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THE COURAGE TO RIGHT A WOMAN'S WRONGS

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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 allow 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 noblemen 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 techniques 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

Ana Caro Mallén (ca.1601–ca.1645) spent much of her time in Seville and Madrid, the two most important cities of early modern Spain, where literature and theater thrived. For several years, she was able to make a living through her work as a playwright writing for Spain’s public playhouses and public festivities. Unfortunately, only two of her plays have survived: a chivalric story entitled *El conde Partinuplés* and *Valor, agravio y mujer*, which we translate as *The Courage to Right a Woman’s Wrongs*. Caro also wrote a number of other texts, including short theatrical pieces that emulate the speech of Portuguese, French, Morisco and West African characters, as well as narrative accounts of various political and military events.¹ We have many records of contemporary praise for Caro. She was intriguingly included in a book celebrating *Famous Men of Seville*, and her talent was celebrated in print by eminent playwrights and novelists of her day, such as Antonio de Castillo Solórzano and Luis Vélez de Guevara. Caro was connected with key intellectual networks in seventeenth-century Madrid and was friends with the famous novelist María de Zayas, who wrote that “audiences have praised [Caro], and every great mind has crowned her with laurel and cries of victory, writing her name on the city streets.”

¹ For Ana Caro's biography see Lola Luna's dissertation, *Ana Caro, una escritora profesional del Siglo de Oro. Vida y obra* (Universidad de Sevilla, 1992) and Juana Escabias, “Ana María Caro Mallén de Torres: una esclava en los corrales de comedias del siglo XVII.” *Epos: Revista de filología* 28 (2012): 177-193.

Besides her celebrity among contemporaries and her role as a professional writer, little was known about Caro's date of birth and family background until recently. The discovery of a document concerning her baptism in 1601, which claims that she was born into slavery in Granada and was subsequently adopted by an officer of the High Court of Justice (Real Audiencia y Chancillería), makes Caro all the more intriguing, as a female dramatist who brings to the fore in her writing issues of social justice.

Introduction²

Marta Albalá Pelegrín and Rafael Jaime

Written by one of the Spanish Golden Age's most accomplished female playwrights, Ana Caro's *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs* is a comedy of wild intrigue and lively ingenuity in which Leonor crosses geographical boundaries and defies social expectations of gender in order to bring her fickle lover, Juan, to justice and restore her lost honor. Dressed as the dashing Leonardo, she travels from Seville to Brussels, where she finds Juan and initiates her shrewd plan for revenge. What follows is a hilarious feat of masterful maneuvering, replete with cross-dressing and unexpected twists, in which she repeatedly outwits the men around her. And while the thrill of Leonor's efforts to seek redress culminates with the expected restoration of her honor and marriage to Juan, the questions raised by her demands for justice make the play anything but conventional. Through this stirring tale of a woman's courage to right the wrongs she has suffered, the play holds up to scrutiny contemporary notions of masculine honor and offers in their place a vision that opens up space for women and their agency.

THE PLOT

The play opens with Estela, a countess, and her cousin Lisarda descending a mountain during a storm. Having wandered off from their hunting party, they find themselves alone when they are set upon by a group of bandits. Fortuitously, Don Juan and his servant Tomillo, who are traveling from Seville, happen upon them and manage to fend off the bandits. Once Estela and

² This introduction expands upon the Study Guide on Ana Caro's *Valor, agravio y mujer*, created for New York City company Repertorio Español by Diversifying the Classics collaborators Marta Albalá Pelegrín, Veronica Toro, and Javier Patiño Loira, for the 2018-2019 theatrical season.

Lisarda are reunited with Don Fernando de Ribera and Prince Ludovico, both of whom long for Estela's love, Juan is invited to join the group at the court in Brussels. Before departing with them, he lingers behind to tell Fernando how he came to be in Flanders. He reveals that he had fallen in love with a lady in Seville and courted her successfully with pledges of marriage, only to grow tired of her and leave her.

As Fernando and Juan depart, Leonor—the very woman Juan had abandoned, and Fernando's sister—enters the stage, dressed as a man and accompanied by her servant and confidant, Ribete. (He and Tomillo both serve as the play's *graciosos*, comedic servants who offer witty insights and criticism.) Leonor describes how she decided to follow Juan to Flanders to restore her lost honor—an adventure she could only accomplish in male guise. She encounters Fernando, who fails to recognize his sister, and convinces him that she is actually his cousin, Leonardo. Fernando invites her, too, to stay in Brussels, enabling her plan for revenge, which will require outwitting everyone.

Act II opens in Brussels, with Estela confiding in Lisarda about her love life. While both Juan and Ludovico court her, she cares for neither; instead, she has fallen in love with the newcomer, Leonardo. Leonor, as “Leonardo,” has set out to seduce Estela to thwart Juan's new attempted conquest and to force him to publicly confess his wrongdoing. Once he confesses, Leonor, still in disguise, plans to force him into a duel and restore her honor through the death of her one-time lover.

Estela plans to meet Leonardo that night on the palace grounds. Leonor-as-Leonardo informs Ludovico of the meeting and offers to give up Estela, if only he will impersonate Leonardo that night and convince Estela that she should love Ludovico instead. Leonor, using Ribete as an intermediary, then convinces Juan that Estela wants to meet him that night at her

balcony. As Juan attempts to go to Estela, however, Leonor sets upon him, using the cover of darkness to hide the identity of her male persona. She accuses him of dishonorable conduct and challenges him to a duel, at least in part to waylay him long enough to prevent him from interrupting Ludovico's meeting with Estela. Leonor leaves a confused Juan to disguise herself as Estela and meet him at Estela's balcony. There she rejects him, and proceeds to criticize his behavior in Seville in such detail that he is left astonished and feels forced to review his old feelings for Leonor. At the same time, he is convinced that someone has betrayed his confidence by revealing so much to Estela. Meanwhile, Ludovico-as-Leonardo is unable to convince Estela of Ludovico's appeal.

Act III begins with Juan accusing Fernando of telling Estela what had happened in Seville. Fernando rightly denies the accusation, but Juan proceeds to ask Estela herself about the identity of the informant. As no one had, in fact, told her anything, Juan's interrogation effectively serves as a confession of the entire affair. Upon hearing this, Estela rejects him for his treatment of Leonor back in Seville. Juan then approaches Leonor-as-Leonardo and asks her to give up her pursuit of Estela. Leonor, still as Leonardo, replies that she is actually in love with Leonor and has come to Brussels to defend not just Leonor's honor but also the dignity of love and women in general. This prompts Juan to sudden and unexpected jealousy, and a declaration that it was he who betrayed Leonor. Fernando enters and interrupts their argument, lamenting his feelings for Estela. Meanwhile, Flora—Estela's servant and the play's trickster—drugs Tomillo with a chocolate drink, rifles through his belongings, and steals his money. Juan, still madly jealous, returns to challenge Leonardo to a duel. Fernando discovers them with their swords drawn and prompts Juan to confess that he had dishonored a lady in Seville and that the lady was Fernando's sister. Leonor-as-Leonardo pushes the argument to the point that Juan declares his

renewed love for Leonor. She leaves and returns dressed as a lady, explaining her actions throughout the play. Repentant and humbled by Leonor's masterful execution of her plan, Juan promises to truly marry her this time. The abandoned Estela forgives Leonor and, calling her "sister," proposes to Fernando. Ludovico proposes to Lisarda. Estela matches Flora with Ribete. Tomillo remains alone and penniless.

CROSS-DRESSING

"This attire will enable me to recover my lost honor" (vv. 426-27), exclaims Leonor she first sets foot on stage. Women dressed as men were very popular devices in Golden Age *comedias*. *The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs* explores what it means for a woman to join the ranks of men, while poking fun at that theatrical construction through the play's *gracioso* (Ribete), who often speaks truth to power. "You look like the god of love himself. What a dashing figure, what a well-turned leg, what a shapely foot!" (vv. 428-31), cries Ribete as he contemplates Leonor, in breeches and stockings, ready to avenge Don Juan's affront. As Ribete notes, typical male attire was considered scandalous on a woman because it exposed the shape of her body, especially her legs.

The exchange between Ribete and the cross-dressed Leonor must have riveted audiences at the *corral*. The *mosqueteros* standing at the pit might have enjoyed Ribete's explicit mention of the actress's tight clothes, while the women in the *cazuela* (stewpot) might have enjoyed envisioning for themselves a similar transformation, with all the possibilities that it could entail, including a challenge to male privilege in their society. The mere idea of such a transformation onstage seems to have inspired historical women. Trial records and contemporary news items tell

of many women who, imitating the stories they watched at the *corral*, seem to have dressed as men to further engage in public life.

Although Leonor has changed her clothes, she insists that she is not just wearing a costume: “I am who I am! You are mistaken, Ribete, if you think I am a woman. The wrong done to me changed me” (vv. 471-74). Leonor claims she is not merely dressing up so she can speak in the voice of a man. Instead, she insists she has undergone a more profound internal transformation. While we might find this a strange claim, some members of the audience would have found it entirely plausible. The early modern period viewed sexual change as possible and derived from multiple causes. Ribete alludes to Ovid’s tale of the maiden Iphis, who is granted her wish to be transformed into a man thanks to the intervention of the goddess Isis (vv. 476-78). Some believed that changes in bodily temperature, great effort or pain, and other accidents might turn a woman into a man. Among the most famous examples claiming such a transformation, well illustrated in books of medicine and news broadsheets, was Elena/o de Céspedes, who in 1587 declared before a court that s/he had become a man while giving birth to a son.

The gender of *mujeres varoniles* was often described as ambiguous. Leonor’s physicality as a beardless man is built on this ambiguity. Estela immediately finds Leonor/Leonardo more attractive than any other man, while the audience arguably finds her more attractive as a woman, both sexually and in her increased agency. Leonor is also presented as both logical and ethical, showing concern for her family members and adversaries alike. From the beginning, she has arranged to hide her situation from her family, scheming with her sister in a conscientious dissimulation that reveals strong female bonds and family ties. As Leonardo, she exposes a woman’s experience of the male conception of honor. She also shows up the version of manhood embodied by Prince Ludovico and Don Juan, whose values are reduced to inconsistency,

egotism, and cowardice. As Robert Bayliss has noted, Leonor's solidarity with Estela, her rival for the love of Don Juan, whom she needs to "defeat" in order to save her own honor, makes her not only "the best man in the play" (Bayliss, 320) but also a "better (hu)man" (Soufas, 89) when compared with the men she has managed to outwit.

