication that Elvira’s
disguise is not as convincing as it seems. Eugenia and Valerían’s constant comments about how witty and beautiful “Antonio” is hint at their knowing or suspecting more than they let on.

Urban Entertainment

Beyond its unique portrayal of married life, Unhappily Married also provides insight into the domestic life of the urban nobility, exemplified by two scenes in which the characters engage in the leisure activities of their class. Plays reflected the common people’s fascination with court life through the extensive portrayal of games that both the nobility and the wealthy merchant classes played to pass the time. Economic privilege allowed for leisure time, and parlor games were often represented on stage as a way to move the plot forward or give context to relationships between characters. This is the case in Unhappily Married, where parlor games and references to theatrical events are opportunities for the characters to voice their true desires or concerns. The first of these is the juego de letras, or alphabet game, which takes up the latter half of Act I. Such games were typical of the teatro cortesano, or courtly theater, as the spectacle and pageantry of court and festival life often made their way into more commercial plays. In this scene, the characters lay it all out on the table, acting out their desires to the amusement of some and the displeasure of others.

The second of these moments, perhaps odder for a modern reader, occurs at the end of Act II, as Eugenia and Ipólita prepare for an evening’s entertainment in the form of a comedia at a local merchant’s house. Meanwhile, in a capsule scene separate from the main plot, the cross-dressed Elvira plays a mean trick on the squire Galíndez. As the characters themselves note, this scene could very well be the entremés or comic interlude for the play the characters are on their way to see, while functioning metatheatrically as the comic interlude for Castro’s own play. This
scene has its roots in other forms of traditional Valencian theater, which often had episodic comic moments only loosely related to the central plot, similar to the set pieces from *commedia dell’arte* and the later *entremeses* played between acts of long-form theater. Even the stock characters of traditional theater and the short-form *entremés* appear: the foreign fool (Pierres), the crotchety old man (Galíndez), the passionate woman (Eugenia), the effeminate, cowardly husband (Valerián), the womanizer (Don Álvaro). While the amused reaction of the characters to the cruel trick may strike us as callous, it is important to keep in mind that in the theatrical context of performance the *entremés* exists as a no-holds-barred moment that is meant to take the audience, momentarily, out of the action, suspending the higher-stakes narrative of the *comedia*. While Galíndez is humiliated in a way which would normally call for disgust and horror, his treatment is standard for an *entremés*; it elicits laughter despite its violence not only because comedy of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century derived its humor more cruelly than modern sensibilities are accustomed to, but also because the scene has been carefully transformed, metatheatrically, into an *entremés*. Galíndez is no longer Don Álvaro and Ipólita’s loyal servant but rather *el vejete*, the archetypal old man always worthy of ridicule in the context of the comic interlude.¹ This scene provides an excellent opportunity for the modern director to bracket the scene with a different acting style, a sketch comedy routine, or even a bit of improv, in the same spirit of the seventeenth-century *entremés*.

Unhappily Ever After: The Denouement

The dissolution of the marriages in the final scene is a unique element of this play, in stark contract to typical Golden Age comedias urbanas. It is important to note that what occurs at the end cannot rightly be called divorce, for divorce as such did not exist in seventeenth-century Spain (it only became legal there in 1981). The only hope unhappily married couples had for the dissolution of marriage was annulment or, of course, for one of the spouses to die. Unlike in Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s bloody wife-murder plays, which were written some decades after Mal casados, no spouses are killed in this play. Instead, the plot leads to a totally unexpected, and unprecedented, dissolution of marriage based on legal technicalities and not a little fudging of the truth. Castro was clearly well informed on all the valid reasons for annuling a marriage, as the list was very short:

[C]ases of annulment of marriage were also very exceptional and were related to the husband's impotence or “the wife’s extreme reticence,” which prevented consummation, the young age of the spouses, clandestine marriages or enforced marriages following abduction, consanguinity, the solemn vow [to enter religious life] of one of the spouses, bigamy, or the murder of the previous spouse in order to be able to remarry.²

In Unhappily Married, Ipólita’s brother Leonardo convinces himself—and more importantly, convinces the Archbishop’s bailiffs—that the papal dispensation required for Don Álvaro and Ipólita’s marriage to a cousin was never properly notarized, thereby nullifying the entire thing. Meanwhile, Eugenia and Valerián’s marriage is nullified through the very specific and oddly fitting technicality of the period which declared that in the case of the murder of one spouse for

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the purposes of marriage to another, the second marriage would be null and void. It is also interesting to note that while the bailiffs admit that Valerián owes nothing to Eugenia due to the murder of her first husband, neither one is brought up on charges; apparently, their horrible marriage has been punishment enough.

“After a time, you may find that having is not so pleasing a thing after all as wanting. It is not logical, but it is often true.” So says Mr. Spock, of Star Trek fame, about a marriage gained through duplicitous means. This certainly seems to be the case for the unhappy couples of this seventeenth-century play, for whom the circumstances of marriage in both cases seem to have required more trouble than they were ultimately worth. From beginning to end, the characters are so dissatisfied with their marriages that they are more than a little relieved to find themselves free of their spouses when the curtain closes. Of all the characters, Elvira seems to have learned this hard lesson best: after nursing jealous desires for Don Álvaro during most of the play, her decision to remain single and become a nun comes as another shock in an already surprising denouement. It is clear, however, that her experience with these toxic marriages has shown her that achieving one’s desires does not always lead to a happily-ever-after. Rather than try for marriage with Don Álvaro, who has proven himself to be a suavely manipulative husband fond of gas-lighting his spouse, Elvira opts to forgo marriage altogether by joining a convent.

Production History

Unhappily Married in Valencia, based on Eduardo Julia Martínez’s 1927 edition of Los mal casados de Valencia, was translated by Laura Muñoz and Veronica Wilson and workshopped by the UCLA working group The Comedia in Translation and Performance. Directed by Dr. Barbara Fuchs and sponsored by the Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies, this work-
ing group is comprised of UCLA graduate students, local theater practitioners and Golden Age scholars. An adaption of the play, written by Luciano García Lorenzo, toured in Spain in 1994 and again in 2013. More recently, in 2014, a modernized English adaptation by Laurel Ollstein, also entitled *Unhappily Married in Valencia*, was read on the grounds of UCLA’s William Andrews Clark Memorial Library as part of *Golden Tongues*, a performance series in association with Playwrights’ Arena that aims to engage local Los Angeles playwrights with the rich corpus of Golden Age Spanish plays.

Condensed to one hour, Ollstein’s adaptation was drawn from only a synopsis and a few scenes translated by Kathleen Jeffs on Out of the Wings, an online database of Spanish-language plays for English language researchers and practitioners. Ollstein moved the action to Valencia, California, a neighborhood in Santa Clarita which was founded in the 18th century as part of Spanish colonizing and missionary efforts. Skipping any reference to a painful history of Colonial Spain in the Americas, Ollstein’s adaptation focuses on today’s Los Angeles: Don Álvaro is Alvy, a literature professor at the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts). In this context, Valencia provides a contemporary suburban setting where isolated couples look for love in all the wrong places.

In Ollstein’s words, her play is an “edgy farce about two mismatched married couples living in Valencia, California, each of them searching for something different than what they have, leading to declarations of love for their neighbors’ spouses, going off meds, and one husband’s mistress (or mister) manipulating everyone.” Ollstein’s main twist is Elvira’s character—not a cross-dressed woman but a gay man who returns from a poetry conference with Alvy. De-

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3 For more information about Out of the Wings, visit: http://www.outofthewings.org/
spite gender changes and an abbreviated plot, Ollstein conveys the enduring themes from Castro’s play, bringing modern audiences closer to Spain’s classical theater and illuminating human experiences that have not changed much between then and now.

A Note on Our Translation

Although the movement from verse to prose and a modernization of spelling and punctuation are the only substantive textual manipulations in our translation, the dialogue of minor character Pierres did force us to deviate from our standard translation from Castilian to English. Pierres, a character of uncertain origin, is an interesting anomaly for Spanish theater of the period, given that he does not speak Castilian, the standard language of long-form *comedia*. Pierres is referred to by the other characters as a *gabacho*, a term which might be familiar to a modern-day audience of Spanish speakers as a somewhat derogatory term for people speak Spanish poorly. This, as it turns out, is not too dissimilar from its seventeenth-century usage, when it was used to describe people of the who left the region of the lower Pyrenees, and moved south into the Kingdom of Aragon in search of work. The stereotype of the *gabacho*, willing to do the most menial and degrading tasks to earn money before returning home, is well documented in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*. We have chosen to keep this term as used in the original, because there is no one word in English that would cover the complexity of the Spanish.

Pierres has been a complicated character to translate: he speaks an odd combination of standard Catalan, Valencian dialect, possibly some Occitan, and Castilian of the period. He is described as a drunkard and uneducated to boot. The other characters refer to him as a Frenchman, though he speaks no recognizable French. We have chosen to translate this character with a combination of languages in an attempt to parallel the complicated language mixture used in the
original, in this case with a combination of Catalan, Spanish, English, and French, which should also be made comprehensible through context and gestures. In cases where a gesture will suffice to make the meaning clear, we have attempted to leave in as much as the original language as possible, with translated footnotes where necessary.
Pronunciation Key

Each vowel in Spanish has just one sound. They are pronounced as follows:

a - AH
e - EH
i - EE
o - OH
u - OO

The underlined syllable in each word is the accented one.

DON ÁLVARO: DON AHL-VAH-ROH
IPÓLITA: EE-POH-LEE-TAH
VALERIÁN: VAH-LEH-REEAN
EUGENIA: EH-OO-HEH-NEEAH
ANTONIO: AHN-TOH-NEE-OH
LEONARDO: LEH-O-NAR-DOH
ELVIRA: EHL-VEE-RAH
GALÍNDEZ: GAH-LEEN-DEHS
PIERRES: PEE-EHR (as in the French, “Pierre”)
TWO GABACHOS: GAH-BAH-CHOHS
Characters

DON ÁLVARO
IPÓLITA, his wife
VALERIÁN, gentleman
EUGENIA, his wife
LEONARDO, gentleman, IPÓLITA’s brother
ELVIRA, lady
GALÍNDEZ, squire
PIERRES, lackey
TWO PAGES
A BAILIFF and some CONSTABLES
TWO GABACHOS
ACT I

SCENE 1

A room in IPÓLITA and DON ÁLVARO’s house

Enter VALERIÁN and IPÓLITA

VALERIÁN Listen to me:
My love for you is infinite.

IPÓLITA That’s rich . . .
Does the man who trusts you with his estate
dererve such an indecent proposal? 5
You overstep your limits.
Instead of looking after his household,
you set your sights on his wife.
Restrain yourself,
or leave at once. 10
Absence should make a friend more loyal.
Don’t you see, you snake,
that even in his absence the man who put his trust in you
is not only honorable,
but your friend and my husband? 15
Can’t you see that this is a crazy whim
even as your lust blinds you?

VALERIÁN Why does any of that matter,
when I’ve seen the way you look at me?
Those fiery eyes of yours 20
stopped me in my tracks.
They speared my heart,
as soon as you shot a look at me.
If my breast is aflame,
and I’m a slave to my desires, 25
what else can I do?

IPÓLITA Take it to the grave!
Such a long friendship
your unkind heart so easily forgets!
You’d give it up in one moment
for the thrill of the hunt.
Leave, there’s no question
you’re acting like the worst kind of traitor.

VALERIÁN  The greater my betrayal,
the more it shows my love.

IPÓLITA  How’s that?

VALERIÁN  Wait! Listen!

IPÓLITA  Listen to what?

VALERIÁN  My many fine qualities,
so you can see I’m madly in love.
Am I not a nobleman?

IPÓLITA  Yes.

VALERIÁN  Do I not owe your husband friendship?

IPÓLITA  Yes.

VALERIÁN  Well then think about who I am,
look upon me,
and let your heart melt
at the size of my love
and the barriers it has overcome.
Don’t you see how you flatter me
the more you call me a traitor,
since it makes it all the more notable
that I love you as I do?

IPÓLITA  Let go!

VALERIÁN  Happy traitor that I am!
IPÓLITA And I an unfortunate wretch!

VALERIÁN My betrayal proves just how fine my love is.

*Enter* GALÍNDEZ, *an old squire*

GALÍNDEZ Today your pining ends.

IPÓLITA What?

GALÍNDEZ I saw—

IPÓLITA Who?

GALÍNDEZ Hush.

IPÓLITA Out with it. Just tell me.

GALÍNDEZ My lord Don Álvaro is in Valencia.

IPÓLITA Finally! And about time!

GALÍNDEZ He’ll be here soon.

IPÓLITA You’ve seen him, then?

GALÍNDEZ Yes, my lady.

VALERIÁN And he’s home?

GALÍNDEZ Yes, my lord.

VALERIÁN The game is up.

IPÓLITA Come.
VALERIÁN Careful that he doesn’t find out . . . 75

IPÓLITA Hush, you fool. I care for him too much to put him in this situation. A woman who can defend her own honor, without involving her husband, makes an honorable wife. 80

GALÍNDEZ You won’t have time to make it down the stairs. 85

IPÓLITA I would run out into the street to embrace him.

SCENE 2

Room in IPÓLITA and DON ÁLVARO’s house

Enter DON ÁLVARO dressed in riding clothes and boots, and ELVIRA dressed as a page

ELVIRA You’re married? 90

DON ÁLVARO Regretfully. Just play along.

ELVIRA Just kill me now.

DON ÁLVARO Any liberties I have taken are due to your love. Forgive me.

IPÓLITA My lord!

DON ÁLVARO My lady! 95

IPÓLITA Thank heavens you’ve returned.
ELVIRA  
(Aside) And now I’m dying of jealousy.

VALERIÁN  
(Aside) Envy consumes me.

DON ÁLVARO  
Forgive me
for not embracing you first.

VALERIÁN  
It’s good to have you back.
Now I await your embrace.

DON ÁLVARO  
Take my arms.
You should be grateful
I tear them from my wife’s neck
to give them to you.

VALERIÁN  
(Aside) It’s a lucky man who gets to enjoy her.
   (Aloud) Well, Álvaro?

IPÓLITA  
(Aside) Oh, traitor!

VALERIÁN  
How was your journey?

DON ÁLVARO  
Better than I could have imagined.

VALERIÁN  
Zaragoza is heavenly.

ELVIRA  
(Aside) My beloved homeland!

DON ÁLVARO  
It’s a beautiful place.

VALERIÁN  
Renowned.

DON ÁLVARO  
I cried when I had to leave
Coso Street.⁴

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⁴ One of the oldest and best known streets in Zaragoza, since its route corresponds to the cursus, a road which bordered the wall in Roman times, and from which it derives its name.
VALERIÁN  And what happened to you there?

DON ÁLVARO  Strange things, certainly.
I’ll tell you all about them
in a better place and time.

VALERIÁN  Until then.

DON ÁLVARO  You’re leaving?

VALERIÁN  I’ll come back later
with my wife.

DON ÁLVARO  I look forward to it.

VALERIÁN  I’m sure she will too.

IPÓLITA  The more the merrier!

VALERIÁN  (Aside) I’m dying inside.

ELVIRA  (Aside) I’m furious!

IPÓLITA  (Aside) Thank God he’s leaving.

Exit VALERIÁN

SCENE 3

DON ÁLVARO  And why so sad?

IPÓLITA  On your account:
you cried when you had to come home
so you must have left something behind.
There are many ladies . . .

ELVIRA  (Aside) Oh God!
IPÓLITA . . . in Zaragoza.

ELVIRA (Aside) Here we go!

IPÓLITA And I fear more than one
must have been your lady-friend. What a fine time you must have had
with them!

DON ÁLVARO None that could equal
the pleasure I have with you.

ELVIRA (Aside) You’re a master of deception. What am I doing here?

IPÓLITA So what!
Haven’t you betrayed me before?

ELVIRA (Aside) What a tantrum!

IPÓLITA Swear to me.

DON ÁLVARO I swear on your beauty.

IPÓLITA Swear again. More.

DON ÁLVARO I swear on your life.

IPÓLITA Swear on your own life, too.

DON ÁLVARO Isn’t your life my own?

IPÓLITA Yes, my love.

DON ÁLVARO Well, light of my life, have faith in me.

IPÓLITA Listen . . .
even with all that, I don’t believe you.
A young man and in Zaragoza—there must have been some chance to give into your desires. What did you do?

DON ÁLVARO I conducted business.  

IPÓLITA And was it all business?

DON ÁLVARO I also visited a few places.

IPÓLITA And courted ladies?

DON ÁLVARO No.

IPÓLITA You didn’t even speak to them?

DON ÁLVARO I didn’t even speak to them.

IPÓLITA You must have at least looked at a few of them.