OVERCOMING THE DON JUAN MYTH

Leonor's unfaithful and inconstant lover, Don Juan de Córdoba, is Ana Caro's re-elaboration of the Don Juan myth popularized first in folktales and then on the stage beginning with the famous *Trickster of Seville* (*El burlador de Sevilla*), a play usually attributed to Tirso de Molina. The prototypical Don Juan is a young nobleman who enjoys conquering women through ruses of all sorts. He does not hesitate to impersonate someone else, kill, or give false promises of marriage in order to enjoy the women he desires. Don Juan always grows tired of his conquests and abandons them, neither experiencing remorse nor fearing any consequences. Caro writes back to the myth by assigning doubt and fear to her Don Juan and making him virtually a parody. A playful reference announces Don Juan de Córdoba's first appearance in *Valor*, as Tibaldo, one of the thieves who tries to assault Estela and Lisarda, perceives him as a devilish creature to be avoided at all costs: "Run, Astolfo! This one's a demon, not a man!" (vv. 171-72). Tibaldo's comment echoes the dark overtones of *The Trickster of Seville*, in which the protagonist is ultimately killed by the ghost of one of his victims, and conjures Don Juan's lack of pity. As in the myth, Don Juan de Córdoba comes from a noble family: the Córdobas, descendants of the *Gran Capitán*, a military hero who helped establish Spain's power across Europe and especially in Italy. Like his predecessor, this Don Juan, too, is a flatterer, and an unfaithful narcissist. As he explains to Fernando, Leonor's brother, his presence in Brussels is not entirely by choice: he is

running from town to town (from Madrid, to Córdoba, to Seville, to Lisbon, to Flanders) to escape the obligations incurred in his unrelenting search for new amorous encounters. We learn that he was expelled from Madrid because of certain love affairs that got him in trouble. In Seville he abandoned Leonor, whom he had promised to marry (v. 363). After sleeping with her, Don Juan tired of their relationship and regretted his involvement, driven by what he calls his blindness (v. 366). Here, and unlike the character in the myth, Don Juan shows some sense of guilt. He deems his escape “indecorous” (v. 377) and claims to have left Seville out of shame due to his “inconstant stars,” which made him reject Leonor (vv. 373-75). Caro’s Don Juan is able to recognize his own faults. But he is ineffective when the play’s female characters get in his way. Leonor easily undoes Don Juan’s high-flying rhetoric: after he claims that a star (Leonor) has been outshone by a sun (his new love interest, Estela, vv. 1688-1703), Leonor reminds him that there was no sun on the horizon when the star was abandoned. With her own responses to Don Juan’s metaphors, Leonor outwits her lover. Perhaps most remarkably, in Caro’s version Leonor manages to make Don Juan humble himself, confess that he still loves her, and acknowledge his fault. Only then does she accept him as a husband and abandon her initial plan to kill him. In order to be reintegrated into society and love, Caro’s Don Juan must repent and take responsibility for his actions.

FEMALE SOLIDARITY

The Courage to Right a Woman’s Wrongs offers a rich tapestry of female characters bound by ties of solidarity, a counterpoint to the bonds that other contemporary plays depict among men. Leonor consistently engages in relationships with other women. Before transforming herself into Leonardo, she concocts a ruse with her sister to hide her absence from her family (vv. 447-55).

At the court, Leonor is well aware that she might be harming another woman as she maneuvers to deceive Estela and prevent her marrying Don Juan. Yet Leonor remains determined: she pursues an outcome that is fair not only to her but also to others.

Leonor refrains from portraying herself as a model of female beauty, and the topic seems entirely unimportant to her. When Leonardo claims that he is related to Leonor, Don Fernando immediately inquires about Leonor, asking whether she is well and “very beautiful” (v. 611). Leonor-as-Leonardo avoids answering and tellingly redirects the conversation by replying: “She’s kind and virtuous” (v. 612), prompting a validation by Don Fernando: “That’s all that matters” (v. 613).

In addition to Leonor herself, other female role models populate the play, whether examples of bravery and courage such as the Amazons, the warrior Camilla, and the goddess Isis, or writers such as the ancient Argentaria, Sappho, Areta, and Blaesilla, to which Caro adds the “thousand modern women who make Italy shine with splendor” (vv. 1144-48). This praise recognizes the importance of validating women's writing and the existence of a tradition of past and contemporary women authors. When Ribete briefs Tomillo on the novelties of Madrid, he voices criticism that might have circulated at the time, as he notes that in Madrid poets have become so numerous that “even women want to write poetry and dare to write plays” (vv. 1138-39). Tomillo replies: “Wouldn’t they be better off sewing and spinning? Women poets!” (vv. 1140-43). By having a less thoughtful character dismiss female writers, the author denounces the idea as equally uncouth. Ribete puts an end to the question of female authorship stating that women writers had become a staple in the playhouses and they were only the last iteration of a tradition that went back to classical antiquity.

Women contributed to the creation of a national commercial theater in Spain even beyond acting and writing plays. Within a theatrical troupe they could rise to become directors and producers (or *autoras*, as they were known). From 1540 to 1710, women made up approximately 11 percent of theater directors and managers (Sanz Ayán, 115). At the same time, printing was a family business. Daughters could inherit a printing press and women married to printers often worked alongside their husbands and led the businesses when they were widowed. Widow-printers were remarkably prominent: in fact, one Francisca de Medina was responsible for publishing many volumes of the plays of Lope de Vega, Spain's most famous playwright at the time.

COURTSHIP PRACTICES

Foreign travelers described early modern Spanish women as free to walk about the streets day and night, ready to talk back, and enjoying as much liberty as men did (Petersen 70). Notably, Iberian structures “allowed for extensive female autonomy” in public cultural life, trade and commerce (Poska and Schultz, 166). However, in a number of noblehouses as well as in the *corrales de comedia*, courtship practices were an intricate negotiation between propriety and desire. The *comedia* often presented a woman's presence in public space as constrained, especially when she was single and noble. One of the places where women and men could see and be seen was the church, during mass. Multiple plays make reference to young people noticing each other and locking eyes at mass. As such these spaces become grounds for wooing. Suitors also made contact with their ladies by coming to their windows late at night; the men would stand below to court the women with words and even music. The Spanish even has a special word—*terrero*—for this space under the window. When multiple suitors showed up to

woo the same lady in the same place, as threatens to happen in *Courage*, the *terrero* becomes the stage for displays of male violence.

When out in public, noblewomen would be escorted and on some occasions were expected to cover their faces with a veil and avoid eye contact with men outside their family and business circles. Of course, women could also use this convention to disguise themselves by covering their faces. In some cases, this was even used as an instrument of seduction, as in the infamous *tapado* (literally the “cover up”—the artful placement of a mantle, veil, or other cloth over a woman’s face so no one could recognize her). We can see this play out in *Courage* when Don Juan sees Leonor (pretending to be Estela) at a window and fails to recognize her—not only is it dark, but she may be covering her face.

THEATER WITHIN THE THEATER

Courage shows off Caro’s deep familiarity with the *comedia* tradition. Her opening scene channels Calderón’s excessive baroque landscapes; Leonor’s long made-up story of seduction and revenge, which she tells as Leonardo, recalls the outsize tales told in the plays of Alarcón (vv. 633-96); and of course her very plot is a rewrite of Tirso’s *The Trickster of Seville*, and closely echoes his *Don Gil of the Green Breeches*. The play further acknowledges literary figures, from classical antiquity to the seventeenth century. Male and female authors from Seneca and Luis de Góngora to Sappho and contemporary Italian women writers are represented through the text.

Metatheatrical references serve to weigh on contemporary issues, and are often conveyed by the *gracioso*, a character in Golden Age *comedias* who has free rein to reconsider what is going on in the play. *The Courage to Right a Woman’s Wrongs* introduces not one but two

graciosos: Don Juan's servant, Tomillo, and Leonor's servant, Ribete. Both servants reflect upon their societal role. When Tomillo and Don Juan liberate Estela and Lisarda from the bandits, Tomillo complains about how noblemen only praise his master, Don Juan, and reminds the audience that he was there to help as well. On a similar note, when Ribete departs for Flanders with Leonor, he remarks how tired he is of *comedias* that depict *graciosos* as fearful individuals, without according them the same human qualities and courage reserved to gentlemen (vv. 493-537). It is not a coincidence that Leonor, whose character is built on empathy, calls Ribete a friend and not a servant.

Further along the play, Ribete again notes that the transformation of Leonor into Leonardo would trigger the typical plot twists of a *comedia* and complains about how women will pester him now with love letters directed to Leonardo: "Just like in a play, where the fool is the go-between and must take care of everything" (vv. 526-528). When things turn interesting for Leonor as she is asked to be lodged with Don Juan, Ribete highlights again how this recalls the plot of a play (v. 774).

WHY BRUSSELS?

Caro's decision to make the court in Brussels the backdrop to her forceful vision of female agency may not at first strike one as an obvious choice. After all, the Flemish city was just one point in a vast political system whose center lay in Madrid. However, when it came to female, personal rule, the court in Brussels was exceptional.

In the period, *Spain* was not a single political entity but rather an association of peoples on the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. With the rise of the Spanish Habsburgs, the dominion of the monarchy expanded well beyond the many "Spains" to a global empire. In the early

seventeenth century, they ruled over an expansive territory that included the Iberian Peninsula, what is today known as Italy, most of the Americas, the Philippines, and the Netherlands. These dominions, however, did not exist as one unified state and the power of the crown over them varied significantly from one place to another.

When the House of Habsburg split into an Austrian and a Spanish branch in 1556, the Low Countries (what we call the Netherlands) came under the dominion of the Spanish monarch Charles V. However, the Spanish monarchy's relationship to the Low Countries was radically changed by the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648). In response to the formidable opposition to Spanish rule in the north of these territories, Phillip II transformed the Spanish Netherlands in the south into a semi-autonomous state headed by his eldest daughter, the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia, and her husband, Archduke Albert of Austria. The two ruled jointly over the Netherlands from 1599 until the Archduke's death in 1621, when the Infanta became sole ruler as governor-general. Thus, from 1621 until Isabel's own death in 1633, sovereignty in the court of Brussels belonged to a woman.

Female, personal rule in the Netherlands was not entirely unprecedented. There was, in fact, a long tradition that stretched from Margaret of Austria and Mary of Hungary—aunt and sister of Charles V, respectively—to Margaret of Parma, Charles V's illegitimate daughter (van Wyhe 10). Yet Isabel's power as governor-general of the Spanish Netherlands was without precedent. Unlike her female predecessors, who occupied a more symbolic role, the Infanta Isabel actually governed. As ruler of the Spanish Netherlands, she also had significant control over its military as captain-general (van Wyhe 11).

Isabel's rule was remarkable for her deft execution of power. She presided over a tumultuous period when the vast dominion of Habsburg Spain threatened to disintegrate and had

to manage the conflicting pressures for continuity and transformation. She tactfully forged “consent through reasonable argument,” and her political skill allowed her to solidify “feelings of affection and submission” crucial to the preservation of her polity (Estingana 418). For a court in Madrid that feared losing its grip on power in the far reaches of its empire, Isabel represented a vital link to the Netherlands and helped ensure the continuity of rule.