DON ÁLVARO No, I swear.

IPÓLITA I doubt that.

DON ÁLVARO Yet I know that it is so.

IPÓLITA Not one, really?

DON ÁLVARO No, by God! Now leave me alone. For heaven’s sake! I’m fed up with so many questions, one after the other—enough of this constant jealousy! I just got here.

IPÓLITA Now you’re upset?
DON ÁLVARO Could you at least let me . . . 185

IPÓLITA Such savage sorrow!

DON ÁLVARO . . . take off
my spurs and boots?
Antonio, take off my spurs.

IPÓLITA You do that,
and I’ll spur my heart
to leave here. 190

ELVIRA Let me help you.

IPÓLITA I’ll go away,
so as not to annoy you any longer. 195
(Aside) My heart is heavy with sorrow.

Exit IPÓLITA

SCENE 4

DON ÁLVARO Go and good riddance.
Look at her weep. Oh holy matrimony!
What a heavy yoke!
If it weren’t a sacrament,
I’d say it was the work of the devil. 200

ELVIRA You’re one to talk.
Do you think, you hypocrite,
that you have behaved
like a gentleman? 205

DON ÁLVARO Yes and no:
no, because I’ve had my pleasure through lies,
yes, because it’s no sin to lie
when you’re in love.
ELVIRA Lying is always dishonorable, you boor.

DON ÁLVARO Look, there’s no dishonor in a lie when it deceives a woman: her beauty provides the excuse.

ELVIRA Oh that’s rich! You pour salt in the wound! Though you were married, you traitor, you led me on, offered me marriage, tainted my honor, and brought me, despicable man, to where I scream, cry, and suffer... all effects of that poison I took in through my eyes. Was that the right thing to do? And then you told me this house—oh, I’m about to explode!—was your cousin’s, you ingrate!

DON ÁLVARO I spoke the truth.

ELVIRA How can I resist my own fury?

DON ÁLVARO The woman you saw is both my cousin and my wife.

ELVIRA My fury is so great, I will shout it to the heavens!

DON ÁLVARO If you’ll just be quiet, I’ll kiss the ground you walk on. Calm down.

ELVIRA Has there ever been a betrayal like this?
DON ÁLVARO  Listen: I haven’t been true, but it was only because your beauty made me do it. Forgive yourself and forgive me, too, for being married is harder on me than anyone else. The pain is so great—I can’t stand it. I bear my marriage like a noose around my neck. Since your love compelled me to accept your tender mercies, free me from this knot, if you can, and I’ll be the lucky one. I hope you’ll keep up the disguise, my love, if you care about me.

ELVIRA  You do have a way with words, you silver-tongued devil! Your words have taken me in reaching deep into my soul, and left me for dead. They fooled me once, and will surely fool me again.

DON ÁLVARO  I’ll make it worth your while . . . Ah, here are Valerián and his wife.

ELVIRA  What else am I to do, if I can’t help loving you?

SCENE 5

*Drawing room in IPÓLITA and DON ÁLVARO’s house*

*Enter VALERIÁN and EUGENIA*

EUGENIA  *(Aside)* I’m trembling from head to toe
at the thought of seeing the one I adore.  
(Aloud) Welcome back, and forgive me.  
I’m nearly dead  
from climbing the stairs.

VALERIÁN You certainly look it.

DON ÁLVARO Rest, please.

EUGENIA (Aside) If only I could rest  
in your arms.

DON ÁLVARO Would you care for anything?

EUGENIA My lady Ipólita,  
where is she?

DON ÁLVARO I will let her know you’re here.  
She’s weeping at the moment.

VALERIÁN What is it? Is it jealousy?

DON ÁLVARO She’s unbearable.

VALERIÁN Is that why she retired?

DON ÁLVARO It’s terrible!  
You know the state she gets into.

VALERIÁN And Doña Eugenia is quite exhausted . . .

DON ÁLVARO Would you get her, then?

VALERIÁN (Aside) I will, I’m dying to see her.

Exit VALERIÁN

EUGENIA (Aside) Good riddance.  
How can I get you alone?  
(Aloud) Could I have some water?
DON ÁLVARO  (To ELVIRA) Go and bring some immediately.

ELVIRA  I’m like the wind.

Exit ELVIRA

EUGENIA  (Aside) I must seize the moment!  295

DON ÁLVARO  Well, my lady, are you better now?

EUGENIA  No, not exactly. Feel my pulse and you’ll see. It’s racing. Come, feel it.  300

DON ÁLVARO  I can see it racing freely from here. It seems to be a little wild.

EUGENIA  Oh my God! . . . give me your hand and you’ll see I’m burning up.  305

DON ÁLVARO  What! This is going too far! You are sick, but not like that.

EUGENIA  Press harder, unless my burning heat consumes you.

DON ÁLVARO  That’s what I’m afraid of. Are you still carrying on?  310

EUGENIA  Come here . . .

DON ÁLVARO  It’s not right.

EUGENIA  . . . and touch my heart.
DON ÁLVARO: I can see it in your eyes.

EUGENIA: You’ve discovered what ails me. Why are you taking so long if the remedy is in your hands?

DON ÁLVARO: That’s what this is about?

EUGENIA: You are cruel.

DON ÁLVARO: I’m a man of honor. I’ve told you a thousand times, it’s inappropriate. Why do you persist?

EUGENIA: I’d like to find one yes among a thousand no’s, and so find my good fortune, like the one who gets the lucky ace among the thousand who don’t.

DON ÁLVARO: Well, there’s no point in trying. I tell you, I am your husband’s friend and have never been a traitor. I must warn you, put an end to your antics. You seek fortune in a bad hand.

EUGENIA: How well you treat me.

DON ÁLVARO: As my station requires.

EUGENIA: Are you sure?

DON ÁLVARO: I am.

EUGENIA: How is it possible, ingrate, that you, fickle as can be,
throw all sense away,
follow any woman you see,
and catch all those you follow,
without leaving one scrap
when the chance comes up.
From the haughty lady
to the humble maid,
since that is what
your nature bids you do,
and yet you steel your heart
against me alone?

DON ÁLVARO Though it’s true,
I do follow my desires,
I only do so where
I owe nothing to a friend.
For that would not be fair dealing—
it would be shameful indeed
to betray a good friend.
Where honor rules,
pleasure has no sway.
One must keep faith with one’s friends:
he who betrays a friend
must know he breaks his word.
A man who does such a thing
is an enemy of the faith,
for whosoever betrays a friend,
would betray his God, too.

EUGENIA Bravo, my friend!
Come and let me bury
my sorrows in your chest,
and then you too can be
a heretic to your faith.
I renege from it a thousand times,
since it only does me harm. I’m crazy for you!

DON ÁLVARO Here comes the water.
EUGENIA It’s hardly enough to put out such a fire.

Enter ELVIRA with a glass of water and some sweets

ELVIRA I ordered some sweets. That’s why it took me so long. 380

EUGENIA (Aside) The later the better. (Aloud) Do you trust this pageboy? 5

ELVIRA I am happy that he trusted me to serve you, my lady. 385

EUGENIA A pretty face and pretty words.

DON ÁLVARO Aren’t you hungry?

EUGENIA I’ve already eaten.

ELVIRA Goodness! You’re flushed.

EUGENIA I have regained the color I lost in climbing the stairs. 390

EUGENIA drinks the water

ELVIRA How fortunate . . . Oh my, what will I do!

EUGENIA What did you say?

ELVIRA How lucky you are to regain what you had lost. 395

EUGENIA Well said.

5 Eugenia’s question is also meant to denote surprise and displeasure at Don Álvaro allowing Elvira/Antonio, a servant, to interrupt their private conversation.
DON ÁLVARO  He's an educated lad.

ELVIRA  With honors, no less.

EUGENIA  He seems a great fool, with a woman's voice and face.

ELVIRA  *(Aside)* Oh Fortune, look what you've brought me to!

*Exit ELVIRA*

EUGENIA  If you loved me . . .

DON ÁLVARO  Must you insist?

EUGENIA  Though you want nothing of it, I must insist.

DON ÁLVARO  I'll always be honorable.

EUGENIA  I'll let the whole world hear my pain, if you won't give up your faith for a new idol.

DON ÁLVARO  You know how this works. Surely you're sane enough to see you'll be ruined. Leave me be.

EUGENIA  Let me be ruined.

DON ÁLVARO  What are you trying to do?

EUGENIA  My darling, love you.

DON ÁLVARO  This madness has crossed the line.
EUGENIA This will be the end of me!

SCENE 6

Enter VALERIÁN AND IPÓLITA without seeing the others

IPÓLITA Stop, on your life.

VALERIÁN My love won’t let me.

DON ÁLVARO Let go.

EUGENIA Wait.

DON ÁLVARO Who says so?

VALERIÁN I’m crazy for you.

DON ÁLVARO You’re not yourself.

IPÓLITA If you insist,
   I will let the whole world know.

EUGENIA My lord!

IPÓLITA (Aside) Oh, heavens!

They all see each other

DON ÁLVARO Look who’s here.

EUGENIA (Aside) Ay, I’m cursed!

DON ÁLVARO (Aside) Compose yourself.
   Why is this taking so long?

IPÓLITA (Aside) What a moment!
   Did he hear you?
VALERIÁN What was that about?

EUGENIA Wait.

IPÓLITA Wait.

IPÓLITA runs off stage

VALERIÁN What’s going on, Don Álvaro?

DON ÁLVARO I would like to drag her out by the hair.
This refusing to come out . . .

VALERIÁN Listen.

DON ÁLVARO . . . Ipólita . . .

IPÓLITA returns

VALERIÁN She was on her way.

DON ÁLVARO . . . is so rude,
and with such poor manners.

EUGENIA (Aside) I’m exhausted by this effort—
this is not right.

VALERIÁN (Aside) I was a dead man there for a moment.

IPÓLITA (Aside) I’m so unlucky,
I thought things might end up even worse.

VALERIÁN (Aside) I feared a greater misfortune.

EUGENIA (Aside) I was very lucky this time.

DON ÁLVARO (Aside) It could have been worse.
VALERIÁN  I’m glad I was helpful
in getting her to open
her bedroom door.  460

DON ÁLVARO  Such nonsense to shut herself in her room
when you are visiting.

IPÓLITA  I know.
Better manners are to be expected
from a woman like me.
Forgive me, my lady.  465

EUGENIA  Fine.
Now you must shake hands,
and anyone who refuses
must face me instead.
My sword always finds its mark,
even though that last battle
has left me all worn out.  470

VALERIÁN  Well said. I’ll vouch for that.

DON ÁLVARO  I’ll second it.  475

VALERIÁN  Come, give me your hand.

IPÓLITA  You should marry us again.
It is better without a doubt
to start anew
when something can’t be fixed.  480

DON ÁLVARO  A mistake won’t fix a mistake,
and it would add insult to injury.
You can’t redo what wasn’t undone.

IPÓLITA  Do you want it undone?

DON ÁLVARO  (Aside) Would that it could be!
SCENE 7

*Enter* ELVIRA, running, and GALÍNDEZ chasing her

ELVIRA  Antonio!

GALÍNDEZ  I will stick this dagger in his belly.

DON ÁLVARO  Halt!

ELVIRA  Crazy old man.

GALÍNDEZ  Rascal.

VALERIÁN  This is good.

GALÍNDEZ  He has no shame!

ELVIRA  Look at the face on you!

GALÍNDEZ  He disrespects me even in your presence. Oh, Saint George!

ELVIRA  He won’t even spare the saints.

DON ÁLVARO  Galindez, be polite!

GALÍNDEZ  My lord.

ELVIRA  I was coming out with the water and sweets when he snatched the treats away from me.

GALÍNDEZ  I did that? You liar!
ELVIRA: Having eaten them...

DON ÁLVARO: Calm down.

GALÍNDEZ: My lord, he’s lying.

ELVIRA: ...he drank the water, and then said it was hot, and then...

510

GALÍNDEZ: A thousand lies!

ELVIRA: I was sure I could get away from him, so I hit the jug as he held it to his mouth. I’m only sorry there wasn’t more water.

515

EUGENIA: So feisty.

ELVIRA: And I came running to you to save myself.

GALÍNDEZ: Oh, traitor!

520

My lord, only that last thing was true. He’s an incredible rascal.

VALERIÁN: It’s a great story.

GALÍNDEZ: He has made a real mess of my poor nose, and if you...

525

DON ÁLVARO: Don’t get all worked up. Antonio, is that any way to behave? I’ll make them whip you a hundred times over.

GALÍNDEZ: I will happily take care of it.

530

DON ÁLVARO: All in good time.
EUGENIA How entertaining.

ELVIRA (Aside) The nonsense I must put up with, just to hide the truth!

DON ÁLVARO Now, let’s find some way to while away the afternoon.

VALERIÁN Good idea!

IPÓLITA Let’s sit.

EUGENIA Do not be sad, my lady, if God is with you.

IPÓLITA I’m at your service. I’ll be all right somehow.

DON ÁLVARO I’ll kiss your hand.

IPÓLITA Yes, of course.

ELVIRA (Aside) I’m so miserable.

VALERIÁN (Aside) This jealousy . . .!

EUGENIA (Aside) This fire . . .

VALERIÁN (Aside) . . . undoes me!

EUGENIA (Aside) . . . consumes me!

DON ÁLVARO What game shall we play?

VALERIÁN Make one up.

DON ÁLVARO The game of letters would suit such a learned company.
VALERIÁN But we need more people to play. 555

DON ÁLVARO So be it.

EUGENIA Perhaps Galindez can play.

IPÓLITA Will he know how?

DON ÁLVARO And young Tony.

GALÍNDEZ I’m not sure I should, I don’t know . . . 560

DON ÁLVARO We’ll see what he comes up with.

VALERIÁN If you want a good laugh, bring in one of those gabacho servants.6

DON ÁLVARO You mean Pierres?

VALERIÁN Besides being a drunk, he’s a little crazy. 565

DON ÁLVARO Have him come then. Go call him, Antonio.

ELVIRA And in his native tongue. M’sieur Pierres!

Exit ELVIRA

VALERIÁN That page isn’t half bad. 570

DON ÁLVARO He’s a devil.

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6 As a general term, it denotes someone of foreign origin, although in the seventeenth century it was often used to describe someone from the lower Pyrenees region who moved into the city to do manual labor. See Introduction.
GALÍNDEZ       That he is.

DON ÁLVARO   Pick a letter.\(^7\)

EUGENIA    I’ll pick the first, A.

DON ÁLVARO   And I choose E,
the second of the vowels.

VALERIÁN I pick the third, which is I.

EUGENIA   Won’t you choose?

IPÓLITA   Which one, oh God!
The A you picked
was rightly mine.

EUGENIA   Take it, then.

IPÓLITA   I don’t want it.
It’s not important. I’ll pick something else.

EUGENIA   Since it’s the first,
I just thought of it first.

IPÓLITA   C isn’t bad.

GALÍNDEZ     See, I know some things . . .

VALERIÁN I see what you’re up to.

GALÍNDEZ . . . that start with this letter,
some very bad ones.\(^8\)

\(^7\) The last half of Act I is dedicated to this word game, through which everyone makes their desires known. See Introduction.

\(^8\) The play on “C words” here probably refers to marriage (casamiento) in the Spanish, but could easily refer to cuckoldry in the English.
DON ÁLVARO  Some which are forced upon us.

VALERIÁN  Galíndez has good taste.
        Pick a letter.  595

GALÍNDEZ  I choose . . .

DON ÁLVARO  Is Pierres coming?

GALÍNDEZ  T.

VALERIÁN  T?

GALÍNDEZ  T.  600

SCENE 8

Enter ELVIRA and PIERRES

VALERIÁN  Just in time.

ELVIRA  Pierres is here.

PIERRES  At your servicio, monsieur.

VALERIÁN  Come here, do you know how to read?

PIERRES  I have some.  605

VALERIÁN  You have to pick a letter.

PIERRES  What for?

VALERIÁN  Pick one, and you’ll see later what to do with it. It’s a game.  610

PIERRES  All right.
Give me $R$.

DON ÁLVARO You’ll have your work cut out for you. Now young Tony picks.

ELVIRA If I think about it, I’ll choose worse. I’ll take $D$.

DON ÁLVARO Play the game, my lady.

EUGENIA I’m first.

DON ÁLVARO Go ahead, my lady.

IPÓLITA That’s not right.

EUGENIA Well, I started from Aragon.

VALERIÁN Now you must forfeit something, your choice.

EUGENIA Why?

VALERIÁN Because you’ve made a mistake. Aragon is not a town, it’s a kingdom.

DON ÁLVARO Without a doubt.

IPÓLITA Give a ribbon for the forfeit.