Esteem for the Infanta Isabel in Madrid extended far beyond the royal palace. She was also celebrated in the city’s *corrales de comedias*, with allusions to her life and reign in the works of playwrights such as Lope de Vega. Though there is no explicit mention of Isabel in *Courage*, there is a strong sense that the play is paying homage to a woman who, like Leonor, journeyed to Brussels and prevailed in an undertaking often reserved to men. In her martial prowess and masterful maneuvering, it is almost as though Leonor becomes the embodiment of the dual roles the Infanta played as sovereign: the captain-general and governor-general of Flanders. References to a certain “Highness” (*su Alteza*) whose identity is never made clear appear throughout the play. However, it does at one point mention the “Infanta” (v. 545). *The Courage to Right a Woman’s Wrongs* is, after all, a play that consistently questions traditional gender roles and affirms the authority and agency of women through references to female characters in myth or to female authors. Brussels, therefore, is more than just a backdrop for Leonor’s adventure. Instead, it represents a privileged space for female agency.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Unlike for other dramatic works by Ana Caro, we have no documentation of seventeenth-century performances of *The Courage to Right a Woman’s Wrongs*. The play was most likely performed

in Seville, where it seems to have enjoyed some success. The National Library of Madrid, preserves two manuscripts, one from the seventeenth and another from the eighteenth century.

In the last twenty years the play has made it back to the stage and has been performed by professional theater companies in the United States and Spain. In 2006, Gala Hispanic Theatre staged *Valor, agravio y mujer* in Washington D.C. (Mújica, 506-509). The play was directed and adapted by Hugo Medrano, who transposed the action to the nineteenth century. In New York City, Leyma López directed the play for Repertorio Español, premiering in 2017 . In 2018 Ana Castrojuan directed an adaptation of the play entitled *Loco desatino*, staged in Pamplona's Teatro Gayarre. It imagined Ana Caro writing the third act of *Valor, agravio y mujer* over the course of a sleepless night. Most recently, Verónica Clausich directed a full production of *Valor* for the 42nd edition of the Festival of Almagro that took place on 9-10 July 2019.

ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is based on two critical editions, by Lola Luna (1993) and María José Delgado (1998). There are two extant manuscripts of the play, each with different textual gaps. In order to fill these, we compared the editions of the two manuscripts. Ana Caro's title also has interesting gaps, in this case deliberate. The modular title simply juxtaposes "courage, wrong, woman." Any translation must fill in the relationships between these terms. Our title emphasizes Leonor's agency, ideally capturing the spirit of the play.

This translation includes emotional interjections and exclamations in Spanish as optional lines where the meaning can be inferred from the context of the dialogue or an actor's performance. These moments are marked with a forward slash between the English translation and its Spanish equivalent in italics, and include Spanish punctuation where appropriate.

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Pronunciation Guide

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 Fernando de Ribera: DON FEHR-NAHN-DOH DEH REE-BEH-RAH

Doña Leonor: DOH-NYAH LEH-OH-NOHR

Ribete: REE-BEH-TEH

Don Juan de Córdoba: DON HWAN DEH COR-DOH-BAH

Tomillo: TOH-MEE-YOH

Estela: EHS-TEH-LAH

Doña Lisarda: DOH-NYAH LEE-SAR-DAH

Ludovico: LOO-DOH-BEE-COH

Flora: FLOH-RA

Fineo: FEE-NEH-OH

Tibaldo: TEE-BAHL-DOH

Rufino: ROO-FEE-NOH

Astolfo: AHS-TOHL-FOH

Godofre: GOH-DOH-FREH

Characters:

DON FERNANDO DE RIBERA, *gentleman*

DOÑA LEONOR/LEONARDO, *his sister*

RIBETE, *her servant*

DON JUAN DE CÓRDOBA, *gentleman*

TOMILLO, *his servant*

ESTELA, *Countess of Sora*

LISARDA, *her cousin*

LUDOVICO, *Prince of Pinoy*

FLORA, *servant*

FINEO, *servant*

TIBALDO, *bandit*

RUFINO, *bandit*

ASTOLFO, *bandit*

GODOFRE, *captain of the guard*

and icy air!
 See how Aeolus,³ god of the winds,
 angrily releases them
 from their stout prison, 35
 so that once freed
 they might make the earth tremble,
 sending prodigious tremors
 through its very womb.
 See Heaven's blue pavilions 40
 all dressed in mourning,
 while the dark and pregnant clouds,
 who delivered this violence
 now abort lightning bolts!
 All is surging fear, 45
 all is duress and hardship,
 all is fright and affliction,
 all is pain and wonder.
 The dark clouds extend
 beyond the furthest horizon. 50
 What shall we do?

LISARDA Don't worry.

ESTELA Fear has turned me to stone, Lisarda.
 For me to take to the woods like this!

They make their way down to the first level of the stage

LISARDA We'll find refuge together 55
 from the inclement weather.
 Come under these oaks, Estela,
 till Heaven comes to our aid.
 See, the sun is finally breaking
 through those clouds in the west. 60

They move to one side of the stage. Enter the bandits TIBALDO, RUFINO and ASTOLFO

TIBALDO Some bandits we are, by God! / ¡por Dios!
 We hardly deserve the name.
 Misfortune or idleness
 has turned every last one of us
 into maidens at their needlework. 65
 Just look at us lying about—

³ *Aeolus*: Greek god of the winds. The original Spanish gives Noto and Boreas (gods of south and north winds, respectively) as the winds released to unleash the storm. Ana Caro is echoing a famous storm in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

	the warlike discipline of Mars himself! A proud sight indeed.	
RUFINO	Spare me. We're short on chances, not on courage!	70
TIBALDO	Well, seek them out then!	
ASTOLFO	By God, if I'm not mistaken, fortune has just delivered a fine chance into our hands!	75
TIBALDO	May Heaven let us enjoy it!	
ASTOLFO	Two fine-looking women, talking to each other. Can't you hear them?	
TIBALDO	Let's approach them nicely.	80
ESTELA	Lisarda, do you see those three men over there?	
LISARDA	Yes, they're headed our way.	
ESTELA	Oh, thank heavens! / <i>¡Gracias al cielo!</i> Gentlemen, is it far from here to the house of Enrique, Count of Belflor?	85
TIBALDO	It is very close.	
ESTELA	Could you tell us how to get there?	
TIBALDO	Come with us.	
ESTELA	Your courtesy is the lodestar that guides us on our way.	90
RUFINO	<i>(Aside)</i> Before long there will be fear and trembling to wreck your calm instead.	

The bandits lead the ladies offstage, while JUAN, very elegant in his traveling clothes, descends along the path opposite the one the women took

JUAN	Confusion everywhere!
------	-----------------------

An earthquake so sudden, 95
 a storm so immense!
 I've lost my way, it seems.
 Will I be fortunate enough
 to find a guide?
 These mountains are so solitary... 100

JUAN walks down to the first level of the stage

Tie the mules to a tree, Tomillo,
 and come down to this meadow
 while they graze.

TOMILLO, from above, while making his way down

TOMILLO What meadow?
 Tigers, rhinoceri, 105
 crocodiles, alligators,
 the cyclops Polyphemus,⁴
 damned souls and devils,
 (God forgive me)
 will come for you there. 110

JUAN What are you going on about, you fool?

TOMILLO I say you must pay
 for the sacrilege you committed
 in abandoning such an angel!

JUAN Has anyone ever seen such foolishness? 115

TOMILLO How can anything go well for us,
 when you—

JUAN Don't make me angry.
 Enough of your nonsense.

TOMILLO Oh, that's good. 120
 So now the truth is nonsense?

JUAN Listen! I hear muffled voices.

TOMILLO Perhaps it's a satyr or a faun.⁵

⁴ *Polyphemus*: the man-eating giant in Homer's *Odyssey*.

⁵ *Satyr / Faun*: mythological creatures that were half-man, half-goat and associated mischief and lust.

Enter the bandits with the ladies. In order to tie their hands, they put down their pistols and cloaks. JUAN remains to the side

TIBALDO	With your permission, or without it!	
LISARDA	What is it you want, you barbarians!	125
ASTOLFO	It's nothing. Don't get upset, or it will go worse.	
TOMILLO	They must have just come down from the mountains.	
JUAN	Listen to them!	
TOMILLO	What should I listen to? Is this some new passing skit, full of enchantments and adventures in the woods, where I play Sancho, you Don Quijote, and we go looking for the inn, the wenches, and the beatings? ⁶	130 135
JUAN	It is indeed a pretty pass, and one that requires me to measure my pride against their daring.	
TOMILLO	Don't rush in, my lord.	140
TIBALDO	Take their jewels now.	
ESTELA	Take them, you traitors, and leave us be. Ay, Lisarda!	
JUAN	Do you not see, Tomillo, these two suns so wrongfully eclipsed? Do you not see their glow diminished, and barbarously overshadowed?	145
TOMILLO	Come back down to earth. These are highwaymen and if they discover us	150

⁶ The first readers of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote* (1605, 1615) regarded it as a funny book, particularly for its opening episodes, full of confusion and violence. The specific reference here is to one of Don Quijote's first adventures, when he confuses an inn for a castle and Maritornes the serving-girl for a princess.

they'll have us for dinner.
They'll make mincemeat of us,
before we can even say confession.

JUAN I must show who I am.

LISARDA Kill us, oh ungrateful men! 155

RUFINO That's not what we're after, my queen.

ESTELA How can the heavens withhold their mercy now?

JUAN jumps in front of them with his sword drawn, upsetting the bandits. Meanwhile, TOMILLO takes the coats and the guns and heads into the forest

JUAN Well, what is it you want?
To taste the wrath
of my arm and my sword? 160

ESTELA Oh, who could resist him!

JUAN You low cowards!

TOMILLO Though I'm quaking with fear,
I've got their weapons here,
which will at least make things
a little less dangerous. 165

TIBALDO Fire, Rufino!

RUFINO Where are the pistols?

TOMILLO Pickles, maybe?

ASTOLFO There's no time to lose. 170

TIBALDO Run, Astolfo!
This one's a demon, not a man!

RUFINO Run, Tibaldo!

The bandits exit, with JUAN in pursuit

TOMILLO By God, I swear my master
is giving them a run for their money,
no beating around the bush— 175

- TOMILLO And what should I do,
sit here twiddling my thumbs
while these witnesses, for and against,
fail to declare just how bold I was? 205
- FERNANDO I will reward you.
- FERNANDO *gives TOMILLO a bag of coins*
- JUAN Off you go, you fool.
Now your valor is repaid.
- ESTELA Tell me your name and origin,
if you will, unless there's reason not to. 210
Let me know to whom I owe so much.
I am obliged to serve you
and it will be my pleasure to do so.
- FERNANDO I ask the same of you, and if by chance
I may be of any help at the court in Brussels, 215
I am at your service,
not only in the name of the Countess, whom I serve,
but because it is my nature.
Come with me, and whatever you wish
I will happily provide. 220
- TOMILLO May you live longer than
a thousand Methuselahs.⁷
What a good lad!
- LISARDA We are all the more in your debt
and so must beg of you 225
to tell us who you are.
- JUAN It would be my pleasure.
- FERNANDO *(Aside)* What a gallant! What a gentleman!
- JUAN I was born in that city⁸

⁷ *Methuselah*: Biblical patriarch said to have lived 969 years. The original text invokes Nestor, an old wise king who fought with the Greeks at Troy.

⁸ Caro praises the city of Córdoba, naming individuals associated with the city's fame to highlight its nobility: philosophers and writers of Roman Antiquity, such as Lucan and Seneca the Elder and the Younger; Roman public figures, such as the senator Anneus Gallio and the priest Rufus; famous Spanish poets, such as Juan de Mena, Enrique de Villena, and Luis de Góngora. Villena was believed to have conducted necromantic experiments,

celebrated for its antiquity	230
as mother of all wits,	
origin of letters,	
splendor of scholarship,	
archive of sciences,	
epitome of courage,	235
and center of nobility.	
It was the happy birthplace	
of Seneca and Lucan:	
one a Stoic philosopher,	
the other a celebrated poet.	240
And also another Seneca,	
whose tragedies teach virtuous morals,	
and his brother Anneus Gallio,	
renowned for his oratory.	
And this is not even to mention	245
the famous Castilian poet, Juan de Mena, ⁹	
and that generous Marquis,	
Don Enrique de Villena,	
who probed the stars	
and the science of numbers,	250
whose deeds arouse wonder	
even if time has obscured them.	
Birthplace too of Rufus, and even of Martial	
(though this is disputed).	
I am from that city, in short,	255
where the poet Góngora was born,	
rare prodigy of the world.	
His wit enriched the Castilian tongue	
with clever phrasing and sweet conceits.	
I was born in Córdoba,	260
monument to Roman pride,	
adorned by the Betis,	
that river whose overflowing waters	
kiss its ramparts in homage	
to the ancient glory of its founder,	265
the Roman Marcellus.	
I inherited the noble blood	
of the Córdobas,	
a name that embodies	
all the excellence of Spain.	270

including forming a cloud and making it rain. Martial, although not from Córdoba, was often thought to be associated with the city.

⁹ Mena: MEH-NAH, Enrique de Villena: EN-REE-KEH DEH VEE-YEH-NAH, Góngora: GOHN-GOH-RAH, Betis: BEH-TEES

I spent my tender youth
 at the court in Madrid
 in search of favor,
 which never ends well.
 I was driven away by envy, 275
 that many-headed Hydra
 that refuses to die,¹⁰
 and sent into exile
 over certain encounters—
 mere trysts, in effect! 280
 I was favored, but not enough
 to save me from misplaced loves.
 And so I returned home
 very much against my will.
 I was used to greater things. 285
 It's not easy to get over
 a fall from favor, you know.
 And so, to distract myself,
 I set out for Seville.
 There my kin received me with open arms, 290
 and I found comfort in their noble house.
 I amused myself as best I could
 in that magnificent city:
 its palace, its orchards, its river,
 its market, its promenades, its cathedral— 295
 an eighth wonder of the world,
 most famous and most beautiful.
 And so...

Enter LUDOVICO and companions

LUDOVICO *(To his companions)* Don Fernando de Ribera, here?
 (To FERNANDO) My friend! 300

FERNANDO What news, my prince?

LUDOVICO I'm here with Fisberto and Lucindo,
 and also Duke Liseno.
 We were charged with looking everywhere
 for Lisarda and Estela, 305
 and told not to return without them.
 Since they are with you now,
 and have found refuge from the weather,

¹⁰ *Hydra*: In Greco-Roman mythology, a water monster with many heads that inhabited one of the entrances to the Underworld.

	let them not delay their return. In that sheltered valley a chariot awaits, with an escort of gentlemen and servants.	310
ESTELA	Let us go, then. But make sure that gentleman comes with us.	
FERNANDO	I see how it is.	
ESTELA	<i>(Aside)</i> He never finished his story!	315
FERNANDO	Countess, the prince will lead you on to the chariot, and we will follow in an instant.	
ESTELA	I hate to go, Lisarda, without hearing the end of the story.	320
LISARDA	You will hear it in good time.	
<i>The women exit with LUDOVICO, TOMILLO and companions</i>		
FERNANDO	My friend, a mysterious force draws me to you, some natural inclination or sympathetic star. Come with me to Brussels.	325
JUAN	I would be honored.	
FERNANDO	While they walk ahead and we follow at our leisure, why don't you finish your story? I beg of you, tell me, what brings you to Flanders?	330
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> What luck that the prince came for Estela just then. My soul has surrendered to her beauty and I would hardly want her to hear the rest of my story. <i>(Aloud)</i> As I was saying, Fernando, while I was seeking solace in Seville, I saw a woman in church	335
	one Tuesday in May, the Day of the Cross,	340

which I now carry on my back.¹¹
 Her great beauty
 was the talk of the town. 345
 I will not describe her,
 for it would only
 add weight to my chains.
 Even if I hated her,
 to call her an angel 350
 would not overstate her charms.
 To see her was to love her.
 I found out her house, her family,
 her state and condition,
 and, satisfied with it all, 355
 swayed her from her virtue,
 pressed her to indiscretions
 and plied her with promises.
 She looked kindly upon me,
 and a go-between was found 360
 to help me enjoy her favors—
 if, indeed, there is joy in such trespasses.
 I promised to take her as my wife.
 I need not say more—
 you can infer the rest. 365
 I was blinded. She was so tender,
 so beautiful, so clever,
 open to pleasures besides,
 taking displeasures in stride.
 And yet her fate, her unlucky star, 370
 undid any obligations incurred,
 justified though they might have been.¹²
 I followed the path,
 if not of my fate,
 then of my inconstant stars. 375
 Weary and full of regret,
 somewhat indecorously,
 without a word or a goodbye,
 I soon left for Lisbon,
 annoyed at those changeable stars 380
 that now made me despise her.
 After traveling through France and England
 I finally arrived in this land,
 at the court in Brussels,

¹¹ *Day of the Cross*: the religious festival of *la Cruz de Mayo*. Don Juan pokes fun at his current situation when he imagines himself carrying as a cross on his shoulders the heavy burden of seeing a lady in church.

¹² Juan uses the passive voice to deflect responsibility from himself.

	where my soul feels at home, recalling the glories of Madrid. It's too bad this truce with Holland keeps me from turning to arms to distract myself from all this. ¹³	385
	And yet, since I have your favor now could you put in a word on my behalf, so that I might occupy myself at court until my funds make their way to Flanders? I am Don Juan de Córdoba, from Andalucia. You, a Ribera, are my noble countryman. Now that we've met like this we must stick together to show the courage of Spanish noblemen, the valor of Andalucia.	390 395 400
	This is my story. Now, you who share my birthplace, and also my nobility, honor me as is your duty.	
FERNANDO	It is my honor to meet you, Don Juan, and I only wish my means could match my devotion. I am drawn to your great courage by some mysterious force. I'll see that her Highness here in Brussels ¹⁴ honors Estela's obligation to you, and what all of us owe you. Meanwhile, my house and all I own are at your disposal. Let us go together to the Infanta. ¹⁵ She will reward you, and so my obligations will be satisfied.	405 410 415

¹³ The play takes place during a brief truce in the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), also known as the war of Dutch independence, in which the Netherlands fought a protracted and bloody war against Spain. Juan's reflection on the truce further confirms his self-centeredness.

¹⁴ Brussels was part of the Spanish Netherlands. From 1598 to 1621, these territories were ruled by Philip II's daughter Clara Eugenia and her husband Archduke Albert VII of Austria (Clara Eugenia continued as Governor from his death in 1621 until 1633). A long period of peace and prosperity in the early years of the 17th century allowed the arts to flourish at the court in Brussels. Though we do not know when Ana Caro's play was written, and though there is little information to date the action precisely, it is possible to imagine her writing about a space ruled by a woman as the context in which Leonor can right the wrongs done to her—see introduction for further information.

¹⁵ *Infanta*: title used for a daughter of the ruling monarch of Spain.

	the one who repaid my love with disregard, my faith with cruelty—	445
	was on his way to Flanders. And so I announced I would enter a monastery to keep my family from looking for me.	450
	No one would come see me, no one except my sister, and she knows the truth. In fact, she'll pretend to visit me to maintain the ruse.	455
	It may be a mad plan, but at least no one else will ever learn the truth. I made up my mind and bravely crossed the sea	460
	to accomplish my purpose or to die in the attempt. By the heavens above, I will be a new Amazon, a courageous Camilla, ¹⁸	465
	and avenge myself on this treacherous liar.	
RIBETE	Listen to you, by God! I do believe your new attire has given you a new spirit.	470
LEONOR	I am who I am! You are mistaken, Ribete, if you think I am a woman. The wrong done to me changed me.	
RIBETE	Wrongs can lead to strange metamorphoses. You did more than Ovid's Iphis by transforming yourself into a man. You were your own goddess! ¹⁹ Anyway, back to our purpose here: will you kill him, then?	475 480

¹⁸ *Camilla*: a fierce female warrior in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

¹⁹ Ribete alludes to a tale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the maiden Iphis is transformed into a man thanks to the intervention of the goddess Isis.

LEONOR	I will kill him, by God! / <i>¡vive Dios!</i>	
RIBETE	Seriously?	
LEONOR	I swear on God's name!	
RIBETE	Still swearing? Shame on you.	485
LEONOR	You're wasting your breath.	
RIBETE	Well, you know your typical Don Juan is always on the move, like some kind of new Magellan. ²⁰	490
LEONOR	Be quiet, fool.	
RIBETE	Oh please. Must I play the coward? Couldn't I be the brave servant?	
LEONOR	Is that what's bothering you?	495
RIBETE	Why must servants always be hungry cowards, and play the fool? Can't a man be born daring even if he is not born noble? What? Couldn't the servant be twice as brave as his master?	500
LEONOR	Well said. There's a reason I chose you as my friend and not my servant.	
RIBETE	Ribete of Seville is at your side, so fierce that he thought nothing of taking on three at once, as he planted his bloody flag amid the green banners of war. But on to the living: what will you do now?	505 510

²⁰ Here and in the following speech, Ribete shows his awareness of other stories. He is referencing the larger legend of Don Juan in other plays, including Tirso's *The Trickster of Seville*. *Magellan* famously circumnavigated the globe—the implication is that Don Juan travels from place to place to seduce women.