EUGENIA I just did. To continue: I arrived at Almeria, where I stayed the night. My host’s name was Antonio and his lady was Ana, and then there was a suitor, Don Álvaro, who followed me on my way.

VALERIÁN Fine.
DON ÁLVARO  It wasn’t me.

VALERIÁN  Oh God, that makes me so jealous.

IPÓLITA  I feel the same.

VALERIÁN  I’ll have my revenge on you both.

EUGENIA  We sat down to dinner, and we started with ... oh, God! Who will help me? Artichokes. Then, for an entrée, Andalusian duck, for dessert, I suppose, Almonds. And now I’ve gotten to the hardest part.

DON ÁLVARO  And what did you say to that handsome man?

EUGENIA  I don’t know what to say, how sad! ... That he was as lovely as the Air.

VALERIÁN  Is air lovely?

EUGENIA  It’s clear, which is the greatest beauty.

ELVIRA  It’s better felt than seen.

IPÓLITA  Well said.

DON ÁLVARO  He’s just a young lad. Go ahead.

EUGENIA  I’m calm now.

DON ÁLVARO  What did you tell him?

EUGENIA  I told him he was the Apple of my eye.
GALÍNDEZ  Good, by George.

IPÓLITA  That works?
         You know a lot about this game.

EUGENIA  Are you making fun?
         (Aside) I know more about the love
         that sets my soul afire.

VALERIÁN  My turn.

DON ÁLVARO  We’re going clockwise.

VALERIÁN  I went from Ita
         to Illescas, where I stayed
         the night at Icarus’s Inn.

EUGENIA  Come on, forfeit. You’ve made a mistake.

VALERIÁN  How?

EUGENIA  There’s no saint by that name.

DON ÁLVARO  That’s right.

VALERIÁN  Take this garter.

EUGENIA  The glove is fine. I’ll take the glove.

PIERRES  Notre dama is the very diabla.

EUGENIA  Hush, fool.

VALERIÁN  As I was saying,
         the host was Inés.
         And the lady’s name:
         Ipólita.
DON ÁLVARO  Good word play, by God.

VALERIÁN  Surely it cannot surprise you if I want your wife, since mine wants you.

GALÍNDEZ  Nice jab.

DON ÁLVARO  Extremely.

IPÓLITA  Extremely unlikely.

VALERIÁN  But necessary.

EUGENIA  More like witty.

ELVIRA  And cliché.

PIERRES  By Jove.

DON ÁLVARO  You’re doing well.

VALERIÁN  They’re very witty.

DON ÁLVARO  What a game.

IPÓLITA  (Aside) Oh, traitor!  
(Aloud) Let’s hear what’s for dinner.

DON ÁLVARO  Since you are the host, of course you’re worried about it.

EUGENIA  That’s funny.

DON ÁLVARO  (To IPÓLITA) You’re always so very . . .

EUGENIA  Don’t say she’s greedy, instead tell her she’s very . . . faithful.
DON ÁLVARO This is not about the truth.

IPÓLITA What I said was also a joke. What did we have for dinner, Valeríán?

EUGENIA Good. 710

VALERIÁN I’ll continue: first there were iced shrimp. What more should I say? . . . and then some Eel.

DON ÁLVARO You’ve made a mistake. 715

VALERIÁN How?

DON ÁLVARO That’s E, not I.

VALERIÁN Details, details.

DON ÁLVARO Eel starts with E.

VALERIÁN You’re right, although it sounds the same. 720

DON ÁLVARO I’ll let it pass, keep going.

VALERIÁN Wait.

EUGENIA You have to have dessert.

VALERIÁN What would I have for dessert? 725 How about Ice cream.

IPÓLITA I can’t stand it.

GALÍNDEZ I could eat it.
IPÔLITA That’s a fine offer.

EUGENIA Very fine. 730

GALÍNDEZ I’ll eat soft, mushy things. For a mouth with no molars, everything mushy is good.

VALERIÁN I told my lady that she was beautiful as the divine Iris, and that I loved her. 735

EUGENIA You loved her like who?

VALERIÁN Like I Imagine.

ELVIRA How do you explain that?

DON ÁLVARO Oh, lad! 740

GALÍNDEZ It was a good question.

VALERIÁN What I want exists only in my Imagination.

GALÍNDEZ That was a clever answer.

DON ÁLVARO Very well said. 745

EUGENIA My husband is very clever.

ELVIRA Well said, if he doesn’t lie, for you know . . .

DON ÁLVARO Will you be quiet?

ELVIRA . . . in matters of love, the glib usually lie the most. 750
EUGENIA A fool fit for a king.

VALERIÁN You’re right.

IPÓLITA Have you ever been in love? 755

DON ÁLVARO Scoundrel.

PIERRES Nail on the head.

GALÍNDEZ Take a look at the village idiot.

DON ÁLVARO Tell us, my lady.

IPÓLITA I left Çaragoza. 760

ELVIRA What a shame!

IPÓLITA I arrived in Cartagena. My host there was Cain.

DON ÁLVARO Strange name. 765

IPÓLITA I always prefer hosts who can kill the mood.

EUGENIA A man’s a man.

VALERIÁN Good point.

DON ÁLVARO Back to the topic, and a good one at that. 770
And your hostess?

---

9 One of the variant spellings of Zaragoza still in use in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ipólita is bending the rules of the game slightly, although either no one catches it or they simply do not call her on it.
IPÓLITA She was called Catalina. And there was Cosme as my enemy.

DON ÁLVARO That’s my middle name. 775

IPÓLITA Who else but you would I dine with in this world?

DON ÁLVARO Is that why you chose that letter?

IPÓLITA I picked what was left of you, because all I get from you are the leftovers. 780

VALEÍRÍÁN Oh, very good!

GALÍNDEZ Precious.

EUGENIA You’re just perfect.

ELVIRA You’re honest and clever, a recipe for jealousy. 785

DON ÁLVARO Quiet, by God, my life depends on it! If you praise her for being jealous, it will be the death of me. What did you start with? 790

IPÓLITA Crab Cakes.

DON ÁLVARO Good start.

IPÓLITA I’ll go on: when you’re angry, you make a tempest in a teacup, and then call me the crabby one, when I want to ask you something. So I’d like to return the favor. 795
VALERIÁN    Good show.

IPÓLITA    And then Chopped liver.

GALÍNDEZ    This also brings up some history.

IPÓLITA    It’s written on the lines of my face.

VALERIÁN    Isn’t she funny?

EUGENIA    Infinitely.

DON ÁLVARO    May God keep her in his infinite glory.

IPÓLITA    To save you from suffering . . .

ELVIRA    Now that’s malice.

IPÓLITA    . . . and no trick.

DON ÁLVARO    God save you for a long time.

EUGENIA    Do tell, what did you have for dessert?

IPÓLITA    It was Cynicism.

DON ÁLVARO    Good Heavens, isn’t that the truth!
There’s never been a meal at my table without cynical jealousy.

VALERIÁN    Eating is better when you add a little spice.

EUGENIA    What did you say to that suitor?

IPÓLITA    I told him he was as beautiful as Cupid.
DON ÁLVARO    How effusive!
IPÓLITA    Not at all,  
for I love in him  
what he hates most in me.
DON ÁLVARO    And what is that?
IPÓLITA    Character.
EUGENIA    Well, you’re all figured out.
ELVIRA    Quarrels between spouses  
are just the storm before the calm.  
This is what souls long for.
DON ÁLVARO    Antonio,  
that’s just the price of marriage.
IPÓLITA    And a high price to pay.
DON ÁLVARO    Now I’ll start.  
   É is my letter:  
leaving from Écija, this is hard,  
to Emaús.
IPÓLITA    You are in the wrong.
DON ÁLVARO    Am I?
VALERIÁN    She’s right. You arrived at Emaús,  
which is a castle,  
not a town.
IPÓLITA    Luckily,  
I caught you.
DON ÁLVARO    I was in the wrong. Enough.
GALÍNDEZ  A rolling stone gathers no moss.  845
DON ÁLVARO  I’ve been a fool in rolling along.
IPÓLITA  As in so many other things.
DON ÁLVARO  Like you and your mood.
IPÓLITA  Come on, you must forfeit something.
DON ÁLVARO  Everything I have
and you could want is yours.
Name it.
IPÓLITA  Your hat will do.
DON ÁLVARO  The host was
Esteban.  855
EUGENIA  The hostess?
DON ÁLVARO  Wait . . .
Eufemia.
IPÓLITA  And now the lady.
DON ÁLVARO  $ will give me a chance for revenge.  860
VALERIÁN  Just as the $ did for me.
DON ÁLVARO  And yet, I don’t want
what belongs to a friend—
whom I respect—even in jest.
IPÓLITA  God save you for me.  865
DON ÁLVARO  Instead,
I’ll say her name was Elvira.
ELVIRA  (Aside) He remembered my name!  
It’s the least he could do.

EUGENIA  (Aside) He’ll do anything  
not to name me.

IPÓLITA  Elvira! A novel name.  
Is she a foreigner? Do tell.

GALÍNDEZ  A daughter of the Cid\textsuperscript{10}  
was named Elvira.

VALERIÁN  You know so much history.

PIERRES  Beaucoup, he’s always reading!

GALÍNDEZ  Hush, wino.

ELVIRA  Surely you were his squire,  
and that’s why you remember.

GALÍNDEZ  Am I as old as that, boy?

PIERRES  Les dames call you goiter.

EUGENIA  The spitting image!

GALÍNDEZ  My actions speak louder than words.

\textit{Everyone laughs}

IPÓLITA  This is good.  
What did you dine on?

DON ÁLVARO  I can’t think of anything, as a starter,  
Endives, and then . . . I’m fed up with this.

\textsuperscript{10} Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the great hero of Spanish medieval epic.
VALERIÁN You’re losing it now.

DON ÁLVARO Just you wait. 890
We had, yes, I say, an Eggplant, and for dessert, Elderberries.

IPÓLITA I already fear her beauty. 895
How did you describe her?

DON ÁLVARO I praised her Excellence.

IPÓLITA Did you love her?

DON ÁLVARO Extremely.

IPÓLITA You always go to extremes.

DON ÁLVARO I erred but once, 900
it could have been worse.

ELVIRA I’ll speak now, 905
if you’re finished.

DON ÁLVARO Go ahead.

ELVIRA I started out from my Desire.

DON ÁLVARO Instead of from a place?

ELVIRA It had towers and walls, 910
but I abandoned them
on the way to my Damage.

VALERIÁN You speak in allegories.

EUGENIA Very fine ones!

ELVIRA The host was Disappointment, 915
and the hostess was Delay,
a bad woman.

EUGENIA No doubt.

ELVIRA She delays in order to kill any happiness that might come. My lady was Dejection herself—the way the suitor liked it.

IPÓLITA What did they have for dinner?

ELVIRA We will eat in bed, a dash of Discouragement, with a dollop of Desolation, and for dessert, Dissatisfaction, the end of a poor, Despondent Devil.

EUGENIA Isn’t he amusing?

IPÓLITA Extremely.

EUGENIA And to this dangerous dame you said . . . ?

ELVIRA That she looked beautiful as a Damsel in Distress.

VALERIÁN What a witty boy, by God.

ELVIRA Then, on her life and mine, I swore I loved her.

VALERIÁN How?

ELVIRA As Destiny Demands.

DON ÁLVARO He’s a devil.

GALÍNDEZ I’ll start with decorum,
if I may.

DON ÁLVARO Go ahead.

GALÍNDEZ I left Toledo, and from Toledo I came to Toro.

VALERIÁN There’s good wine there.

GALÍNDEZ Isn’t all wine good to a worn-out traveler?

DON ÁLVARO Extremely.

GALÍNDEZ Am I doing all right?

IPÓLITA Very well, keep going. What was the name of the host?

GALÍNDEZ You want me to name the host? Terence.  

EUGENIA What a perfect name for you to say! And the hostess?

GALÍNDEZ Teresa.

ELVIRA She’d be pretty ancient.

GALÍNDEZ Then there was my Trotting dame.  

IPÓLITA Galíndez, what dame is this?

GALÍNDEZ You people will drive me mad!

---

11 Terence (Publius Terentius), one of the most famous Roman playwrights, is known for his clear and direct language.

12 Reference to prostitutes.
This much is clear:
if this dame didn’t trot,
she could never keep up with me.

DON ÁLVARO  Good one.

GALÍNDEZ  And it’s clear,
and I’ll say it clearly,
that those who trot first,
will gallop later.

DON ÁLVARO  That’s good.

GALÍNDEZ  And to my lady,
I gave some Truffled balls.¹³

VALERIÁN  Good to eat.
That’s all you should have given her.

GALÍNDEZ  They paired well,
if you’ll pardon the expression.

DON ÁLVARO  Galíndez!

IPÓLITA  Say, what else did you give?

GALÍNDEZ  We had Tenderloin.

VALERIÁN  Very good.
What were the desserts?

GALÍNDEZ  Turrón.¹⁴

ELVIRA  Were you able to eat it?

GALÍNDEZ  Why do you ask?

---

¹³ In Spanish *turmas* can refer either to testicles or truffles.

¹⁴ *Turrón* or *turrone* is a confection popular in Spain and Italy, often made of almond nougat.
ELVIRA

Well, without teeth, how could you chew?

EUGENIA

Especially the kind from Alicante.¹⁵

GALÍNDEZ

This lad gets into everything.

ELVIRA

Why not, old man?

GALÍNDEZ

I’ll give you . . .

VALERIÁN

Forget him, and keep going.

What did you say to your lady?

GALÍNDEZ

That she was beautiful . . . What a moment! What shall I say, when my thoughts go every which way? I’ll say that . . .

ELVIRA

That’s not a bad solution. Clearly it helps you.

You keep hitting yourself on the head, and I’ll take a stick to you.

GALÍNDEZ

How can I come up with anything when this rascal keeps interrupting?

DON ÁLVARO

Leave it for now, and afterwards, I’ll have him whipped for you.

GALÍNDEZ

She was pretty, like . . .

I can’t think of the word . . .

like . . . oh, the devil take it . . .

like a Turk!

VALERIÁN

Nice!

¹⁵ City in southern Valencia which continues to be famous for its turrón, which is especially hard.
DON ÁLVARO That’s good!

EUGENIA How do you love her?

GALÍNDEZ I adore her like . . .
   What’s this, is there more?  1010
   Like a Tigress.

IPÓLITA Like a tigress?
   What nonsense!

GALÍNDEZ They have a certain reputation.

EUGENIA How so?  1015

GALÍNDEZ There is no lady
   who does not become fierce
   when a man falls for her.
   And so what I’m telling her
   is that I love her more than myself.  1020

DON ÁLVARO Good argument.

VALERIÁN And proven.
   —Ah, Pierres! Are you asleep, gabacho?

PIERRES My noggin hurts.

VALERIÁN You’re drunk.  1025

PIERRES Not from any vino you gave me.

VALERIÁN What letter did you have?

PIERRES R.

VALERIÁN Have you figured out the game?
PIERRES: Yes.

VALERÍÁN: Well then, go ahead, start.

PIERRES: I left from who knows where, I left from, um, Roussillon.

DON ÁLVARO: Where did you go?

PIERRES: To Ruzafa.\(^{16}\)

GALÍNDEZ: How well the jughead speaks!

PIERRES: Très bien, better than the old fart.

ELVIRA: Enough of that.

EUGENIA: The host, what was his name?

PIERRES: How? Roland.\(^{1040}\)

ELVIRA: Is he French?

PIERRES: Sans sainthood.\(^{17}\)

VALERÍÁN: A famous name at that.

PIERRES: Of course!

IPÓLITA: And the hostess, what was her name?

PIERRES: I don’t know, mon dieu. Her name was Roma.

\(^{16}\) A neighborhood in the city of Valencia.

\(^{17}\) A reference to the *Song of Roland*, which for the French functions as an epic story of Christian knights fighting the Moorish invasion. On the Spanish side, the same episode involves the hero Bernardo del Carpio allying with the Moors to defend Spain from the French.
ELVIRA Did she have a Roman nose?¹⁸

EUGENIA Good Lord!

VALERIÁN What a drunk.

GALÍNDEZ He should forfeit something.

DON ÁLVARO This one plays to make mistakes.

EUGENIA What was the lady’s name, Pierres?

PIERRES Oh, j’adore!
I’m embarrassed, but I’ll say it.

IPÓLITA What was her name?

PIERRES Rafela.

IPÓLITA My maid’s name!

DON ÁLVARO Even this drunk knew which letter to pick?

EUGENIA Love reaches all.

VALERIÁN Love teaches all.
And what did you eat? Tell us.

PIERRES Rue.

DON ÁLVARO Good food.

IPÓLITA Funny.
And then?