LEONOR	Well said. I must find my courage today for the sake of my honor if I am to restore its luster. For without honor, even gold is vile.	600
FERNANDO	I've read this letter, Don Leonardo, and it simply asks that I favor you. Your presence alone would have sufficed, yet my sister requests it, and, obliged to her, I will honor her wishes for your sake, for hers, and for mine. How is she?	605
LEONOR	She misses you, of course.	610
FERNANDO	Is she very beautiful?	
LEONOR	She's kind and virtuous.	
FERNANDO	That's all that matters. And the youngest sister, Laurencia?	
LEONOR	She's precious! A little flower, an angel in human form.	615
FERNANDO	Tell me, by my life, what brings you to Flanders?	
LEONOR	I can barely bring myself to speak, overwhelmed as I am by your courtesy. Though it's true that my gratitude would seem to require an answer.	620
FERNANDO	You're too kind.	
LEONOR	Oh, worthy scion of the Riberas! To respond to your generous concern, I will tell you of my harsh fortune, only now turned kind in bringing me to you. I need not tell you of my distinguished line: the mark of its nobility is my pride	625 630

in being related to you.

They embrace

I served a lady whom the heavens²³
graced with all beauty.
My soul secretly enjoyed her favors, 635
finding glory in our sleepless nights.
Though I faced a powerful rival,
I was hardly worried.
Don't be surprised: my Anarda
is as faithful as she is beautiful. 640
The Marquis Ricardo made bold
to show everyone he served my lady.
But I am not one to lose my courage.
Instead, I added fuel to his jealous flame.
Rich and handsome, he became 645
willing to risk his reputation.
Presuming in vain, and with little tact,
he caused such jealousy and strife,
he lost his good name, once intact.
One night among many, 650
I found him at Anarda's door,
his vain hopes withering as they bloomed.
His presence set my sword on fire,
so that on my own I pushed not just him,
but two others, off her street. 655
He pretended nothing had happened,
but one day, when we were playing tennis,
and deciding who'd serve first,
he shouted, in a sudden rage,
"You pack of liars, the lot of you!" 660
and at that, I lost my head.
One of my hands found his face
while the other beat back a furious attack.
That was it for the game. On each side
all broke out into civil war, 665
while I landed outsize blows
and made my rival kiss the dirt.
One attempts to make peace,
while another furiously closes in—
in the end, between the avenged and the insulted, 670
one man lay dead and three wounded.

²³ Leonor's elaborate lie echoes the hyperbolic embellishment of Alarcón's famous liar, Don García in *La verdad sospechosa*, which is the basis of Corneille's *Le menteur*.

Ricardo, scorned by my lady
 so many times, and jealous,
 if not of me, then of my fortune,
 wastes no time in seeking his revenge. 675
 Offended, he rallies friends and relatives,
 making a grand show of his injury,
 as only such a coward would.
 Let us just say,
 his fierce rage gave way to violence, 680
 so that the best remedy seemed
 to be to put ground between us
 and absent myself from my dear homeland.
 In fact, I had to leave in haste,
 for he could seek his revenge at leisure, 685
 and it never would be treachery,
 since I had injured him first.
 My uncle prepared me for my journey.
 Before I embarked, he gave to me
 this ring, a rich remembrance of Victoria, 690
 his beautiful and noble daughter.
 I traversed the cerulean expanses
 of Amphitrite's briny deep,²⁴
 unencumbered by storms,
 and, with this fair wind at my back, 695
 my hopes now land at your feet.

FERNANDO

I was so pleased to see you,
 and now your story has amazed me.
 Don't worry about our homeland,
 for you will find in my breast 700
 the loyalty of a relative,
 the kindness of a friend,
 the love of a brother.
 Indeed, I could not care for Leonor
 more than I do for you. 705
 I had given this ring
 to my lovely cousin Victoria—
 may God keep her in His glory—
 just before I left Spain.
 Although it lends you credence, 710
 the truth is you do not need
 any such proof with me.
 In fact, I welcome the occasion
 of your unfortunate quarrel,

²⁴ *Amphitrite*: In Greek mythology, Poseidon's wife and queen of the sea.

	for it has brought you to me.	715
LEONOR	There is a reason your good name is renowned the world over.	
FERNANDO	Don Leonardo, you are my brother.	
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> What courtesy! He's a Ribera, I see. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.	720
FERNANDO	We'll put you up with Don Juan de Córdoba.	
LEONOR	Who is that?	725
FERNANDO	Who? A fine gentleman from Córdoba.	
LEONOR	It would be neither fitting nor, indeed, courteous if my own comfort came at this nobleman's expense.	730
FERNANDO	Don Juan has a separate room. Her Highness honors him for his great valor.	
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> What's this I hear? <i>(Aloud)</i> Is he a person of refinement?	735
FERNANDO	He certainly cuts a fine figure and is affable enough, although inconstant, it must be said: he misled, seduced, and then abandoned a lady from Seville. Now he adores Estela, Countess of Sora. She is very beautiful, but in my opinion nothing can excuse such a fickle change of heart.	740 745
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> Take courage, my highest hopes! <i>(Aloud)</i> It's not always the man's fault.	
FERNANDO	Yet he has often spoken	

	of Leonor's ²⁵ thousand good qualities.	
LEONOR	And yet he hates her now?	750
FERNANDO	Love makes even the eagle-eyed blind. When the Countess is around, he can't see straight.	
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> How cruel! / ¡Ay cruel! <i>(Aloud)</i> And does she return his feelings?	755
FERNANDO	She is grateful to him, friendly and courteous. She could do no less given his brave action on her behalf. You'll hear of it soon enough. Fineo!	760
<i>Enter FINEO</i>		
FINEO	Yes, sir.	
FERNANDO	Prepare Don Leonardo's room for him at once.	765
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> This is killing me!	
RIBETE	<i>(Aside)</i> Hush, Leonor.	
FERNANDO	Put him in Don Juan's quarters.	
FINEO	Straight away, sir.	
FERNANDO	Come, Leonardo.	770
LEONOR	I'll be right in.	
FERNANDO	I will await you in Her Highness's room.	

FERNANDO and FINEO exit on opposite sides of the stage

²⁵ Although Fernando knows that Don Juan has abandoned a woman in Seville named Leonor, he does not make the connection to his own sister.

Where are your thunderbolts, oh Jove?
 Does your arm lie useless and idle? 810
 How can you suffer
 this barbarous betrayal?
 Does Vulcan not provide
 weapons of fire,
 forged by his hammer, 815
 from which there is no escape?²⁸
 Where is Nemesis, goddess of revenge?
 To which god has she ceded her power,
 who might gladly avenge me instead?
 Fortune metes out its blows at a whim. 820
 Merit has no importance;
 virtue finds no reward.
 Is love held in such low regard
 that one who claims to be noble
 need not restrain his affections? 825
 What is this misery?
 How can such truth be hidden,
 such affection despoiled
 such excellence destroyed,
 such blood dishonored, 830
 such modesty bandied about?
 How can honor such as mine
 be consumed and undone?
 I, to be spurned and dishonored like this?
 What evils the heavens allow! 835
 My nobility scorned?
 My reputation tarnished?
 My devotion unrequited?
 Is it possible that my faith,
 which reached beyond the farthest stars, 840
 could be so slandered by Don Juan?
 Vengeance, vengeance, oh heavens!
 Let the world gossip:
 despite what people might think,
 all will witness in my valor 845
 the most amazing story,
 the worthiest resolution
 the world has ever seen.
 And I swear,
 by the blue-veiled heavens, 850
 and by all the lights
 that shine within them,

²⁸ *Vulcan*: Roman god of volcanoes and metalworking who forged the weapons of the other gods.

either to triumph
 or to die in the attempt,
 without a thought to quarrels, 855
 to scorn, contempt,
 disdain, ingratitude,
 antipathy or hatred!
 I will see my honor restored
 to the very heavens above. 860
 Either my madness will absolve my errors,
 or that same madness will grant me
 the courage to right a woman's wrongs,
 with what excesses it may require,
 with what errors may come. 865

ACT II
SCENE 1

Enter ESTELA and LISARDA

LISARDA What do you think of Don Juan, Estela?

ESTELA He seems fine.

LISARDA He's such a gentleman, so gallant.
 He deserves every attention.
 He was so dashing, so spirited, 870
 so proud, so brave!

ESTELA I would expect him
 to be handsome and graceful
 if you find him to your liking.

LISARDA You flatter me, cousin. 875
 And what of the prince?

ESTELA Nothing pains me more
 than the sound of his name.
 May the heavens spare me
 his attentions! 880

LISARDA *(Aside)* May love reward
 my yearning heart.

ESTELA What a horrible man!

LISARDA	So you really don't like him?	
ESTELA	No.	885
LISARDA	Don Leonardo, on the other hand, deserves your love. He's so handsome and clever.	
ESTELA	It's happened so fast, cousin. I can't ignore what I feel for him. In this short time, he's caused me such heartache so many sleepless nights. And yet I owe Don Juan my gratitude for his attentions. But this gallant Adonis, this Spanish phoenix, this new Ganymede, this youthful god of love, this Narcissus, this sun! ²⁹	890
	The sight of him has so changed me there is no room in my heart for even the memory of a former love.	895
LISARDA	A change indeed!	905
ESTELA	It's true, I confess. Yet since I've never shown another favor, there is hardly any fault in my falling for him now.	
LISARDA	And so, he may seek his happiness.	910
ESTELA	My own, you mean.	
<i>Enter FERNANDO, LEONOR, and RIBETE</i>		
FERNANDO	Beautiful Estela, Prince Ludovico has asked me to come to you. Yet Don Juan is my friend, and I know he would lay his very soul at your feet,	915

²⁹ *Phoenix*: mythological bird that was reborn from its own ashes, also a term often used to refer positively to extraordinary people; *Adonis*, *Ganymede*, *Narcissus*: beautiful, and mostly ill-fated, young men in Greek mythology. These references emphasize Leonor's androgynous erotic appeal in contrast to the men in the play.

could have caused in me,
 those twin shining lights
 offer peace and serenity 950
 amid the raging storm,
 and sweetness when all is false.
 Yours is an arresting beauty,
 a bold charm,
 and a confident glance. 955
 Who but you could be so cruel
 and yet so merciful?
 Who else bestows
 punishment and reward,
 life and death? 960
 Who overcomes the will,
 disturbs peace of mind,
 rules over pleasure,
 reigns over volition?
 Who else but you? 965
 Who else but you
 could rule over all she beholds
 like the sun or a god?
 While you stand aloof,
 suitors surrender to a sweet death. 970
 Pain is pleasure,
 cruelty alluring,
 suffering irresistible.
 What else but your imperious beauty
 could command this delicious torture? 975
 The more my soul surrenders
 to the mercy of those eyes,
 the more it suffers,
 the more it is deceived.
 My soul comes humbly 980
 to seek mercy at your fair hand.
 Yet reflected in the crystal
 of your flashing eyes,
 it turns away,
 disabused and ashamed, 985
 for those eyes
 captivate the will,
 and steal all freedom,
 flaunting their crimes,
 flattering with their cruelty, 990
 and making death seem worthwhile.
 So wise and so lovely,
 yet so cold in your courtesy,

	reserved in your praise, sensible in your whims, virtuous in your beauty. Yet there is no blaming you, for, mysterious as a goddess, you devastate with your loveliness.	995
	What would mar another, no matter how lovely, is cause for praise in you. Only you can wound at will and delight those you kill. Change my pain into pleasure.	1000
	If my love is worthy, let me be your humble servant for if your eyes were to deny me their fortune and favor, their cruel mercy, where else could my soul turn?	1005
RIBETE	<i>(Aside)</i> On earth as it is in heaven, for ever and ever, amen! That's some poetry Leonor spouted! It's not too bad. At least her verse is penetrating, since she won't be able to go as deep with her prose...	1010
ESTELA	Don Leonardo, that's quite enough of your sweet words. I suspect you are playing the nightingale, who sings not out of love or a jealous heart, all yearning and lovelorn, but simply for his love of song. I value your courtesies, and were I assured of your love, I would grant you my favor.	1015
LEONOR	My love will prove itself in time, but you are not wrong to compare my affection to the nightingale's song. When sweetly and sincerely he sets his music stand above the jasmine or the rosebush to sing welcome to the day,	1020
		1025
		1030
		1035

- it is you he greets, celestial dawn,
for your eyes are two suns
and your beauty, the sky.
Would any nightingale
not sing when beholding you? 1040
Would he not grieve
when you are gone?
- ESTELA How glib is your tongue!
But enough, Leonardo, no more. 1045
Tonight, in the courtyard,
beneath my window,³⁰
I wish to speak to you alone.
- LEONOR My soul shall fly to obey you.
- ESTELA Goodbye, then. 1050
- LEONOR Goodbye. I am at your command,
lovely Lisarda.
- LISARDA I will see you later.
- ESTELA Very well.
- Exit ESTELA and LISARDA*
- LEONOR How was that, Ribete? 1055
- RIBETE It seems my prediction
is unfolding nicely.
Estela, blinded by love,
imagines she can coax fire
from damp wood and two cold stones. 1060
How could a great fire of love be struck,
even if she's hot for you,
when you've got no wood to burn?
- LEONOR Love is on my side.
Here comes the prince. 1065
See how vain he looks!
But I need his friendship.

³⁰ In the original, the space beneath a woman's window is called the "terrero"—see introduction on courtship in the *comedia*.

RIBETE A real gem!

Enter LUDOVICO

LUDOVICO Don Leonardo!

LEONOR My prince! It's been so long 1070
since I last saw you.

LUDOVICO You do such credit
to our friendship.

LEONOR By your life, I swear—

LUDOVICO Enough! What is there to swear about? 1075

LEONOR How are things with Estela?

LUDOVICO How are things?
Fernando spoke to her
and she told him with such scorn
that I ought to leave her alone, 1080
that she “does not love the prince”
nor “plans to marry.”
I'm vexed by her slight,
I tell you, as my interest in her
is plain for all to see. 1085

LEONOR We're friends, are we not?

LUDOVICO Who but you deserves
to know the truth of my love?

LEONOR There is much we need to discuss.

RIBETE *(Aside)* Watch what you're doing. 1090

LEONOR This is a matter of great importance.
Listen: Estela has declared herself to me,
but for your sake I will not love her,
not if my life were at stake,
for moments like these 1095
are the test of true friendship.
I'd prefer you to possess
the favor she would give me.

And so that you may win her,
you must go to the courtyard tonight
to speak with her, pretending you are me. 1100

LUDOVICO What are you saying?

LEONOR You must grant me
this favor. Come,
I'll tell you the rest. 1105

Exit LUDOVICO and LEONOR

RIBETE What's Leonor doing?
But she's a woman—what wouldn't she attempt?
Even the most proper of women
has a touch of the devil about her.

Enter TOMILLO

TOMILLO Good God! I can't find
Don Juan anywhere! 1110

RIBETE *(Aside)* That's the buffoon who
means to deflower Flora—
(Aloud) Have the town crier call for him,
as they do in Spain. 1115

TOMILLO My countryman!
How it warms the cockles of my heart
to think I see other Spaniards!

RIBETE It's a natural feeling
towards one's countrymen. 1120

TOMILLO You serve Don Fernando, don't you?

RIBETE That's right.
I'm a servant of his cousin, Don Leonardo.
Anything else?

TOMILLO How's the pay? 1125

RIBETE He pays in advance.

TOMILLO And he feeds you?

Enter JUAN alone

JUAN	<p>There is such turmoil in my breast, such passion in my soul! 1155 I can find no rest as this life takes its bitter toll. Though I relish each sleepless turn, I shiver and I burn at this love.</p>
	<p>There is such pain in this pleasure, this jealousy that wracks me is hell in different form. 1160 To what end did chance have that lady cross my path, if the lady I now love 1165 is the one I'll never have? Sweet Estela is well aware of my love and obligation but what of it, if she dithers, takes no risks, offers no care? 1170 She is snow to my hot fire, a moth drawn to another flame. Neither love nor hope frighten me, for good fortune remains elusive when I await such a reward. 1175 This Leonardo, cousin to Don Fernando, is now my gallant rival in love. And yet, I am amazed, for his voice, face, figure, and name are so similar to Leonor's. 1180 For who if not one who is Leonor's very copy, could indeed have spoiled such an agreeable match with Estela? Leonor, though she is absent, 1185 still haunts my imagination, and knows just how to thwart me. My desire frustrated, it is as if Leonor had come from Spain just to get in my way. 1190 The prince serves Estela, and she—fickle as she is— dotes on his friend Leonardo. I, like the last soldier on the watch, am left out in the cold, 1195 while unease consumes my favors and my sorrows—</p>

my breast, an ardent volcano,
 my soul, an Etna of fire.³²
 A poet once said: 1200
 “He who loves more, deserves more,”³³
 and so I must love, for I believe
 there is merit to my suit.
 Let Fortune’s chosen one
 receive the laurel branch, 1205
 though if love were enjoyed without merit,
 then unearned pleasure
 would be all that Fortune brought.

Enter RIBETE

RIBETE (Aside) How these blind endeavors
 weigh upon Leonor! 1210
 Yet who can hope to see
 when the blind lead the blind?³⁴
 I am to give Don Juan this letter
 as though it were from Estela.
 Since love keeps Leonor awake, 1215
 she is taking steps,
 using tricks against tricks,
 and ploys against ploys.
 Ah, there he is!
 How happy I will make him. 1220

JUAN Must I love without reward,
 and conquer without a prize?

RIBETE Fortune calls to you now
 with a happy task.
 Read this letter. 1225

JUAN What is this latest misfortune?

RIBETE It’s from Estela, Countess of Sora,
 by the grace of God.

JUAN I shall kiss this letter a thousand times,
 for it is hers. Let me read it. 1230

³² *Mt. Etna*: a volcano in Sicily.

³³ In the Spanish, this line is taken from the title of *Más merece quien más ama*, a seventeenth-century drama by Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza.

³⁴ A reference to Cupid, often depicted wearing a blindfold.

RIBETE	Have you made up your mind?	
LEONOR	This night will bring me either resolution or death.	1295
RIBETE	Be careful, Leonor.	
LEONOR	There's no other course.	
RIBETE	God, I hope you don't muck everything up.	1300
LEONOR	You don't know my courage!	
RIBETE	Who says you're a coward? Just look at you now, so brave, so quick, so proud, so daring, and, in short, another Mars in everyone's eyes, ³⁷ whose boldness alone wrecks havoc far and wide. And yet, my lady, where is the strength to match it?	1305 1310
LEONOR	What of the heroic Semiramis? What of Zenobia, Drusilla, Draznes, Camilla, ³⁸ and a thousand like them? Did they not set an example for a thousand famous men? Besides, Ribete, I have to find him first. I am only here this early to give the prince time to see Estela without running into Don Juan.	1315
RIBETE	Take courage, then, for you are here now and those are the Countess's windows up there. She spoke to me right here the other day.	1320

³⁷ *Mars*: Roman god of war.

³⁸ *Semiramis*: queen regent of the Assyrian Empire from 811 to 806 BCE; *Zenobia*: also known as Septimia Zenobia, she was the queen of the Palmyrene Empire in Syria during the third century AD; *Drusilla*: probably Livia Drusilla, advisor and wife to the Roman emperor Augustus, though Caro could also be referring to Julia Drusilla, sister and lover of the Roman emperor Caligula; *Draznes*: obscure reference.

LEONOR Make sure the keys Fineo gave you
are waiting for me where I said, Ribete. 1325

RIBETE Very well.
The ones to the room next to Estela's?
The one with balconies
to the other side of the palace,
which lies empty now? 1330

LEONOR Yes, and wait for me
where we agreed,
with one of my gowns.
My life depends on it. 1335

RIBETE No, I should stay here
to defend you,
in case Don Juan—

LEONOR Oh, what nonsense, my friend!
I know my own strength. 1340

RIBETE If you know your own strength,
then so be it, my lady. Goodbye.

Exit RIBETE

LEONOR I came early, in case
Don Juan cannot sleep
and is around too. 1345
May God delay Prince Ludovico
in case Juan shows up.

Enter JUAN

JUAN I was right to fear
there'd be someone here.
It's one man alone— 1350
I must find out who he is.

LEONOR That is a fine figure of a man.
Could it be Don Juan?
I must get closer
and find out who he is. 1355

JUAN If he would just say something,

LEONOR *moves to JUAN's side*

My courage will save him
from a thousand deaths. 1490

JUAN What's this?

LUDOVICO You defend the one
who offends you?

LEONOR I may want him alive.

JUAN What is this, by God?
Such a sudden change? 1495

LUDOVICO If only someone would kill Don Juan!

LEONOR It won't be easy,
not when I defend him.

LEONOR *fights LUDOVICO*

LUDOVICO Such terrible blows! 1500

LUDOVICO *steps back*

LEONOR That's better.
This is not your business.
Leave, sir,
before it costs you.

LUDOVICO (*Aside*) That's the first reasonable
thing he has said. 1505
They have not recognized me.
I should go now,
and not leave Estela waiting.