¹⁸ This reference jokes with the association of Rome with prostitution, where the “Roman nose” was a term for snub noses or complete loss of the nose due to syphilis.
PIERRES: I’m not sure what to say.

GALÍNDEZ: Good Lord, he’s sweating.

VALERIÁN: He can’t put two and two together. See how he frets.

GALÍNDEZ: Don’t rattle him.

PIERRES: No, mon dieu.

ELVIRA: Well, what?

PIERRES: A Rat.

VALERIÁN: A rat? Truly you’re drunk! And for dessert?

PIERRES: Je ne sais pas. I say, Radishes.

GALÍNDEZ: Very good.

ELVIRA: You eat it, you share it.

EUGENIA: Now tell us how pretty your lady was.

GALÍNDEZ: And call on Cupid.

PIERRES: Like a Rabbit.

IPÓLITA: Of course.

EUGENIA: How silly.

VALERIÁN: Now more nonsense. How did you love her?
PIERRES  Like Regurgitation.

DON ÁLVARO  A release?

ELVIRA  Of radishes and wine.

VALERIÁN  It sounds like a good meal.

IPÓLITA  We’ve certainly enjoyed it.

EUGENIA  Well, the game is over, we must receive our penance.

IPÓLITA  Who will give it out?

EUGENIA  I say it should be you.

IPÓLITA  Me, I couldn’t.

VALERIÁN  Whoever caught the mistake, decides the punishment.

DON ÁLVARO  Good idea.

EUGENIA  Well, I was first to make a mistake. I want to pay the first penalty.

VALERIÁN  I’ll give you your penalty: you’ll say sweet nothings to Don Álvaro at once, since you chose him as the suitor in your story.

EUGENIA  You’re so amusing.

VALERIÁN  That’s your penalty.
EUGENIA | Ipólita can teach me, and I’ll learn from her.  
IPÓLITA | Given this penalty I command that he scorn you.  
GALÍNDEZ | That’s the spirit.  
DON ÁLVARO | That’s fair. I accept.  
EUGENIA | Do I really have to do this?  
VALERIÁN | On your knees, Eugenia.  
EUGENIA | On my knees? My scornful lord, don’t look like that, when I say you’re as beautiful as the sky above.  
DON ÁLVARO | What’s this you say?  
VALERIÁN | Not bad.  
DON ÁLVARO | I won’t listen to a word of it.  
IPÓLITA | He’s so good at scorn.  
EUGENIA | Rejection stokes my flame. Don’t be so cruel. Let me return to my senses. Look at me, my darling, I’m yours, and I’d die for you. There’s no call for such scorn.  
DON ÁLVARO | And I am, as is right, a friend to my desires, but loyal to my friend.
EUGENIA Will that do, judge?

VALERIÁN Anyone would think this has happened before. Such repartee seems to have been rehearsed.

IPÓLITA Doña Eugenia was something to see.

DON ÁLVARO This is true.

IPÓLITA Even in jest, it’s hard to believe you could be loyal.

DON ÁLVARO If all women belonged to my friend, I wouldn’t offend you with any of them.

EUGENIA (Aside) Here’s my chance to get what I want. I will have my revenge, since this is the day of reckoning. (Aloud) Now Valerián, you say sweet nothings to Ipólita. Here, take your glove.

DON ÁLVARO Are you taking vengeance on me, too?

IPÓLITA Don’t think that I won’t get you.

VALERIÁN (To DON ÁLVARO) I know I do you wrong.

DON ÁLVARO Not to worry. It’s just a game.

VALERIÁN (Aside) My heart is all aflame, like my immortal shame. (Aloud) I say, lady, that I love you—no, truly, I adore you, I weep for you and die for you, and you should not scorn me,
since it’s not your penalty.

**IPÓLITA**

What can be more powerful in a noble breast
than the pleasure it seeks?
Do I not have a point,
Don Álvaro?

**DON ÁLVARO**

You do.

**VALERIÁN**

My everything,
you know I’m yours.
Make room for me in your heart:
you’re a tigress and an angel,
so cruel and yet so beautiful.

**IPÓLITA**

And I’m faithful
to the tips of my toes.
For this to work,
you would have to be my husband and
I would have to be your wife,
since you love me
and she loves him.

**GALÍNDEZ**

*(Aside)* Well said, by Saint Michael.

**VALERIÁN**

She’s clever.

**IPÓLITA**

And you’re a cheat.

**VALERIÁN**

Have I done my penance?

**EUGENIA**

Amazingly.
It seemed well rehearsed.

**VALERIÁN**

Yes and no.
What can be better for our friendship
than to speak plainly?

**ELVIRA**

*(Aside)* These lines stink of truth.
EUGENIA Are there no more penalties?

IPOLITA I don’t think so. Anyone else who made a mistake will just have to live with themselves.

EUGENIA Ipólita didn’t make a mistake, so she has no need of judgement.

IPOLITA My heart is like a seer, so I rarely get things wrong.

DON ÁLVARO Yet you rarely see beyond your jealousy. Anyway, it’s late.

IPÓLITA I’d hardly noticed.

DON ÁLVARO Bring candles.

EUGENIA We should go now, and you get some rest.

She gets up

EUGENIA I’m thinking of you too, my lady.

IPÓLITA What do you mean by that?

EUGENIA Nothing.

IPÓLITA Do you really wish to go?

EUGENIA The sooner we leave,
the sooner we can return and bother you again.

IPÓLITA    I enjoy your visits and look forward to them.  

VALERIÁN   Pierres, come down,  
             and tell the driver to bring the coach around to the door. 

DON ÁLVARO  We’ll talk tomorrow? 

VALERIÁN   Whenever you want. 

DON ÁLVARO  It certainly is late. 

VALERIÁN   (Aside) Oh, most beautiful image! 

DON ÁLVARO  Bring lights! 

EUGENIA    (Aside) Oh, blind love! 

ELVIRA     Lights, lights! 

GALÍNDEZ   Here are the torches. 

Enter ELVIRA, and enter GALÍNDEZ with torches and distributes them 

VALERIÁN   Whoever wants can come along  
             and light them from this flame. 

EUGENIA    Stay here. 

IPÓLITA    That would not do at all. 

EUGENIA    You’re already too gracious. 

IPÓLITA    I insist.  
           I’ll see you to the stairs. 

ACT II

SCENE 1

*In VALERIÁN’s bedroom*

*Enter VALERIÁN, in nightgowns, washing his hands: one PAGE gives him water and another PAGE gives him a towel*

VALERIÁN

What a night!

Bring me water right away.

This fire burning in me,
inflamed by my tears, is driving me insane.

I didn’t want to wake up,

but I haven’t been able to sleep—
it’s impossible to live in this state

and not kill myself.

This letter I hold here,

which this night has helped me imagine,

lays out my cares,

and claims my ultimate happiness.

I explain in verse

my sorrow and pain.

Aren’t lovers always poets?

Melancholy and love

have the same effect,

and so love and poetry

are the business of the wise.

I understand completely

why the world calls lovers fools,

but what part of genius

doesn’t have a touch of madness?

How can I send these lines?

And yet, if they don’t soon meet their audience,

there will have been little joy

in writing them at all.

PAGES offer VALERIÁN the water and while he’s washing, enter ELVIRA
ELVIRA  
I’ll hide the truth a thousand times  
to keep up these tricks:  
that Galíndez  
is such a fawning old fool.  
I cannot stop laughing  
over this letter he gave me  
for his lady love.  
I’m a go-between for such a crazy old fool!  
Oh, love! Your tyrannical laws,  
your fire, your drive:  
snow does not make you cold,  
nor grey hair make you old.  

1270

1275

1280

1285

The PAGES serving him leave

ELVIRA (Aside) What does he want from me?

VALERIÁN (Aside) He could well do it . . .  
but I fear harm.

ELVIRA (Aside) If only he would set my mind at ease . . .

VALERIÁN Well, Antonio,  
how are things going for you here?
ELVIRA Very well. 
With so much kindness, 
who wouldn’t be doing well?  

1295

VALERIÁN And where are you from?

ELVIRA Zaragoza.

VALERIÁN That must be why you’re so clever. 
In truth, it’s paradise 
for those who live there.

1300

ELVIRA There are clever men there, 
though it hasn’t rubbed off on me.

VALERIÁN They must be very clever 
if they are anything like you.

ELVIRA You are too kind.

1305

VALERIÁN I only tell the truth.

ELVIRA (Aside) What nerve! 
He holds me back and flatters me— 
he wants something from me. 
(Aloud) My lord I’m here to serve.

1310

VALERIÁN God save you, that’s what I wanted to hear.

ELVIRA (Aside) If I give him some rope, 
he’ll hang himself. 
(Aloud) Ask away. 
Nothing would please me more than to serve you.

1315

VALERIÁN I see that you return my good wishes.

ELVIRA I’m at your service, have no fear. 
I can see in your face . . .
VALERIÁN  

Ay, Antonio!

ELVIRA  

(Aside)  Now I swear  
that my suspicions were true.  
(Aloud)  Have no doubt, there is nothing  
I wouldn’t do for you.

VALERIÁN  

Your lady, Antonio, isn’t she dashing?  
Isn’t she beautiful?

ELVIRA  

She perfumes  
the ground as she walks.  
A man might be forgiven  
for being taken by her.

VALERIÁN  

Well then, Antonio . . .

ELVIRA  

My lord.

VALERIÁN  

Would you, listen, tell me, if you want . . .

ELVIRA  

(Aside) Oh, Love, what a child you are!  
How you babble on!  
(To VALERIÁN) Don’t worry.

VALERIÁN  

I’m crazy,  
help me, Antonio, before I lose my mind . . .  
I confess my sinful desire to you.  
I could never pay you enough  
for fanning the flames.  
What do you say, Antonio?

ELVIRA  

I say  
I am your slave.

VALERIÁN  

And friend to my hopes  
and dreams  
if you can make them come true.
ELVIRA  What shall I do
to make it happen?

VALERIÁN  Give this note
to your lady . . .
Hush now, my wife is coming.

Enter EUGENIA

EUGENIA  A secret and without me?

VALERIÁN  Listen . . .

EUGENIA  So you’ve found a new playmate.

VALERIÁN  . . . my lady, I swear on your life,
what I was saying . . .

EUGENIA  Shush,
now I’ll find out
what you’ve been dreaming of.

VALERIÁN  So little trust
from the one whom I adore.

ELVIRA  (Aside) This is good.

VALERIÁN  Listen to me, I beg you.

EUGENIA  Let me be.

VALERIÁN  So angry, my darling?
Why the daggers from your eyes?

EUGENIA  Could you stop annoying me?

VALERIÁN  Yes.
EUGENIA Then leave. I want to ask this page what's been going on. 1370

VALERIÁN I'll be going then.

ELVIRA (Aside) This husband is fit to be a woman.

VALERIÁN Antonio! . . .

He makes signs for ELVIRA to keep quiet

ELVIRA (Aside) What a dumb-show! 1375

VALERIÁN (To ELVIRA) Tell the truth.

ELVIRA This is so childish.

VALERIÁN (Aside) My yearning could make stones weep.

Exit VALERIÁN

SCENE 2

Sitting room in VALERIÁN and EUGENIA's house

ELVIRA (Aside) What shall I say? 1380

EUGENIA The audacity!

ELVIRA My lady, don't worry.

EUGENIA Oh Antonio, you've got it all wrong! It wasn't jealousy, good heavens! How could I be jealous of a husband I retain,
but have no love for, only disdain.  
And what I’ve suffered here 
is due to this:  
the husband who’s bound to me 
has never had my love.  
Women want men 
who are not so easily moved, 
who are what they seem 
in thought, word, and deed.  
It’s inevitable that you will 
come to detest the one 
you’re stuck with for life, 
especially if he acts like a woman.  
I trust you, 
and hope you can find a cure for my woes.  
I’m dying to have a husband 
who is the very opposite of mine.  
I want . . .  

ELVIRA  
I know who: my lord.  

EUGENIA  
Oh, Antonio! I cry for him.  
I adore his daring, 
his self-confidence and bravado, 
a tireless man about town,  
a hungry wolf, 
loving all and keeping none, 
subjecting both fury and reason 
to his sword alone, 
punching one  
and slashing the other.  
And yet, how honorable he has been 
in the face of my advances:  
I never saw him yield, 
even when I begged him.  
This consumes me—  
he is just my type.  
And don’t be surprised—  
oh, Antonio!—
that these men drive a woman crazy. These are men to love, these, men to adore: they heat up the senses and set a woman on fire. And so, it would be a triumph to hand him the crown, to make myself his prize. I adore his mind, believe everything he says, and am constantly inspired to drink him in. Unlike my beautiful Narcissus there, so very like a nymph, whom I spook with my voice, and trample with my feet. When, at any moment, he fears I’ll get upset, as if the knots on my belt were a whip to strike him with. Heaven knows I cannot love him, when I see him worship the ground I walk on, not out of love, but out of fear.

ELVIRA (Aside) Why would she tell me all this! Jealousy consumes me.

EUGENIA Lend me your hand, Antonio, as if you were my friend.

ELVIRA What can I do for you?

EUGENIA Give him this letter.

ELVIRA I am at your service. (Aside) A nice occupation!
This one makes three.\footnote{Elvira refers here to the love letters she has received from other characters: Galíndez to a servant girl, Valerián to Ipólita, Eugenia to Don Álvaro.}

**EUGENIA**

And if you are shocked
I tell you all this,
forgive me,
and consider my reasons.
Your master has many good parts . . .

**ELVIRA**

I’m at your service.
Tell me what you need.
\textit{(Aside)} If only you knew how well I know those parts.

**EUGENIA**

By heaven, Antonio,
I’ll do anything for you,
as long as you make him love me.

**ELVIRA**

\textit{(Aside)} Oh, I’m burning up!
\textit{(To EUGENIA)} Trust me.
\textit{(Aside)} I must know more!
\textit{(To EUGENIA)} I’m here to serve you.
First, tell me . . .

**EUGENIA**

What do you want to know?

**ELVIRA**

I should probably know where your love stands.

**EUGENIA**

It doesn’t.
He can’t stand me,
and you can see it on my face.

**ELVIRA**

Does he scorn you then?

**EUGENIA**

It will make me lose my mind.
ELVIRA  Enough said.  1485
     (Aside) With this, you’ve calmed my fear.
     (Aloud) Ah, here comes my lord Don Álvaro.
     (Aside) I can’t wait to see her disappointment.

EUGENIA  Speak of the devil!  1490
     Love has conjured him!

Enter DON ÁLVARO

     Will you give him the letter now?

ELVIRA  It’s better if you talk to him.

EUGENIA  So afraid and so in love!

SCENE 3

DON ÁLVARO  I kiss your hand, my lady.  1495
       Antonio . . .

EUGENIA  He’s a gem,
       and very tactful, for sure.

DON ÁLVARO  . . . what are you doing here?

ELVIRA  I’ve struck gold,
       a treasure trove, 
       and there’s no reason
       you shouldn’t get a share.

DON ÁLVARO  And have I earned it?

ELVIRA  If you want it, it’s yours.  1505

DON ÁLVARO  Is that so? And where is it?
EUGENIA In my will.

DON ÁLVARO Pardon me, my lady?

EUGENIA Wait, don’t fan my fire.

DON ÁLVARO I came to talk to Valerián.

EUGENIA You must first hear me out. Antonio will bear witness to the pain that’s killing me.

DON ÁLVARO A fine witness.

EUGENIA I confided in him, tired of your scorn.

DON ÁLVARO What a great confidant you have! (Aside) If you only knew what you’ve done!

ELVIRA My lord, be patient and hear her out.

DON ÁLVARO Quiet, lad, don’t you know I am an honorable man?

EUGENIA Be courteous.

DON ÁLVARO Rudeness is better in things related to love: there’s a fine line between courtliness and betrayal.

EUGENIA I’m about to kill myself, and about to kill you.
DON ÁLVARO  You’re being crazy.

EUGENIA  Are you leaving me? Are you going?

DON ÁLVARO  I am leaving you. I am going.  

EUGENIA  You scorn me?

DON ÁLVARO  That’s not true.

EUGENIA  Don’t you know me?
Aren’t you worried that I’ll shout
that it was you who killed me?

ELVIRA (Aside) What a bold woman!

EUGENIA  I’ve seen your disdain for me,
and I’m a woman . . .
I’d sacrifice my soul to take revenge.

DON ÁLVARO (Aside) Can this be possible?
I begin to fear her.

EUGENIA  You’ll see more than this:
things will get worse,
the tighter the choke on my desire.
Won’t you surrender to me, oh my enemy?

DON ÁLVARO  I can’t.

EUGENIA  Then kill me.

DON ÁLVARO  I don’t want that either.
Can’t you see I’m your husband’s friend?
And even if I weren’t,
I could never love you,
for I see you are a woman
who begs for love.
Stop already, and leave me be.

ELVIRA (Aside) Ay, what an affront to all women!

EUGENIA Horrible man, who will neither love me nor kill me. Go ahead, loathe my advances, follow your heart, but be careful, for I will kill you, even if it costs me my life. I will change my tactics, and now my hope will empower revenge. Desire only goes so far. I want to kill you, you worm. Beware my wrath! Skilled as any swordsman, I’ll strike the first blow.

ELVIRA My lady is coming.

EUGENIA Oh God!

SCENE 4

_Sitting room in VALERÍÁN and EUGENIA’s home_

IPÓLITA and GALÍNDEZ enter from outside, and VALERÍÁN comes in from another room, each going to their respective spouse

IPÓLITA Where are you going?

VALERÍÁN My lady!

DON ÁLVARO (To VALERÍÁN) I was just coming to greet you.

ELVIRA What a way for you two to meet!
VALERIÁN  What’s wrong?

EUGENIA  Come with me.
         I’m beside myself!

VALERIÁN  Don’t cry.

EUGENIA  You can always trust in treacherous friends.

VALERIÁN  (Aside) If you only knew I am the treacherous one.

Exeunt VALERIÁN and EUGENIA

IPÓLITA  Was she so angry with you
         that she left without a word?

DON ÁLVARO She must be angry at her husband.

IPÓLITA  I was deaf, but I’m not blind.
         I didn’t hear what was said,
         but my eyes have seen
         the reason for her anger.
         It’s written all over your face.

DON ÁLVARO What do you mean?

IPÓLITA  Is it not telling,
         to see her like that,
         flushed as she walked away from you,
         and find you looking the same?

DON ÁLVARO Interesting theory, good Lord.

IPÓLITA  Haven’t I seen enough
         to figure out
         that you’ve quarreled with her?

DON ÁLVARO For the love of God, you’re mistaken.
         Give up this insanity.
IPÓLITA I have good reason for my suspicions, ingrained in my very soul from being burned before.

DON ÁLVARO Your suspicions are unfounded. You’re always pulling them out of thin air.

IPÓLITA My heart is true.

DON ÁLVARO You’re wearing on me.

IPÓLITA Oh, woe is me!

DON ÁLVARO Don’t you know I’ve never looked elsewhere?

ELVIRA (Aside) Her jealousies ignite my own.

DON ÁLVARO So much spite!

IPÓLITA So much hurt!

ELVIRA (Aside) It’s a bitter pill to love a married man.

IPÓLITA My soul is burning.

DON ÁLVARO Where are you going? What are you going to do?

IPÓLITA I’m going to cry my misfortunes in a corner of your house.

DON ÁLVARO You’re crying again?

IPÓLITA Don’t be surprised. You’re the one who wants it this way.

DON ÁLVARO You women cry
as often as men spit.
Where are you off to?

IPÓLITA
My deep pain
will take me to my grave.

DON ÁLVARO
What are you saying?
Must you flaunt
your crazy tantrums?
Go ahead, make your visit.

IPÓLITA
I don’t want to, you’ve made me too upset.

DON ÁLVARO
For the love of . . .

IPÓLITA
Angry already?

DON ÁLVARO
Go now.

IPÓLITA
I’ll go.

DON ÁLVARO
What I say goes.

IPÓLITA
And that’s very fair.

DON ÁLVARO
Be sensible.

IPÓLITA
How can I?

DON ÁLVARO
Am I the husband or the wife?

GALÍNDEZ
(Aside) I always
hold my tongue
during these spats.

IPÓLITA
How could anyone stand so many insults?

Exit IPÓLITA and GALÍNDEZ through the same door as EUGENIA and VALERIÁN, leaving
DON ÁLVARO and ELVIRA alone
SCENE 5

ELVIRA  Don Álvaro, what is all this?
       Were you imitating cruel Bireno?²⁰
       What was the purpose of deceiving me?
       What misfortunes have you led me to?
       Are you trying to avenge me
       for resisting your first advances?
       Couldn’t you have avoided
       dashing what little hope I had?
       Why have you brought me here, my lord?
       One woman has tried to seduce you,
       and the other has made me
       as jealous as she always feels.
       I wouldn’t cry like this
       if I didn’t care for you.

DON ÁLVARO  Now you’re jealous,
            and I’m the target.

ELVIRA   You’re right about that.

DON ÁLVARO  Oh, my Elvira!

ELVIRA   And your poor wife, how sad!
       You are kindest to her
       when she is most jealous.

DON ÁLVARO  For the love of God, you’re mistaken.
       Give up this insanity.
       What a piercing arrow
       you’ve plunged right through me!

ELVIRA   I want to go home,
       although I might weep for you there.

²⁰ In Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso, Olympia is cruelly abandoned by her husband, Bireno.
DON ÁLVARO  I’m losing my patience,  
when what I need is your comfort.  
Why are you being so dramatic?  
What did I do to you? How dare you!  
If one woman begged for my affection,  
and another was jealous,  
I sent one away,  
and the other I ignored.  
What do you want from me?  
Where did I go wrong?

ELVIRA  What I saw offended me.  
After all, aren’t you married?

DON ÁLVARO  I’m drowning in women’s tears.  
What should I do?  
Kill my own wife  
to put your mind at ease?  
Don’t you see how insufferable she is,  
how detestable I find her . . .  
at one time I cared for her,  
but now I can’t stand her.  
So much jealousy accrued  
with so much constant spite!  
She’s tried to restrain  
my God-given free will.  
With loathing I broke free  
of her spell and her charm,  
and if you do the same,  
I will break from you, too.  
Elvira, if my affections  
keep you awake at night,  
and you’re not tired of me yet,  
ask me for anything:  
the fish in the sea,  
the birds in the sky,  
show me the finest ones,  
and I’ll gladly get them for you.
For when they take flight,  
I will be close behind.  
And if the fish don’t come,  
I’ll grab my rod,  
and fish for them myself:  
a feat greater than killing  
the highest noble in Spain.  
And if he were the king,  
or the biggest fool,  
I would make sure that he bends  
to your wish and your rule.  
Ask for the loveliest stars,  
and they will be at your command,  
although with your eyes  
you have no need of them.  
If you require Midas’s treasures,  
I will get them,  
though I have nothing like them,  
because your asking is enough.  
I would become the thieving Cacus,\(^{21}\)  
and steal them just for you.  
But don’t be jealous,  
don’t start whining,  
or come crying to me.  
If those terms will suit,  
then I’m your slave.  
And now I leave you,  
so you can think it all through.  
I’m going out.  
I need the wide open fields.  
I need air.  
This house is suffocating,  
like a hostile jail.

ELVIRA  
Your free spirit captivates me,  
your audacity consumes me.  
I will not lose you,

---

\(^{21}\) In Roman mythology, Cacus is a giant associated with thievery.
even if it means my death. 1750

DON ÁLVARO Freedom has no price.

Exit DON ÁLVARO

ELVIRA I will avenge, if I can, my disappearing hopes. To get revenge on the lot of them, I shall hatch a plot, and they will all feel the sorrows that weigh on me, and the fire that burns me will burn others, too. Here’s Pierres, who has come a little too late to comfort me.

SCENE 6

Enter PIERRES

ELVIRA Oh, good Pierres!

PIERRES Mon dieu save you: friend of yours, Antonio, I am, oui.

ELVIRA And I yours. 1765

PIERRES You could do to me un favor gigantique?

ELVIRA What is it, Pierres? What can I do for you?

PIERRES Listen, I have to tell you something: I’m in love un chic. 1770

ELVIRA What is un chic?
PIERRES  A bit.

ELVIRA  You’re a bit in love, and very crazy.

PIERRES  Yes, this letter, please to take, Antonio, to my mademoiselle, my bon amic.

ELVIRA  Who is this lady? What’s her name?

PIERRES  Her name is Rafela.

ELVIRA  Very well, Rafaela. I’ll help. And what will I get?

PIERRES  We’ll drink the vino together.

ELVIRA  Now I’ve got a full quartet of letters. And here come the ladies. I am happy to help you, good Pierres.

PIERRES  And I, Antonio, will forever be a bon friend et companion.

Exit PIERRES

SCENE 7

Enter VALERIÁN, EUGENIA, IPÓLITA and GALÍNDEZ

22 The variations in the name of the servant girl Pierres is enamored with are different, just another way the text marks Pierres’ linguistic idiosyncracies.
VALERIÁN I will come with you, my lady.

IPÓLITA I will not allow it.

EUGENIA I have more to tell you. 1795

IPÓLITA At my house then.

EUGENIA Soon then.

VALERIÁN Wouldn’t you like me to come with you?

IPÓLITA No I would not, and it is wrong of you to ask. 1800

GALÍNDEZ You have here a gentlemanly and honorable squire, grey-haired, bespectacled, who offers you his arm, instead of one about to devour you with his eyes. I don’t like his look. 1805

IPÓLITA Antonio, come with me.

ELVIRA At your service, here I come. 1810

EUGENIA Hush, Antonio.

ELVIRA (Aside) You have good reason to be suspicious, since you insist on being so foolish. What mischief I can do with these four notes! 1815

Exeunt ELVIRA, IPÓLITA, and GALÍNDEZ, leaving VALERIÁN and EUGENIA alone

VALERIÁN Tell me again,
though it makes my blood boil.

EUGENIA  Is it so hard  
for you to understand?

VALERIÁN  This is all Ipólita’s fault.  

EUGENIA  I’ll tell you again,  
that your friend is not your friend:  
he wants to dishonor you.

VALERIÁN  Don Álvaro?

EUGENIA  What, is he a saint?  

VALERIÁN  He is trying to seduce you?

EUGENIA  And by force, the traitor!  
What? You’re surprised?

VALERIÁN  And shocked, shocked!

EUGENIA  Why do you keep asking me?  
Don’t you think  
it has come time  
to sharpen your dagger and sword  
to defend our honor?  
Does your doubt make you anxious?  
Instead of arguing with me here,  
shouldn’t you let your gun  
do the talking?

VALERIÁN crosses himself  

That would be the right way to go, and not . . .  
Why are you making all those crosses?  
Make a cross on his back,  
like the ones on your chest.
Who can wait around
for your nonchalance to turn to action?
Tell me to do what Don Álvaro wants.
Go ahead,
keep searching your heavy heart for an answer.
What woman could feel passion
for a man like this,
a woman despite his beard?

_Exit EUGENIA_

VALERIÁN  What purpose could Don Álvaro have in his hopes?
Is it to insult me,
or is it revenge
for him to seduce my wife?
Did he know I meant to cuckold him?
Whatever the reason,
now that I know of his betrayal,
I have an excuse for mine.
In part, I am happy
that I am not the only traitor,
although this is an insult
that consumes my thoughts.
It all comes down to this:
to take my revenge,
I must guard my house,
while I dishonor his own
I will rekindle my hopes,
since what was once betrayal
is now only fair,
and what was once just for pleasure,
is now for revenge, too.

_Exit VALERIÁN_

SCENE 8

_Room in IPÓLITA and DON ÁLVARO’s house_
Enter IPÓLITA, GALÍNDEZ and ELVIRA

IPÓLITA  Galíndez, you have not been discreet.

GALÍNDEZ  Rage beats discretion.

IPÓLITA  You slapped him for no reason.

ELVIRA  Look where fate has brought me!

GALÍNDEZ  Being treated like an old fool is nothing? And in the street he treats me like a monkey. Curse him!

IPÓLITA  I will consider this offense, which occurred in my presence, playful roughhousing just this once. Although for me, your old age absolves you.

GALÍNDEZ  That’s no less an insult!

IPÓLITA  Tread carefully now, Galíndez.

ELVIRA  He’s so old, there’s no way he’ll get all the way to Rome: he will repent right here, and get his absolution.

GALÍNDEZ  Good for nothing busybody.

ELVIRA  You old fart, doesn’t your conscience trouble you?

GALÍNDEZ  By Saint Peter!
IPÓLITA  Quiet Antonio!  
          Galíndez!

GALÍNDEZ  Good show.  
          One of us is going to be taken by the devil. 
          Is it right that some bully, 
          without shame or fear, 
          urchin that he is,  
          dancing around on a bench, 
          has taken it as his duty 
          to mock me 
          1905  
          and my life? 
          He exhausts my patience, 
          and makes me lose my good sense. 
          A man with my reputation would never run, 
          even when chased by a bull, 
          1910 
          but walk away slowly  
          and carefully, 
          and take out his sword 
          only if need be. 

IPÓLITA  What a speech.  
          He’s crazy.  

GALÍNDEZ  And with that I’m off to sleep. 

Exit GALÍNDEZ

SCENE 9

Room in IPÓLITA and DON ÁLVARO’s house

ELVIRA  I swear that you will pay.  
          With your slow and feeble pace, 
          you won’t escape.  
          1920 

IPÓLITA  Listen, Antonio.
ELVIRA        What is it?

IPÓLITA     I take it you witnessed my tears, which would soften
the hardest stone.
You have seen me
at my worst.

ELVIRA        I have.

IPÓLITA     Wait.

ELVIRA        And even if I hadn’t, your eyes would tell me of your pain.

IPÓLITA     Well then, Antonio, you know well the truth I suspect.
Confide in me, I will hide it deep inside, under a thousand locks and keys.
Look at the misery I live in, which only you can relieve.

ELVIRA        (Aside) Once again, I will cast you in the fire that consumes me.

IPÓLITA     Surely you know, and can tell me if my greatest pain is true.
Even if the truth hurts, suspicion is always worse.
Does Don Álvaro burn for Doña Eugenia?
Say yes.
I wouldn’t have believed it from her, but I will believe it from you.

ELVIRA        She told you that?

IPÓLITA    Without prompting, she flung a spark from her lips
into my breast
My heart was already kindled with suspicion:
her words set me afire with jealousy.

ELVIRA (Aside) Can I possibly be seeing
a betrayal such as this? 1955

IPÓLITA Antonio, I am burning up.

ELVIRA (Aside) What will it take to convince you of the truth?
Women are wicked,
and I, no less so. 1960

IPÓLITA Tell me, Antonio.
My suspicions squeeze the breath from me
like a noose around my neck.
I wish to know nothing,
and yet want you to tell me. 1965

ELVIRA I do not wish to hurt you.
(Aside) God, what a web I’ll weave!
(To IPÓLITA) If it will relieve you, my lady,
to know the truth,
this note should do that,
since it was written for Eugenia.
But you must return it to me. 1970

IPÓLITA You can take it back,
once whatever is in the note
leaves me for dead. 1975
These are verses, his verses,
and my clear misfortune.

ELVIRA (Aside) Wasn’t it a good trick
to give Ipólita the note meant for her,
and to tell her that her husband
sent it to Doña Eugenia? 1980

IPÓLITA So heartless!
ELVIRA  
(Aside) I will make her husband
into her worst enemy,
for my lover’s wife must be my foe.
God will forgive me
for attempting this.
My own peace will be born
of battles between these two.
(To IPÓLITA) Give me the note, my lord,
Don Álvaro is coming.

1985

IPÓLITA He has seen me with it, the traitor!

ELVIRA My lady, you will get me killed.

IPÓLITA I will keep my word,
and keep this secret to myself.

1995

ELVIRA I need to go.
I am sick with worry.  

23

SCENE 10

Enter DON ÁLVARO

DON ÁLVARO What’s wrong? Something is wrong.
What is that paper you’re holding?
Why have you hidden it?

2000

IPÓLITA I am ashamed on your behalf,
because you have no shame.

DON ÁLVARO What is this? This is strange.
It must mean something, by God,
this sudden disrespect,

2005

23 Elvira says this aloud, and in the Spanish slips up by referring to herself in the feminine. She also remains on stage during the next scene, although she has no lines.
and such distance.
This trembling with anger,
this uneasiness,
tears of fire,
changing color,
from pale to yellow
and then to bright red . . .
I will find out what is wrong with you,
even if you try to hide it.
Take out that note.
Give it to me now!

IPÓLITA
Listen.

DON ÁLVARO
Out with it.

IPÓLITA
Your wickedness,
and my misfortune are both written here.
Until now I have only wept
at your wanton ways,
but now I weep to know
that you’ve abandoned all honor.
You want to seduce her,
your friend’s wife,
and you wrote these things to her.

DON ÁLVARO
What are you saying?
Who told you that?

IPÓLITA
I am saying it.
I am saying that you are a traitor.

DON ÁLVARO
Silence, foolish woman.

IPÓLITA
Unhappy silence.

DON ÁLVARO
I want to pierce you to the soul
when you attack my honor like this.
I would never be capable of such an offense,
even in my imagination!
Now, what’s in this letter?

IPÓLITA

(Aside) What torture this is!