LUDOVICO *retreats with LEONOR chasing him offstage*

LEONOR That's more like it. 1510

JUAN That was brave and gallant.
(*Aside*) By heavens! / ¡Válgame el cielo! What is this?
For this man to provoke me,
and with his sword allow fury

	to triumph over reason! He wished me dead, yet in a moment he came to my defense. I would never have imagined such a thing. He might want me alive, he said. He bravely challenged me to fight, then resisted the one who attacked me. I do not understand.	1515 1520
LEONOR	Ah, he's gone. Let's resume our fight.	
JUAN	What is all this obliging and offending me, by God? I won't fight you, sir, which is proof enough that I am grateful.	1525
LEONOR	You think my coming to your aid was some sort of great favor? You could not be more wrong! Offended as I am, I want no other to partake of my glorious revenge. It would not be my victory if another's courage were to deprive me of my triumph. I want no one's help: my revenge would be less memorable then. No, my happiness depends on killing you myself.	1530 1535 1540
JUAN	If someone has offended you, and you believe it was me, then you are sorely deceived.	1545
LEONOR	I may have been deceived once, but no longer.	
JUAN	Then tell me who you are.	
LEONOR	One who treats me so poorly has no right to ask. The man I chased away was Prince Ludovico. He will soon be back	1550

and I don't want to see him.
 You may stay—I don't care. 1555
 And if I provoked you earlier,
 I had good reason to do so.

JUAN Who are you? Tell me.

LEONOR I won't. Rest assured,
 we'll settle this soon enough. 1560

JUAN Listen. Hear me out.

LEONOR It is not possible.
 I will find you.
 This is enough for now.

Exit LEONOR

JUAN By God, I will follow him,
 if only to confirm that he knows 1565
 it was me he spoke to.
 Who could know what I did?

Exit JUAN

SCENE 4

Enter ESTELA at her window

ESTELA What takes Leonardo so long?
 He must be waiting for things 1570
 to quiet down at the palace,
 or perhaps he is detained
 in someone else's arms.

May love prove me wrong.
 What to do with myself? 1575
 Oh, could that be him now?

Enter LUDOVICO

LUDOVICO Good lord! / ¡Válgame el cielo!
 Where is Leonardo going at this hour?
 I heard him talking to someone.

ESTELA Is that Leonardo? 1580

was neither foolish, ugly, poor,
lowly, or rustic, was she?
And yet you know, you ingrate,
how you toyed with her honor
despite her sincere devotion. 1645

JUAN What Leonor? What lady?

LEONOR Come closer. Listen.
There is always some truth to rumor.
I know reputations do not lie.

JUAN *(Aside)* Don Fernando has given me away! 1650

*JUAN and LEONOR continue speaking while the action moves to LUDOVICO and ESTELA.
The scene switches continually between the two couples*

LUDOVICO I am your slave, of that I'm certain,
but not whether you pine for me,
beautiful Estela.
(Aside) I must find out if she favors Leonardo.
(Aloud) I know that Prince Ludovico is dying 1655
for the love of you.

He is rich, noble, royal, in fact.
And although love pays no heed
to distinctions such as these,
I cannot possibly prevail against him. 1660

ESTELA I find him tiresome, arrogant, pretentious, in fact.
I cannot stand to hear his name.

LUDOVICO *(Aside)* Oh, ingrate,
my love is clearly more deserving!

The action switches back to LEONOR and JUAN

LEONOR So many pretty words. 1665
You confess your love, then.

JUAN I do confess it.

LEONOR So then you betrayed her?

JUAN It is true that I loved her,
but know this: I did not offend her honor. 1670

	I saw my previous love was but shadows and flickering light. Leonor is a fading star, and you a resplendent sun.	1700
LUDOVICO	I know well that Don Juan has a claim on your affection.	1705
ESTELA	I would be lying if I denied it, and yet it was... Hear me out.	
LUDOVICO	Speak.	
ESTELA	Allow me to explain, Leonardo. As one who in a shady grove or garden comes upon a pure, fragrant, lovely field of flowers of every possible color, and is drawn by the beauty of the rose, only to then find a more delicate jasmine, and so must leave the rose behind, so it was for me. I saw Don Juan, a handsome rose, and out of gratitude accepted him as my suitor.	1710 1715 1720
	Then, at the sight of you, all my senses drawn to you, I chose what I found most beautiful. For though I may esteem the rose, I find in you, the jasmine, a more fragrant delight.	1725
LEONOR	So Leonor was just a twinkling star, announcing the sun to come?	
JUAN	That's right.	
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> This is tearing me apart! <i>(Aloud)</i> Listen—	1730
JUAN	I am all ears.	
LEONOR	The wandering traveler treasures the pure light of the morning star in the darkness of the night.	1735

	<p>It alone brightens the path and offers him hope. And so, though the sun's rays might finally reach him, he remains grateful to the star, that beacon in the storm. Leonor was the star that led the way through the dark night of your love. She was your guide, and you, ingrate that you are, forgot the spark of its beautiful light long before you fell for my radiance. Had you not forsaken the star long before you saw the sun?</p>	<p>1740</p> <p>1745</p> <p>1750</p>
LUDOVICO	<p>That's a strange metaphor, Estela, to compare a rose to Don Juan's courage and gallantry.</p>	
ESTELA	<p>Not so.</p>	1755
LUDOVICO	<p>But listen: he wasn't wise who, among the flowers, preferred the jasmine to the rose. Its perfume does not last once it starts to wither. The rose maintains a strong sweet smell, fragrant to the very end, so that even in death one may call it beautiful. The rose is, indeed, the better flower. The jasmine is not as fine. Presented with rose and jasmine, you welcome the brief splendor of the jasmine, its fragrant snow, which the spring wind will blow away. But then once you see the coveted rose, with its proud, beautiful grace, you'll surely prefer it to my love. The jasmine is but a lowly flower. The rose is full of fragrance.</p>	<p>1760</p> <p>1765</p> <p>1770</p>
JUAN	<p>A nice bit of sophistry!</p>	1775
LEONOR	<p>Forgive me. I must say what I feel. Go, go on back to Spain.</p>	

An honorable man should not deign
to deceive such a noble woman.

JUAN My love for you redoubles 1780
my feelings of disdain. I've forgotten her,
yet this is the reward I get.

LEONOR Then lose all hope, Don Juan.
I only wanted to see you 1785
in order to disabuse you.

Exit LEONOR

ESTELA You make such easy wordplay
of my pain, Don Leonardo!
Yet I'll be firm in my affection.
Nothing will stop me from loving you.

LUDOVICO Whether a jasmine or a rose, 1790
I will merit fortune's crown.

ESTELA Farewell.
Dawn is breaking now,
clear and radiant.

LUDOVICO Stay, for your eyes rival the sun. 1795

ESTELA More flattery! Look for me later,
and farewell.

Exit ESTELA

LUDOVICO I'm blind without your light.

JUAN How could Estela respond like that?
How could she be so disdainful? 1800

My heart pounds as though
it would leave the prison
of my breast. My battling desires
will cost me my very life.
Foolish thoughts afflict my soul, 1805
lost in doubt and chaos.
Don Fernando is to blame.
What should I do now,
ungrateful Estela?

	<p>May the one who ruined my happiness and led to such trouble be cursed a thousand times over! I believe what you say, but, by God there is no one else in Flanders who knows my story.</p>	1845
FERNANDO	<p>Neither my honor, nor my noble devotion to you, would ever allow me to say a word.</p>	1850
JUAN	<p>You have wronged me, and this adds insult to injury. Not knowing who speaks of my past so carelessly is a slow torture. I am losing my mind! How my fears and woes afflict me!</p>	1855
<i>Enter ESTELA and LISARDA</i>		
FERNANDO	<p>Here comes Estela.</p>	
JUAN	<p>My anxious soul has been longing for her. Say nothing.</p>	1860
FERNANDO	<p>Beautiful Estela, lovely Lisarda, the dawn breaks late today, for here are the sun and the sunrise walking side by side.</p>	1865
LISARDA	<p>A new hyperbole.</p>	
JUAN	<p>Hardly new, for Estela is always a radiant sun, and you a shining dawn.</p>	1870
ESTELA	<p>That's quite enough, Don Juan. How many times must I acknowledge your courage and your courtesy?</p>	
JUAN	<p>It is my misfortune never to please you. Instead you reproach me, so aloof and ungrateful.</p>	1875

ESTELA	No, Don Juan. Ungrateful, no. But perhaps less than sensible in my courtesy to you.	1880
JUAN	Your good sense is killing me.	
ESTELA	I'm eternally obliged to you, Don Juan, and may God make me worthy of your courtesy. It is my every wish to repay your affection.	1885
JUAN	A change for the better, Don Fernando!	
FERNANDO	See how wrong you've been? (<i>Aside</i>) I must prevail today.	
JUAN	Tell me —by your life!— a single truth.	1890
ESTELA	Ask away.	
JUAN	Will you answer?	
ESTELA	Yes, by my life!	
JUAN	Who told you that in Spain I once served, wooed, and enjoyed Doña Leonor, a lady from Seville?	1895
ESTELA	Who? You yourself.	
JUAN	I did? When?	1900
ESTELA	Just now! Didn't your words awake me from my ignorance a moment ago?	
JUAN	And before that, who?	
ESTELA	No one, on my word.	1905
JUAN	Then why were you so angry at me when we spoke at your window last night?	

ESTELA	I don't know—by my life! Just wait. You can't keep these things from a woman. Call Tomillo. He'll tell us the truth.	1980
LISARDA	You're right. Tomillo!	
<i>Enter TOMILLO</i>		
TOMILLO	How can I serve you?	
ESTELA	Tell me the truth about something, and this purse is yours.	1985
<i>She offers TOMILLO a purse</i>		
TOMILLO	<i>(Aside)</i> I've got a truth for her. <i>(Aloud)</i> Go on, ask me.	
ESTELA	Tell me, who was this Leonor from Seville, whom Don Juan knew so well?	1990
TOMILLO	Who? Oh yes, oh yes! Silly me. It was little Nora the streetwalker. She sold her wares in Frogtown, and also passed false coins. ⁴⁰ You must mean the one whose house Don Juan used to visit, right?	1995
ESTELA	Yes, perhaps that's it.	
TOMILLO	<i>(Aside)</i> How easily she's deceived!	
ESTELA	Who was this woman?	2000
TOMILLO	Not a woman at all, she was more of a monster! Her forehead was wide, her cheeks all sunken, with bristling brows.	
ESTELA	I'll congratulate him on his catch.	2005

⁴⁰ Tomillo fabricates a story to both protect his master, Don Juan, and to benefit from Estela's offer of payment. This scene refers back to Tirso's Don Juan, who is fond of boasting about his dealings with whores.