DON ÁLVARO

Unyielding suspicion!
(Reading) “I lay awake all night, my lady, and only when Apollo began to fasten his horses to the sun did I fall asleep, dreaming that your love and desire took you from your husband to my waiting arms. But I was awoken by the cold reality of unrequited love, my nemesis, which will not allow our union, not even in dreams. Later, my soul was consumed in jealousy’s cruel flames, seeing that my dreams are his reality. Enjoy his homecoming, so long awaited and desired. Alas, misfortune keeps from me what it grants him as your husband.” Here the note ends. This pierces me to the soul. And you think this is my hand? These verses, do they sound like me? Do I write such bad verses, and in such a fine hand?

IPÓLITA

Dear God, a miracle!

DON ÁLVARO

I am shaking with anger. If the homecoming is mine, as it states here, then this note was meant for you.
IPÓLITA Then I have been deceived.

DON ÁLVARO Yes, this is the handwriting of a traitor, whom I believed to be loyal: it is Valerián’s. 2075

IPÓLITA Can it be? I am not to blame, my lord.

DON ÁLVARO How can this love note be mine when everything in it is his? Who has given you this note? Have you no answer? 2080

IPÓLITA Only my bad luck.

DON ÁLVARO Speak, for the love of heaven, which I am unworthy of.

IPÓLITA Young Tony gave it to me. 2085

DON ÁLVARO And what did Tony tell you?

IPÓLITA That it was yours—so wicked! You need to believe me, and kill me if I stray at all from the truth. 2090

DON ÁLVARO I believe you, and it’s clear, for your excuse is written all over your face. Although you cannot see it, I believe what you say— any wife of mine would naturally be an honest woman. What’s more, I now see that my own worth blinded me to what that traitor was capable of 2095 2100
in his evil desire.
I’m like a man,
who in the darkness walks by some horror unawares,
but who, in the light of day,
looks back and sees his narrow escape.
But this is no way to proceed!
It is neither wise nor noble
to believe so readily
what is so lightly written.
Letters lie a thousand times over,
and this one might as well.
You, Don Álvaro, can make this right.
What liberties has Valerián
taken with you?

IPÓLITA (Aside) What should I say?
It will be the end of them.

DON ÁLVARO Have you noticed them? Have you been aware of them?

IPÓLITA (Aside) Oh God, I will force him into action if I say anything!
I’m a miserable woman!

DON ÁLVARO Why do you look so distressed?
Don’t you understand what I’m asking?

IPÓLITA I heard you.

DON ÁLVARO Have you been aware of Valerián
trying to woo you?

IPÓLITA (Aside) Would it not be better
to deny everything?

DON ÁLVARO Tell me.

IPÓLITA My lord.

DON ÁLVARO Did he betray me or was he merely bold?
Did he convey his desires to you with his soul, or with his mouth? Tell me.

**IPÓLITA**

My lord.

**DON ÁLVARO**

His mad longing, did you see it in his eyes? Did you know of it?

**IPÓLITA**

(Aside) I should deny it.

**DON ÁLVARO**

Have you no answer?

**IPÓLITA**

No, my lord, he is our friend, and he is honorable.

**DON ÁLVARO**

You are trying to spare me my revenge. Enough. Why am I even asking you this? When you hesitated to say no, you spoke a thousand yesses. Go to your room, and let no one see you’re upset.

**IPÓLITA**

(Aside) This intense feeling will be my downfall. His rash fury promises a million scandals. (Aloud) Listen, my lord.

**DON ÁLVARO**

Silence and be gone. I already know you are honorable.

**IPÓLITA**

(Aside) I must leave. I begin to fear his anger. This could lead to a fiery outburst. God help him.

**DON ÁLVARO**

This has gone too far.
Enough of this insolence!
I must be prudent,
and not get too angry.
Haste and anger
can make a man brave,
but only with good sense
can a man be honorable.
What insolent madness,
and from a friend!
His heart must be the opposite of mine.
With his wife wooing me,
it would be so simple to take revenge!
Vengeance should be mine,
but I must take it honorably.
To see if he is truly a backstabber,
I should give him ample opportunity
to commit an offense,
and so tailor a punishment to fit his crime.
I will try to feign ignorance,
though I’m no good at it.
Even in this I am too honest.
What a disgraceful mess!
And what does this vile woman want,
so close to sundown!

SCENE 11

Enter EUGENIA, GALÍNDEZ, PIERRES and ELVIRA

EUGENIA He’s crafty.

GALÍNDEZ He’s insolent.

ELVIRA I am at your command.

DON ÁLVARO Well, madam,
why do you bring light upon this house
just as the sun is retiring for the day?
ELVIRA  We’re going out.

DON ÁLVARO  Where to? (Aside) My soul is on fire.

EUGENIA  There’s a play tonight that Ipólita and I will attend, with your permission. If you’d like to come, we can all go in my carriage.

DON ÁLVARO  Right, and this play, where is it taking place?

EUGENIA  At the Merchant’s house.

DON ÁLVARO  Which merchant?

EUGENIA  Don Gaspar. Only he, in his excellence, deserves to be known by that name.²⁴

DON ÁLVARO  He’s very gallant.

PIERRES  He’s molt manly.

GALÍNDEZ  And he has a clean conscience.

ELVIRA  No small thing for a merchant.

EUGENIA  His wealth flows freely from his coffers.

DON ÁLVARO  He’s very rich and important.

EUGENIA  Rational in all things but conflict.

ELVIRA  Everyone must adore him, then.

²⁴ Reference to Don Gaspar Mercader Count of Buñol, contemporary of Guillén de Castro who was notorious for his bad temper and who often hosted literary and theatrical events at his manor.
DON ÁLVARO    And how will you go?  2210
EUGENIA     We’ll cover our faces. 25
DON ÁLVARO    And do they let in women who don't show their face?
EUGENIA     That’s what Valerían went to go see.
DON ÁLVARO    While we wait,
             let’s see if Ipólita will join us.  2215
EUGENIA     Is she . . .?
DON ÁLVARO    As usual, she’s . . .
EUGENIA     She can be very extreme.
DON ÁLVARO    (Aside) What a traitor!
             Here comes the source of all my troubles.  2220
EUGENIA    (Aside) This bull-headed man
            will pay for his disdain
            with no less than his life.

Exeunt DON ÁLVARO and EUGENIA

SCENE 12

ELVIRA    (Aside) Now I can trick these two,
          since no one is listening to us.  2225
          That’s right.
          The note meant for the one, I will give to the other.

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25 By the early seventeenth century there was great controversy surrounding veiled women attending the theater, as this allowed for anonymous, licentious activity and so became associated with women of loose morals. See Laura Bass and Amanda Wunder, *Hispanic Review*, 2009.
GALÍNDEZ Me, a play? Me, a play?  
I will take to my good bed.  
Maybe with peace and quiet  
my headache will be cured! . . .  

ELVIRA Even though you were cruel to me . . .  

GALÍNDEZ Come here boy, and let me show you a thing or two!  

ELVIRA Just keep quiet.  
Here’s an answer to that letter you gave me.  

GALÍNDEZ Oh what a happy lover I am!  
When did I ever deserve this?  
From now on,  
I will put this young man on a pedestal.  
I could kiss your feet,  
and, with God as my witness,  
I almost want to cut off the hand  
I used to slap you.  

ELVIRA Look how he carries on.  

PIERRES Old fool words!  

GALÍNDEZ Dear Cupid!  
You dull my head,  
and stir up butterflies in my stomach.  

ELVIRA Well Pierres?  

PIERRES Well companion?  

ELVIRA I have the response to your letter.  
You’re lucky  
that I am the one to bring it to you.  

PIERRES Oh mon sir Antoine,  
this response I am content with!
Pierres now jumps more for joy than Galíndez, old wreck.

(Sings) “If I go off to France, to lap up Jesus’s blood, nevermore will I return again.”

ELVIRA Your song celebrates your good fortune, while others use it to dispel their sadness, or even to dispel a crowd . . . different effects born of different causes.

PIERRES I want to kiss your feet, those are the hands I get, or your breasts, even your mouth.

ELVIRA Courtesy à la French. A pretty sight.

PIERRES My Antoine.

ELVIRA To repay me you shall do me a favor.

PIERRES No doubt you shall see the strength and esprit of moi.

ELVIRA (Aside) I want to have a little fun with this old man. It will be my revenge. (To PIERRES) Do you have any friends?

PIERRES Mais oui, and the crème de la crème of la France.

ELVIRA You’ll be in need of them.

PIERRES And pour que?
ELVIRA  To help you.
         Your master is coming.
         Listen, quickly, to what you must do.  2285

Enter VALERIÁN

VALERIÁN  I can imagine so many schemes
         to achieve my dearest dreams!
         Revenge and pleasure
         in one fell swoop.
         Best to keep up the pretense.
         In this world,
         only liars prosper,
         only traitors survive.  2290

ELVIRA  Go now! I’ll be along later.

PIERRES  And I will dance, pardiu.  2295

Exit PIERRES

SCENE 13

ELVIRA  My lord.

VALERIÁN  Antonio,
         I am fighting my own illusions!

ELVIRA  I’m sure you will conquer them.
         (Aside) And I want to fool them all:
         I’ll give this one the note
         that his wife wrote.  2300

VALERIÁN  What’s that you say, Antonio?
         Did you do what I asked of you?

ELVIRA  Of course.  2305
She hands him a letter

VALERIÁN Then’s an answer? Lucky me.

ELVIRA Hush now, take this, and don’t be sad. I must go, so that no one sees us together.

VALERIÁN I am a fortunate man!

ELVIRA exits

Happy heavens, beautiful heavens, sacred heavens, friendly heavens! I will read it—but here they come . . . Oh, I wish they would delay a little longer! I will go from joy to madness if the heavens don’t answer my prayer.

Enter DON ÁLVARO, IPÓLITA, and EUGENIA

EUGENIA Valerián is taking his time.

DON ÁLVARO Here he comes.

VALERIÁN Did I take too long?

EUGENIA And did you find out if they allow women in veils?

VALERIÁN They do.

DON ÁLVARO Well, then, let us go since it is already very late, and it’s getting dark, which is even worse.

EUGENIA (Aside) Vile man!

IPÓLITA (Aside) Scoundrel!
EUGENIA  Don’t worry, God is with you.

DON ÁLVARO  Torches!

VALERIÁN  The one I brought should be enough.  

IPÓLITA  (Aside) This is killing me.

DON ÁLVARO  I entrust my wife to you.

VALERIÁN  While you look after mine.

DON ÁLVARO  (Aside) This way I can hide my fury.

VALERIÁN  (Aside) This is my chance.  

I will dishonor him in return.  

DON ÁLVARO  (Aside) If he betrays me, I will kill him.

EUGENIA  (Aside) Let there be no bloodshed!

IPÓLITA  (Aside) He has handled this wisely.  

What a worthy husband!  

EUGENIA  (Aside) What a disgraceful husband!

SCENE 14

Enter ELVIRA, PIERRES, and two GABACHOS carrying a ladder

ELVIRA  That’s fine. Call at that door,  

and he will come to the window.

PIERRES  And the porta is open.

ELVIRA  It makes little difference.  

GALÍNDEZ (Offstage) Who’s calling? Who is it?
Who’s making all that noise?
I’m coming.

ELVIRA Throw the rope over him now.

GABACHO 1 It’s done.

ELVIRA Hammer the nail.

GALÍNDEZ Ay, ay, ay!
I’m choking, by the holy virgin!

ELVIRA Get his face!
And his crazy white hair!
He can hold his ground while the bull charges.
Step lively,
by God.  

GALÍNDEZ I’m choking!

PIERRES Watch out for the bull!

ALL GABACHOS Over here, you uglysnout beast,
you can’t get us, sooiie, sooiie!

ELVIRA If your pretend love
has you so fired up,
receive these compliments,
sent by your lady love.

PIERRES Old fool.

GABACHO 2 You’ve wet yourself.

GABACHO 1 Old Man Goiter!

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26 In this farcical scheme, Elvira leads Pierres’s cronies in a cruel joke against the old squire Galíndez. They string him up and paint his face.
GALÍNDEZ      Jesus!  2370
ELVIRA        Let’s leave him like this.  
              They’re coming. Run!
GABACHO 1     We will make our escape.
PIERRES       This has been magnifique.
ELVIRA        Perfection!  2375
GALÍNDEZ      Those devils got me.
ELVIRA        My work is done here.  
              Gentlemen, go, be gone!

*Exeunt GABACHOS*

SCENE 15

ELVIRA        This way, they’re killing Galíndez!

*Enter DON ÁLVARO and VALERIÁN with swords drawn, along with their wives*

IPÓLITA       Don Álvaro, where are you going?  2380
DON ÁLVARO    Leave me.
EUGENIA       *(Aside)* This coward  
              was not first at the scene.
GALÍNDEZ      I’m dying.
DON ÁLVARO    Galíndez, what are you screaming?  2385
VALERIÁN     Bring that ax over.
GALÍNDEZ       They’ve left me here,
as you can see, hanged and dead.  

DON ÁLVARO    They’ve certainly left you in a foul mood,
and a sight to be seen.  2390

EUGENIA       Good lord! One can’t help but laugh.

VALERIÁN      Galíndez!

IPÓLITA       I would laugh,
but I am in such a state,
my heart is in my throat.  2395

GALÍNDEZ      Untie me.

DON ÁLVARO    Who is behind
this joke?

ELVIRA        Some scoundrel.

GALÍNDEZ      Oh you traitor!  2400

DON ÁLVARO    A daring one at the very least.

VALERIÁN      We’ll sort this all out later,
not in the street.

DON ÁLVARO    This has been the comic preamble
for the play we are about to see.  2405
ACT III

SCENE 1

DON ÁLVARO’s room

Enter DON ÁLVARO and ELVIRA

DON ÁLVARO When it comes to honor, everything must give way, Elvira. There’s no room in my heart for a beautiful face, for obligation or love. There is only room for matters of honor. Who gave you this letter for Ipólita? I will have the truth, or kill you, by God.

ELVIRA Has it come to this between us? You threaten me?

DON ÁLVARO And I adore you.

ELVIRA That would have been enough.

DON ÁLVARO I’m out of my mind, and must look to my honor. Don’t cry.

ELVIRA I have good reason to cry.

DON ÁLVARO Hush, you’ll have no reason to complain, but tell me first whose note this is.

ELVIRA Valerián gave it to me,
showering me with money and compliments so I would deliver it. He’s dying for her.

DON ÁLVARO Good God!

ELVIRA I, believing that it wouldn’t add insult to injury, gave her the note as yours, telling her it was written for Doña Eugenia.

DON ÁLVARO A clever trick!

ELVIRA I am dying for you. I am yours and not your wife’s. That much is clear. I wanted to inflame her jealousy, to make her burn like me. I’ve become a devil, blinded by love: other souls twist in my flames, and I watch them with pleasure. If love can excuse my behavior, then forgive me, for he is the false friend, perverse and a traitor.

DON ÁLVARO I forgive your tricks if you will forgive my anger. A friendship of so many years, and the ties that bind... Is there a love that could unravel or twist it? Either honor has no strength, or there is no honor in this world. But no, for I have it in spades, rather too much than too little.
Perhaps everyone else is lacking, because I have it all. I have earned my standing over many thankless years: never have I found another man like myself. To find no friend with honor, to know one can't be had, were he to be watched from the cradle to the grave! One looks to profit, another to pleasure: sacred friendship, where have you gone? What has happened to you? You were raised to the heavens from the lowly earth. You are sacred to me. Valerián, false friend! I will kill him, or die in the attempt.

ELVIRA

Listen, my lord.

DON ÁLVARO

This sword will enforce his punishment.

ELVIRA

He fully deserves it, but you are furious now, and you'll never carry out your sentence this way. Be reasonable, just as you are bold. Can't you see that secret betrayals must be secretly avenged?

DON ÁLVARO

(Aside) Although she is a woman, she makes a good point. I will set aside my fury. This is good advice, regardless of the source.
ELVIRA  Shush, and as proof of my love, I will see to it that only you witness your vengeance and his death. Tonight, I will take care of him so that you can see, should you care to watch, that not all women are cowards. This I will do, as long as you trust me. What do you say? 2505

DON ÁLVARO  I say yes.

ELVIRA  If you want to have your vengeance, you must pretend to leave. Say you must visit your village tonight, and leave the rest to me. Then you shall see what your heart desires. 2515

Enter GALÍNDEZ at the door, only partly on stage

DON ÁLVARO  You’re so brave, so beautiful, my greatest good fortune, and the cure for my honor. You are all my happiness, the apple of my eye.

ELVIRA  Shall we go into your study?

DON ÁLVARO  Yes. 2525

They enter a room offstage

27 In a typical corral performance, there would have been at least two doors at ground level, one of which led into the backstage area or a small room. In this scene, Antonio/Elvira and Don Álvaro have retreated
SCENE 2

GALÍNDEZ  Oh my God!

DON ÁLVARO For you I will set aside my anger.

GALÍNDEZ  Is this a dream?  
Are these two delusions?

ELVIRA  As you lie here in my arms,  
I will tell you what I have planned.

DON ÁLVARO  My worries disappear,  
while I am in your embrace.

GALÍNDEZ  fully enters the stage

GALÍNDEZ  Is this Spain or Sodom?  
Oh, sacred Inquisition!  
My lord and Antonio  
follow that most infamous sect." In the Spanish “Learned followers of Mohamed.” Early modern Spaniards associated North Africa and Islam with sodomy, even though it was fairly common in courts throughout the Mediterranean.  
I want to watch  
through this keyhole,  
and yet I’m sure they’ll cover it too,  
since it is a hole!  
Look at them, by God,  
how they wrestle!  
Is it a trick or a sudden itch?  
Now they speak with their eyes,  
and listen with locked lips.  
No wonder this fiery sin  
is called unspeakable." Sodomy was referred to as the “unspeakable sin.”

Enter IPÓLITA  

into this interior room, Don Álvaro’s study, while Galíndez looks in on them through a keyhole or crack in the door.

28 In the Spanish “Learned followers of Mohamed.” Early modern Spaniards associated North Africa and Islam with sodomy, even though it was fairly common in courts throughout the Mediterranean.

29 Sodomy was referred to as the “unspeakable sin.”
IPÓLITA Am I never to have a moment’s peace?  
Galíndez, what are you looking at?  

2550

GALÍNDEZ Oh my lady! A terrible evil.  
Our lord . . .

IPÓLITA What?

GALÍNDEZ My lady,  
he is a wicked man.

2555

IPÓLITA Why?

GALÍNDEZ At this moment,  
he is . . .

IPÓLITA Where? Can it be so?

GALÍNDEZ Well he’s . . .

2560

IPÓLITA What?

GALÍNDEZ A bad Christian.

IPÓLITA Why? Oh unhappiness!

GALÍNDEZ Because he . . .

IPÓLITA What? What is happening?

2565

GALÍNDEZ He’s a sodomite.

IPÓLITA What are saying, you rude idiot?

GALÍNDEZ That my lord is a . . .

IPÓLITA Shut up!
GALÍNDEZ  I’ll shut my mouth, 
but you should open your eyes.  2570

IPÓLITA  I am mad with grief!
Vile, despicable!
Inexcusable men!
Servants and traitors!  2575

GALÍNDEZ  Look through here,
and you’ll see young Tony
and my lord in an embrace as tight
as a vine on a tree.
Look and see
if I am telling tales.  2580

IPÓLITA  Oh good heavens,
I’m in the depths of despair!

GALÍNDEZ  Come and see.

IPÓLITA  I have seen it already.
Oh Galíndez, I am dead!  2585

GALÍNDEZ  Kick down the door,
make a scene.

IPÓLITA  Jesus Christ!
We must be rational!
Do this for me, for my sanity.  2590

GALÍNDEZ  I will do anything you want.

IPÓLITA  Oh unhappy woman!
Go, Galíndez, get my brother,
and tell him to come at once.  2595

GALÍNDEZ  Like the wind I go. 

Exit GALÍNDEZ
IPÓLITA

Oh blind man!
God has let you wander.
Lord knows that I adored you,
that I was crazy for you!
If I could barely live with jealousy,
how can I survive this sin?
What can I do? I am lost.
To what extremes . . . what excess!
Oh God, let me keep my sanity,
although you ruin my life!
Don Álvaro perverse, heavens above!
Mine is a horrible misfortune.
I have suffered through
so many fits of jealousy,
troubled sorrows,
a restless obsession
over his shameless exploits,
yet I worshipped him,
thinking he was noble and honorable.
What should I feel
when I see he is not noble, not human,
not honorable, nor even a Christian,
but gives in to such evil desire?
His offense to God weighs on me,
with good reason, more than his offense to me.

SCENE 3

Enter ELVIRA

ELVIRA (Aside) What a stroke of luck it would be
to get away with such a grand scheme.
There she is.

IPÓLITA

Here is the infamous root
of the pain that consumes me.
I will pretend I know nothing,
although I’m burning inside.

ELVIRA  
\((Aside)\) I will wait for her to call to me.

IPÓLITA  
I am full of anger, 
but I will keep it in check.

ELVIRA  
\((Aside)\) What’s going on? 
Her face is blotched, 
and she is frowning at me. 
Has she discovered my trick with the note already? 
It’s possible. 
Has she realized I am a woman?

IPÓLITA  
\((Aside)\) I will call him over.

ELVIRA  
\((Aside)\) I will go to her.

IPÓLITA  
\((Aside)\) To maintain the pretense, 
I should call to him, the traitor! 
What should I do?

ELVIRA  
\((Aside)\) I should go to her first, 
to prove my nonchalance. 
\((Aloud)\) My lady?

IPÓLITA  
Antonio?

ELVIRA  
Is something wrong? 
You seem . . .

IPÓLITA  
I am overcome with great sorrows, 
and have little hope of happiness.

ELVIRA  
Some angel speaks to you, 
warning you of sorrows to come.

IPÓLITA  
What are you saying?
ELVIRA
Your misfortune
pains me.

IPÓLITA
What now?
Have you brought another note
to fool me?

ELVIRA
I myself was deceived.
You must now brace yourself for the worst,
the most terrible,
most cruel fate.

IPÓLITA
May the heavens see me through!

ELVIRA
(Aside) What a tale I will weave!
(To IPÓLITA) Make sure
no one is listening to us.

IPÓLITA
I will go mad from confusion.

ELVIRA
I feel for you,
from the bottom of my heart,
given your great misfortune.
And so I must warn you:
your husband
wants to kill you.

IPÓLITA
My husband?

ELVIRA
Do not tremble so.

IPÓLITA
Oh God!

ELVIRA
It would be better to find
some way out of this.

IPÓLITA
(Aside) And if this traitor lies?
My heart tells me:
I should both fear and doubt his word.
(Aloud) And do you know
why he wants to kill me? . . .

ELVIRA He needs no serious reasons.

IPÓLITA Because I belong to him,
he can kill me?

ELVIRA It may well be,
because you are his wife.
If you think I am deceiving you,
then listen to this:
he will pretend to leave tonight,
but he means to come back,
under cover of dark, to kill you.
If you see him leave,
and wish to stay alive,
do not wait for him in your bed,
because that is where he will take your life.
Wait in another room
for as long as he’s gone,
then you can trust your own eyes,
even if you don’t trust me.

IPÓLITA Oh God! What is this feeling!
What shall I do?
You upset me so
that I have to believe you.
(Aside) The heavens must have filled him
with compassion for me.
He has given me a chance
to avoid my demise.
This must be true, poor me!
By my faith,
I could believe Don Álvaro capable of anything,
after what I saw today.
God no longer holds Don Álvaro
in His powerful hand.
ELVIRA Calm your fearful soul,  
and your troubled heart.

IPÓLITA This cannot possibly be.

ELVIRA Here comes your husband.

IPÓLITA Who?

ELVIRA I must go now.  
It’s better he not see us together.

IPÓLITA You have good reason for your misgivings.  
(Aside) Protect me, divine heavens.

SCENE 4

Enter DON ÁLVARO

DON ÁLVARO Prepare my clothes,  
my boots, and spurs for travel.

IPÓLITA Where are you going, my lord?

DON ÁLVARO I need to take  
a short trip today.

IPÓLITA (Aside) Oh wretched woman!  
I am a short trip away from death.  
This confirms what I was told . . .

DON ÁLVARO What now! You’re crying? What is it?

IPÓLITA Since when do you leave me  
without leaving me in tears?

DON ÁLVARO Your weeping weighs on me.  
It’s always like this:
When I go,
these tears of yours flow so easily,
they are hard to take.

IPÓLITA
Say instead
that you are sick and tired
of seeing them,
because they are my tears
and therefore, your burden.

DON ÁLVARO
They weigh on my heart,
because they are yours.

ELVIRA
(Aside) Not bad flattery.

IPÓLITA
(Aside) These sweet words
are nothing but lies.

DON ÁLVARO
All right now, embrace me,
and may God be with you, my lady.

ELVIRA
(Aside) Would that someone
could sever the bond between them!

IPÓLITA
(Aside) These are the arms, oh cruel one,
that I saw offend me with their infamy!

DON ÁLVARO
God be with you,
and shed no more tears.

IPÓLITA
Godspeed.

Exit DON ÁLVARO

My heart pounds
with confirmed suspicions!
His honeyed words
confirm his treachery.
Sudden kindness such as this
is a sure sign he’s either wronged me, or plans to do so. What else can I expect amid such confusion?

ELVIRA  
(Aside) All goes well.  
(To IPÓLITA) This should be proof of my good intentions.

IPÓLITA I find myself condemned, with no trial and no remedy.

ELVIRA Take my advice and protect yourself.

IPÓLITA God help me.

SCENE 5

Enter LEONARDO, IPÓLITA’s brother, and GALÍNDEZ

LEONARDO Well, sister?

IPÓLITA Brother!

ELVIRA (Aside) Will my hopes be in vain?

IPÓLITA Come, listen.

LEONARDO Calm down.

LEONARDO and IPÓLITA continue speaking quietly to each other on the side

GALÍNDEZ This is a fine one!

ELVIRA Don’t I get thanks
for the letter, Galíndez?  

**GALÍNDEZ** You deserve a beating instead.  
(Aside) For now I’ll only singe you.  
I’ll get my revenge later.  
(Aloud) Am I a country bumpkin or a Frenchman,  
that you write me,  
and make fun of me in that language?

**ELVIRA** Now you’re making me laugh.  
Don’t you know that Pierres,  
who is such a great friend of yours,  
wrote that because your lady chose him as go-between?

**GALÍNDEZ** Now you’re just pulling my leg.  
**ELVIRA** Let me read the letter to you,  
Galíndez.  
Give it here.  

**GALÍNDEZ** I already tore it up:  
it made me so angry.  

**ELVIRA** You tore it up?

**GALÍNDEZ** That’s right.  
The language and the letter,  
both annoyed me.  

**ELVIRA** That *gabach*,  
who might well have been drunk,  
wrote as best he could.  
But it was your lady’s  
affections he wrote.

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30 Referring to the letter written by Pierres for the servant Rafaela which she gave to Galíndez in preparation for her last trick.

31 With this Galíndez indicates that he plans to denounce Antonio to the Inquisition as a sodomite; fire was often an instrument of Inquisitorial punishment, especially for the worst offenders against the Church.
GALÍNDEZ  You jest.

ELVIRA   You’ll see.

GALÍNDEZ  And how is that?

ELVIRA   Just wait.
What if I bring your lady
to your room tonight?
Will you still think
I’m full of hot air?

GALÍNDEZ  I will believe you speak marvels,
and sacred mysteries,
filling my room with incense,
and sweet smoke.
What is this you say, Antonio?

ELVIRA   Hush.
I will bring her tonight.
Come with me,
and I will tell you how to prepare for her.

GALÍNDEZ  I would like to befriend
one who promises such things.
And if he wants to be a fairy,
I could be his pimp.

IPÓLITA and her brother LEONARDO end their side discussion

LEONARDO  Good God!
I wish you would stop saying those things.
Is this a trick?

IPÓLITA   This is no trick.
I wish to God that it were!

LEONARDO  You saw him?
IPÓLITA

With the same weeping eyes
that look upon you now.
I saw their eyes reflected in each other’s,
much to my despair.
I saw them entwining their necks,
and sharing their lips,
and I would have seen much worse,
had I stayed to look.

LEONARDO

God help us! What an affair!

IPÓLITA

And now I see, to my sorrow,
that these signs of his life
are the omens of my death.
I’m sure he will kill me.
Someone capable of this,
so contrary to nature,
is capable of anything.
This is what I was told
by his partner in sin,
who gave me no end of proof.
Brother, my life, honor, and soul
are in your hands.

LEONARDO

These things must be handled
with tact and wisdom.

IPÓLITA

I am resolved to flee
my dishonor and his madness.

LEONARDO

Listen, do you have, by chance,
the brief and dispensation
in which the Pope approved
your unhappy marriage?32

32 As cousins, Don Álvaro and Ipólita would have needed a special dispensation from the Pope in order to marry.
IPÓLITA I do.

LEONARDO A thought has occurred to me, while you’ve shed your tears.
I know from experience that some certificates are drawn up carelessly, and can be full of errors. Something tells me that might be the case with yours. Give me the license. I will examine it, and if there is any fault in it I’ll take it to a judge. Then we will be rid of this burden, this unhappiness, once and for all.

IPÓLITA Good. You can work that out. But get me to safety now, away from here, brother, for I fear I will be killed if I stay.

LEONARDO If I took you, it would reflect poorly on our honor and reputation, but the bailiff can do it. He is an officer, and takes care of cases like this for the Archbishop.

IPÓLITA And what if as soon as night falls—see how quickly it comes—I am killed, and the remedy comes too late . . . Oh, I am wretched!

LEONARDO Listen.

IPÓLITA My misery has turned me into a coward.
LEONARDO  Set up a bed
in another room.
Have only one servant with you,
and keep watch for your life,
locking yourself in,
so that if your husband
comes looking for you,
he cannot open the door without making noise.
I will call my friends
into the street here,
and they will kill whomever they need to,
in order to prevent your death.
But I will return sooner than that
with the officer.

IPÓLITA  I fear the worst,
but I will do as you say.

LEONARDO  Is it settled, then?

IPÓLITA  It is.

LEONARDO  Come then, and forget your fear.

IPÓLITA  May our Lord take pity on me:
Dear Lord, on this unhappy day,
I turn for my protection
to the holy Mother of your holy Son,
most devoutly.

LEONARDO  Take heart,
your cause has brought strength to my arms.

IPÓLITA  Oh, Don Álvaro!
Piece by piece, I will tear you from my breast.

*Exeunt*

SCENE 6
Enter ELVIRA and EUGENIA

ELVIRA I would have come, even if you had not ordered it.

EUGENIA Why, Antonio? 2930

ELVIRA I have been serving you in a thousand ways.

EUGENIA And has any good come of it?

ELVIRA Are you still in love with my master?

EUGENIA He will never leave my breast, more out of stubbornness than love. If I cannot see him dead, I would love to see him mine.

ELVIRA If you have the spirit for it, he will be yours without a doubt. 2940

EUGENIA How?

ELVIRA First, you must place your trust in me.

EUGENIA My heart is in your hands. 2945

ELVIRA Then stay, and listen to me.

EUGENIA I am listening.

ELVIRA Come with me tonight, and I will take you to him, while he is none the wiser. 2950
What I have planned
is a night of passion for you both,
without his knowing
whom he beds.\textsuperscript{33}
Imagine it,
and attend to your deepest desires.

\textbf{EUGENIA}  
I do attend to them,
yet I have a husband.
There is no way for me
to get away from him.

\textbf{ELVIRA}  
I have already thought
of a way around this obstacle:
I can get him out of the house,
and perhaps even the city.

\textbf{EUGENIA}  
If you do,
I will follow your instructions,
to satisfy my desire.

\textbf{ELVIRA}  
Well,
I say you can leave it to me.
Go now,
I think your husband is near.

\textbf{EUGENIA}  
That settles it.

Exit EUGENIA

\textbf{ELVIRA}  
I will tangle them all in my web,
as long as luck is on my side.

\textsuperscript{33} The “bed-trick,” in which an expected partner is replaced with someone else, is a common literary motif throughout Renaissance and Golden Age literature. In this case Eugenia awaits Don Álvaro in bed, pretending to be Ipólita. See Adrienne Laskier Martín, \textit{An Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain}, pp 198-202. [THIS PARTIAL CITATION FEELS OUT OF PLACE, ESPECIALLY W/OUT A BIBLIOGRAPHY. OMIT?]
SCENE 7

Enter VALERIÁN

VALERIÁN  In such strange times,
everything is doubt and affliction.

ELVIRA  The time is right, I think,
to work my intrigue.

VALERIÁN  Oh Antonio! On my life,
I was on my way to find you.

ELVIRA  And I, my lord,
was coming to speak to you, and serve you.

VALERIÁN  Ever since you gave me that note,
Antonio, my thoughts,
which were already smoldering,
have been set ablaze.
You’ll see what you’ve done,
if my wayward reasoning
betrays the confusion
you’ve left in my soul.
But now, to be clear,
I must ask you to tell me who it was,
who gave you this note.

ELVIRA  Do you hold me in such little regard,
my lord,
as to think I lied to you?
I told you before, and I’ll tell you again:
my lady gave it to me.

VALERIÁN  So, what do you say?

ELVIRA  A thousand times yes.

VALERIÁN  Can it be true?
ELVIRA  You can believe what I bring to you.

VALERIÁN  I tell you, it is written in my wife’s hand. When I saw that, I was thrown into an abyss of illusions.

ELVIRA  Perhaps she wrote it as a go-between for you. Could she not have been tricked by a friend whom she trusts, who told her she was writing to a married man?

VALERIÁN  That would be strange.

ELVIRA  Don’t you know that the best lie is to lie with the truth?

VALERIÁN  She certainly writes well!

ELVIRA  That’s easy to explain. She’s so honorable and proper, no one has suspected that from time to time she does take a pen in hand.

VALERIÁN  She did not even notice what a state this has put me in.

ELVIRA  I tell you, in order to fool around with you, the first thing she’s done is to fool your wife with this fine trick.

VALERIÁN  I could believe it,
if I knew she favored me.

ELVIRA Perhaps this is how
she reveals embers long hidden away.

VALERIÁN And what’s more,
she does not respond to what I wrote.
Listen, she writes:
(Reading) “Although you make a mockery
of all my true feelings,
I will make you love me,
or at the very least kill me.”
Would I ever treat
her deepest desires as a joke?

ELVIRA What if she believes that, until now,
all your words have been in jest?

VALERIÁN Impossible.

ELVIRA Not so.
Thousands of women,
faced with a man in the throes of passion,
have believed
he was just mocking love.

VALERIÁN I still do not understand.
(Reading) “I will wait for a chance
for my flaming passion to envelop you.”

ELVIRA Blind though you may be,
surely you can see,
that her line speaks volumes.

VALERIÁN (Reading) “And I shall speak to you tomorrow,
if I lack a chance,
or my life today.”

ELVIRA Either I am crazy,
or her message is plain as day.
And more so to me,
who has come
to assure you about tonight.

VALERIÁN You expect me to have my wits about me,
overjoyed as I am?
How is it, Antonio,
that I have earned this glory overnight?

ELVIRA The disdain of a husband
can work quickly on a wife.
Perhaps in her desperation,
she will grant your greatest desire.
But let us leave this discussion aside:
he has gone on a journey tonight.
Say that you are leaving, too,
let me know where to find you,
and I will take you
to your bliss.

VALERIÁN You say Don Álvaro
has left Valencia?

ELVIRA There’s no doubt,
and you can finally occupy that place
he has freely shunned.
Quickly,
tell your wife you are leaving.

VALERIÁN I’m on my way.
I can’t stop to think
about the exaltation that awaits me,
or I might die of happiness
by merely imagining it.
It’s better not to think,
so as not to spoil my pleasure.

ELVIRA And where should we meet,
so I can take you to your paradise?

**VALERIÁN**
In the Plaza Seo. 34

**ELVIRA**
Best foot forward.

**VALERIÁN**
I am so happy!

*Exit VALERIÁN*

**ELVIRA**
The trap tightens nicely.
Here comes another appellant:
he has a solid case against me,
given that I lie just like a lawyer.

**SCENE 8**

*Enter PIERRES*

**PIERRES**
Son of a dirty rotten bitch,
who has made a ruse with me and the lettre!

**ELVIRA**
What’s wrong, Pierres?

**PIERRES**
Get away! 3105

**ELVIRA**
You do flourish so.
What’s wrong?

**PIERRES**
You have swindled me.

**ELVIRA**
Me? How’s that?

**PIERRES**
With lo paper.
Either you excuser yourself,

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34 Also referred to as Plaza of the Virgin, near the Cathedral of Saint Mary.
or you will regret it.
Who do you make of me,
although servant and lackey?
Feel now the sword of Pierres.

PIERRES grabs his sword

ELVIRA I think you are—lovely speech by the way!—
a French gentleman.
Why so angry
at someone who would be your friend?

PIERRES Pardiu, but you have to read
this papier you have given me.35

ELVIRA Give it here. It says:
(Reading) “My lady,
your beauty has made me . . .”

PIERRES E bien, be I a mademoiselle?

ELVIRA (Aside) Now I understand.
(Aloud) Listen, Pierres, calm down,
and I will tell you what’s going on.
“. . . offer you this fire of mine,
though my hair be white as snow.
Do not take this lightly:
a Castilian gentleman
offers you his life and hand.”

PIERRES Castiliano?

ELVIRA (Aside) Crazy old man!
(Aloud) “I leave my heart in your hands,
I, who long to see you and to serve you,
rather than write to you.”
(Aside) What a pretty note, and so old fashioned!
(Aloud) Now listen to what happened

35 Letter written by Galíndez to Madalena, another servant girl.
to lead to your frustration:
that pompous and
loud-mouthed old man
also gave me a note
to try to conquer Madalena,
who pays him little attention.
And God knows
I had another just like this one,
and so I gave yours to her,
and hers to you: it’s my fault.
I beg your forgiveness,
and to make it up to you . . .

PIERRES
I feel I have a need to laugh.

ELVIRA
Here is the good part:
Rafaela is waiting to see you tonight,
and if you show up,
you will surely enjoy her.

PIERRES
I will exit leaping and dancing.

ELVIRA
In that case,
we will need to borrow a skirt and a veil.
Dressed as a woman,
escorted only by me,
you will enter very carefully.
I will take you by the hand
to the old Castilian’s room,
which he has agreed to loan us.
Then, Rafaela will come down—
I will bring her myself—
and while you enjoy yourselves,
I’ll serve you by keeping watch.
Do you dare?

PIERRES
Pierres is no chicken.
I go with you.
ELVIRA Isn’t Antonio a good friend?
No more pouting, then? 3175

PIERRES I have wish to kiss your hands:
you are, Antoine, most honorable man.

ELVIRA Hold it.

PIERRES Your feet have been kissed—
ay!—by Pierres. 3180

ELVIRA Leap, yes, and dance, too.
Go now,
and borrow a dress from someone.

PIERRES The shopkeeper is French.
I’ll convince her to give me lend. 3185

ELVIRA Get it, then,
and I’ll come soon to escort you.

PIERRES I run full speed.

Exit PIERRES

ELVIRA I can hardly stop laughing
at all the tangled webs I weave. 3190

SCENE 9

Enter EUGENIA

EUGENIA Everything is secured.
Oh, Antonio, he is gone now.
How did you make him leave?

ELVIRA I cast a strong spell.
EUGENIA

No doubt some enchantment has fallen from your lips.

ELVIRA

We must go. It’s getting late, my lady.

EUGENIA

Come then, cover me with my veil.

ELVIRA

(Aside) Tonight, I will bring together you and your husband. That way, Don Álvaro can take his vengeance on you both.

Exeunt EUGENIA and ELVIRA. Enter GALÍNDEZ

GALÍNDEZ

How this sweet expectation makes the hours seem long! And my years can no longer carry this burden without fatigue! What if the lad who takes so long has fooled me? Dear Cupid, who give my senses, fierce war, and sweet peace! Sleep begins to wear on me: I must suffer it on my feet, for if I sit, I will sleep like a log. Who comes here? It’s him. Now my wishes will come true.

Enter EUGENIA in a veil, led by the hand by ELVIRA

Is that my Madalena?

ELVIRA

No. Entertain this lady for me. Madalena is on her way down.

Exit ELVIRA
EUGENIA  Have no fear.
Madalena will soon be here.

GALÍNDEZ  Being at your side
makes everything more charming.
You could take Madalena’s place, you know,
and save me from burning up,
while I wait for her.
That would give me great pleasure.

EUGENIA  By God, that’s good.
And if she were to come?

GALÍNDEZ  I’m man enough for two.

EUGENIA  Your intentions are good.

GALÍNDEZ  My deeds are even better!

EUGENIA  So tell me, do you pay women double,
or just double-cross them?

GALÍNDEZ  Your wit doesn’t cut me,
though you have plenty more, I’m sure.
Powerful and poor,
I neither pay them, nor double-cross them.
I know my business well, my lady.
I swear I am not two-faced,
but neither will I lose face.

EUGENIA  A fine answer.
You are a sly old man.

GALÍNDEZ  And I want to be yours.

Enter ELVIRA

ELVIRA  My lady, come with me.
Luckily—and truly it is fortunate—the house is now just as I described to you. She’s left the room that she usually occupies, and has retired to another one, taking her serving women with her. A joyous encounter awaits you. Come, and get yourself in her bed. Follow me, come.

EUGENIA I will follow you.

ELVIRA I’ll be back.

GALÍNDEZ I shall wait here.

_Exeunt EUGENIA and ELVIRA_

What is that young rascal up to? He must also want a woman, just as I do. By God, he should enjoy himself! Let him have some pleasure, as I will. The only thing that worries me is if it all ends now. If Madalena were to come, and I were to get her with child, praise God! How happy that would make me!

_Enter ELVIRA_

_ELVIRA (Aside) I leave her to undress. How humiliated she’ll be! I’ll call that gabacho now to make a fool of the old man. (Aloud) Galíndez? I’ll be right back._
GALÍNDEZ  Don’t be long.

ELVIRA  I am the wind itself.

Exit ELVIRA

SCENE 10

Enter DON ÁLVARO

DON ÁLVARO  This is the only way  
to resolve this situation.  
To trust a woman  
with such a weighty matter  
is to have lost one’s mind,  
especially in this case.  
I want to be home,  
with my wife by my side.  
Who knows, if in the time I have been gone,  
Elvira has driven her mad?  
I must appease Ipólita  
with a greater affection—  
to drive her to her death  
could cause me great harm.  
This is much better  
than waiting for anything else.  
There’ll be no lack of opportunity  
to kill a traitor.  

GALÍNDEZ  (Aside) Good God, he’s coming this way.

DON ÁLVARO approaches him

DON ÁLVARO  Who goes there?

GALÍNDEZ  (Aside) Is that my master?

DON ÁLVARO  Ah, Galíndez! When I call to you,
answer me. What are you doing here with the door open?

GALÍNDEZ  I was taking some fresh air.

DON ÁLVARO Very funny. When you come back in, make sure to close the door.

GALÍNDEZ  Of course. Do you want a light?

DON ÁLVARO I don’t want to wake anyone, and I am quite used to undressing without one.

DON ÁLVARO exits

GALÍNDEZ  Well, I won’t close the door, even if day breaks. I will see my hopes through to the end, by the golden fleece!36

Enter ELVIRA and PIERRES, dressed as a woman covered with a veil

Is that them?

ELVIRA  Keep your mouth shut, for now.

GALÍNDEZ  That a veil should conceal the divine light of my sun!

ELVIRA  Be quiet, and keep pretending, while I go on ahead, and she will be completely fooled.

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36 In Greek mythology, the quest for the golden fleece undertaken by Jason and the Argonauts takes them to the ends of the earth though many obstacles.
PIERRES  So much you do to fool Beelzebub himself.

ELVIRA  Are you happy?

GALÍNDEZ  I am crazy with happiness.  

ELVIRA  That’s right.

GALÍNDEZ  Is it possible . . .?

PIERRES  Èvidemment!

GALÍNDEZ  . . . that I touch your beautiful hand?  

ELVIRA  This makes me want to laugh.

GALÍNDEZ and PIERRES exit holding hands, and enter VALERIÁN

VALERIÁN  He who waits loses his mind.

ELVIRA  I would stop here, but I have things to finish.

VALERIÁN  Antonio . . .

ELVIRA  You have come right on time. I was about to go looking for you. And yet with all your boldness, this could still go wrong. You are too excited.

VALERIÁN  What do you expect, when I’ve been waiting here forever?

ELVIRA  I think you are the first man to hit the truth with an angry fist.
Come with me.

SCENE 11

*Enter LEONARDO, IPOLITA’s brother, accompanied by other people*

LEONARDO Yes, that’s him.
He just went in.
Come, let’s go, and since the door is open,
we must enter quietly, and without disturbances.

*BAILIFFS and CONSTABLES enter with their batons.*

DON ÁLVARO enters from another door wearing a nightshirt, stabbing at VALERIÁN while the latter tries to get away. All who entered attempt to separate them.

DON ÁLVARO Do you run from me, you traitor?

VALERIÁN What is this?
I’m lost! God help me!

DON ÁLVARO I am going to kill you,
and whoever let you in my house.

*Enter all the BAILIFFS and CONSTABLES at last to aid LEONARDO in separating the two fighting men*

CONSTABLE Stop! In the the name of the King!

DON ÁLVARO Can’t you see?

LEONARDO Stop, brother!

DON ÁLVARO Can’t you see
that you offend my honor

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37 Bailiffs were under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop and considered religious officials, while constables had the power to apprehend criminals. Both would have been needed to escort a married woman from the home of her husband.
if you help the one who offended me?

CONSTABLE    We have him now. That is enough.

DON ÁLVARO   Let me go before I lose my mind.

CONSTABLE   Stay calm, be reasonable, and tell us how this man has offended you.  

DON ÁLVARO I will do as you ask, but then you must let me go. That man there came into my house with traitorous intent. I was in bed with my wife.  

LEONARDO    With my sister?  

DON ÁLVARO And the traitor . . . 

LEONARDO    Heartless luck!  

DON ÁLVARO He came into my room.  

CONSTABLE You go in, my lord Leonardo, and retrieve your sister.  

LEONARDO exits  

DON ÁLVARO Get to the truth quickly, so that I can kill him at last.  

Enter LEONARDO with EUGENIA, the former thinking it is IPÓLITA  

LEONARDO    Come now, quickly.  

EUGENIA     My life is over.  

DON ÁLVARO Oh God! What’s this I see?
Is it possible? I cannot believe it.

VALERIÁN Oh, miserable man, that woman is my wife!

Enter PIERRES, dressed as a woman with a veil, fighting with GALÍNDEZ

PIERRES Mon dieu, 3385
I must do massacre to this vile queer.

CONSTABLE What is this? 3390
They are like puppets in a spectacle!
Hold them!
This is like a tangled dream.

Enter IPÓLITA

IPÓLITA Brother!

LEONARDO Sister, come out, you have a new master.

DON ÁLVARO What confusion all of a sudden!

VALERIÁN What incredible humiliation! 3395

CONSTABLE I don’t know what to say or do in such an unprecedented situation.

ELVIRA I must confess that this whole mess might have been my fault.

CONSTABLE How’s that? 3400

ELVIRA First, my lord, I must let you all know that I am a woman.

IPÓLITA Good God!

LEONARDO What a strange affair!
ELVIRA  It was a prank, and no small thing to pull off.  3405

CONSTABLE  The gall!

GALÍNDEZ  And a silver tongue
to accomplish such a trick.

VALERIÁN  Listen, my lord,
I can scarcely catch my breath:
on my orders,
my wife’s first husband was killed.
I arranged this with her.
Once she was left a widow,
I married her.
She can vouch that this is true.  3415

EUGENIA  It is.

VALERIÁN  I have kept this from the law,
and I ask you now
if that woman could be considered my wife.  3420

CONSTABLE  I declare she cannot be,
and you must immediately
step aside and leave her.

VALERIÁN  With that, my lord,
my honor is well satisfied.  3425

EUGENIA  A just comeuppance.

DON ÁLVARO  The heavens have revenged me
in the most extreme way.

LEONARDO  Do tell, sir, why have you come?

CONSTABLE  My lord Don Álvaro,
it appears that those
who sought the dispensation for your marriage in Rome
got it all wrong.
And so, from this moment on,
Ipólita no longer belongs to you,
but to whomever she wishes.

DON ÁLVARO Very well,
if that is what she wants.
Could anyone believe that I,
honorable as I am,
would want to keep any woman
against her will?
(Aside) What happiness! I am free!

IPÓLITA I would rather be without a husband,
than be a jealous wife.

ELVIRA Well could I, my lord,
demand that you and the heavens,
who owe me my honor,
grant me justice,
by making me your wife.

CONSTABLE Tell us then, what do you plan to do?

ELVIRA Yet God forbid that I should want that.
I have seen what married life is like
in these two couples.
And so,
may God keep me from taking on that burden.
I want to return to my homeland,
where there must be a convent
to provide me with sweet peace,
far from the bitter wars of matrimony.

CONSTABLE If you are all satisfied,
I have no more business here.

Exeunt BAILIFFS and CONSTABLES
EUGENIA From now on,  
I will give free rein to my thoughts.

VALERIÁN It’s a wide world,  
and I’ll stride across it at my ease.

GALÍNDEZ I must do a cruel penance.

PIERRES I will retourner to la France.

IPÓLITA I will turn my cares to heaven,  
that greatest of mysteries.

DON ÁLVARO As my bondage ends,  
so ends Unhappily Married in Valencia.

Exeunt