LISARDA	(<i>Aside</i>) I'll go along with this. (<i>Aloud</i>) And did he love her?	
TOMILLO	I don't know. I only know that she bragged about being his.	2010
ESTELA	Can you believe such a man?	
TOMILLO	You are surprised? Don't you know that he finds any woman beautiful?	
ESTELA	You are right. Here comes Leonardo.	2015
TOMILLO	(<i>Aside</i>) I played that hand well.	
<i>Exit TOMILLO. Enter LEONOR dressed as a man</i>		
LEONOR	I searched in vain inside my heart, oh lovely Estela, but I was not there. My heart encouraged me to dare, and to seek in you my best part. I dared not hope, then fear took hold, yet at last humility conquered fear. And when at last the truth made bold, my love rendered it all quite clear. And so I sought myself in you, proving the paradox, you see: I could not find myself in me, but yet I found myself in you.	2020 2025
ESTELA	Leonardo, you know it isn't much to say my eyes reflect your image true, ⁴¹ For that mirror comes from my love for you, not your own pretensions of love as such. To better your conceit and make it sound, instead say love finds me within your eyes, rather than finding yourself in my guise, so that I'm missing, nowhere to be found. Clearly you have no real memory of me nor space for myself in all that is thine.	2030 2035

⁴¹ Estela comments on Leonardo/Leonor's clumsy use of Neoplatonic love theory. Leonor's reply tries to amend for her mistake in a way that sounds simultaneously pedantic and amusing.

- If you loved me full well I'd surely be
in your remembrance as you are in mine. 2040
- LEONOR Though your sweet lips may have let fall
a belief so misguided, in all fact
whatsoever the lover does at all
moves the beloved in that very act.
When Love lights a true fire in your heart, 2045
it is the beloved's breath that fans it,
and as it mingles with your breath in part,
you live to see love advance it.
I carry you within my heart, so dear.
I cannot believe I deserve to be 2050
carried within you, as you are in me,
'til I see myself in your eyes appear.
- ESTELA In short: you're not yourself without me.
- LEONOR I will never deserve you,
and so my love will never know 2055
the satisfaction of knowing you love me.
- ESTELA And is love so suspicious?
- LISARDA Love must be wise.
- LEONOR There will be no satisfaction
in your loving me, 2060
given my qualities.
- ESTELA That is most unfair!
Your merits should give you hope.
I will go to the park this afternoon.
Follow the carriage. 2065
- LEONOR I will obey.
- ESTELA Then goodbye.
- Exit ESTELA and LISARDA*
- LEONOR May God keep you,
amid such misfortunes and pain
as clearly lie ahead. 2070
I find danger to be certain,
with no solution at hand.

Alas! What should I do next?
Love undoes all attempts to right my wrong.

Enter JUAN

JUAN (*Aside*) Yes, Leonardo was here. 2075
The force of my desire has conjured him.

LEONOR (*Aside*) For him to love another
while I'm humiliated?
Not a chance! I would die first!

JUAN Don Leonardo, sir— 2080

LEONOR My friend—
(*Aside*) If only you were more than that!
But you are fickle as all men.
(*Aloud*) What can I do for you?

JUAN I need your help. 2085
Listen: I have come to you,
as you are a nobleman,
to beg of you,
as you are a gentleman,
to ask of you— 2090

LEONOR (*Aside*) Oh, you traitor!
You have greater claims on me,
if only you would recognize them.

JUAN My lord, I'll make my case brief,
and state it once and for all, 2095
because Estela encourages me.
The Countess—

LEONOR Good start!
Go on.

JUAN As I was saying, Countess Estela, 2100
following her inclination, or perhaps
in light of my outsize courage
on that occasion you've heard about,
set her eyes on me—as well a woman might.
She was grateful and that sufficed. 2105
This is often women's weak spot:
fond obligation is the start.

She caused my sleepless nights,
 all my foolish carrying on,
 and seemed to welcome my sighs. 2110
 Then, fool that I was,
 I considered myself the happy master
 of both her beauty and her estate.
 Then when you came from Spain,
 you cast a spell on her 2115
 and put an end to my happy love
 when it had only just begun.
 Yet I've kept Estela under careful watch
 —like Argos of the hundred eyes—⁴²
 and now I really am quite sure 2120
 all her fickle changes only prove
 without a shadow of a doubt
 that she's actually in love with me.
 And thus, Leonardo, if my pleas
 can sway a nobleman such as you, 2125

I beg of you to give me relief
 by courting Estela no more,
 since my suit came first
 and I've made such heroic efforts.
 If you do me this kindness now, 2130
 your generosity and my gratitude
 will go down in history.

LEONOR (Aside) Oh, you ingrate, you despicable man!
 A fine way for a nobleman to carry on!
 (Aloud) You've expressed your pain 2135
 so keenly, Don Juan,
 that I only wish I could
 (Aside) rip your soul out
 (Aloud) set your mind at ease.
 Time and again the Countess has said 2140
 she would be mine, it's true,
 and has no will beyond my own,
 and all she does is nothing but
 a loving sacrifice for my sake.
 Yet what does any of that matter, 2145
 when my own soul is bound elsewhere
 by other ties of love?
 I only wish I'd loved Estela
 devotedly, faithfully,

⁴² *Argos*: A hundred-eyed giant from Greek mythology.

- just so I could help you out. 2150
 Yet I am of no use to you,
 for my own sweet thoughts of love
 have me so beguiled
 that I'm in heaven above.
 And so, Don Juan, it seems to me 2155
 I cannot do anything for you.
- JUAN How could Estela
 have so little effect on you?
- LEONOR If words cannot persuade you
 that I'm telling the truth, 2160
 let this portrait serve as proof
 that I love another,
 full worthy of my devotion.⁴³
- LEONOR *takes out a small portrait*
- (*Aside*) Now, you ingrate,
 I'll be revenged for your scorn. 2165
- JUAN Heavens! What's this?
- LEONOR Take a look and tell me
 if this perfection, this elegance,
 this grace, this beauty...
- JUAN I'm losing my mind! 2170
- LEONOR ... could ever be forgotten for Estela's sake.
- JUAN (*Aside*) She's turned me to stone.
 It's like looking upon the head of Medusa.
 A basilisk before my eyes!⁴⁴
 She's taken my very life. 2175
- LEONOR (*Aside*) Who is he bargaining with now?
 (*Aloud*) You seem surprised.
- JUAN Oh heavens! It seems to me

⁴³ Miniature portraits were luxury gifts exchanged by lovers in this period. "Leonardo" takes out one of these portraits to prove that he is in a relationship with "Léonor."

⁴⁴ *Medusa*: In Greek mythology, a female monster with snakes for hair whose gaze turned her victims to stone. *Basilisk*: a fabled snake-like creature which could also kill with its eyes (see note 25).

	I've seen this lady before and that this portrait was once mine. (<i>Aside</i>) My reason must surrender to the truth before my eyes.	2180
LEONOR	You must know I've carried it with me from Spain. It's the portrait of a lady to whom I owe the glory of a most sweet endeavor, and whose delights, if I live, will lead to the bonds of marriage. That is why I'm in Brussels, for I cannot wed unless I first punish a wrong with force, a crime with death.	2185 2190 2195
JUAN	(<i>Aside</i>) What's happening to me? How could I resist when confronted with my dishonor? Why did I not stop this talk of infamy? What good is a life without honor? And yet, did Leonor yield to him so easily? Loyalty, pure faith reduced to disgrace? Yet it was done under the name of husband. ⁴⁵ Leave me be, jealous thoughts. I must forgive her. Only I am to blame. I abandoned her. I was the ingrate. What am I to do amid such confusion? (<i>Aloud</i>) Don Leonardo...	2200 2205 2210
LEONOR	(<i>Aside</i>) The traitor seems to be coming around. (<i>Aloud</i>) What's this you say?	
JUAN	(<i>Aside</i>) I don't know what I'm saying— I burn in a jealous rage. I'm lost in a labyrinth	2215

⁴⁵ Marriage vows exchanged in private long had the force of an actual marriage, even after the Church began trying to enforce public unions instead.

(Aloud) So you are my rival, Don Juan?

JUAN Yes, Leonardo.

LEONOR Leonor never would say—
perhaps out of respect 2260
for the Córdoba name,
which would have been tarnished
by such disloyalty.
All she said was that
I'd find you in Brussels, 2265
and that I'd learn the name
from her letters.
Now that you've confessed,
this is as good a time as any
to kill you. 2270

Enter FERNANDO, as LEONOR and JUAN pull out their swords

FERNANDO *(Aside)* My cousin
and Don Juan, at odds?

JUAN Don Fernando!

LEONOR You think he heard us?

JUAN Who knows. 2275

LEONOR Well, not to put too fine a point on it,
I'll kill you, Don Juan.

JUAN You say that so pointedly, Leonardo.

LEONOR When I duel my courage rules,
and I forget the finer points of art— 2280
the parries and the thrusts—
though I know the famous swordmaster,
Don Luis de Narváez.⁴⁷

FERNANDO *(Aside)* What's this I see? What's this I hear?
(Aloud) Don Juan, Leonardo, 2285
what are you talking about?

⁴⁷ *Luis Pacheco de Narváez*: Famous 17th century Spanish fencing master who wrote the *Libro de las grandezas de la espada*, which taught the art of fencing using the principles of geometry.

that only you escape her general disdain— 2315

LEONOR Stop.

FERNANDO I will stop.
Now that you know, Leonardo,
how will you respond to such favor?
If not indifferent, then at least warm? 2320
(Aside) Lord knows how it hurts
to serve as her go-between
when I adore her so!

LEONOR Well, Fernando,
if I have any claim to Estela's love,
I withdraw it now. 2325

FERNANDO Have you gone mad?

LEONOR I've completely lost my mind.
(Aside) Will this afternoon never come?

FERNANDO Let me help you out. 2330

LEONOR Not yet.
(Aside) I need to distract him somehow.
(Aloud) Come with me.

FERNANDO Willingly.

Exit FERNANDO and LEONOR

SCENE 2

Enter TOMILLO

TOMILLO Ever since I drank that chocolate,
or whatever it was Flora gave me,
I've been in such a daze.
I can't keep my eyes open. 2335

Enter FLORA

FLORA *(Aside)* Here's Tomillo now.
Hasn't the chocolate taken effect yet? 2340

and examine him again.

She turns him over

He sure is heavy, the bastard!	
By all the saints in heaven,	2375
I hope he doesn't wake up!	
Some tangled silk and a cigar—	
is there no vice this dirty louse	
has not picked up? Ah, this must be	
the precious purse, most worthy	2380
of my service and devotions.	
Jesus, what is he wearing!	
One, two, three, four, five,	
six, seven, eight layers of rags.	
I will never be done counting.	2385

She finds the purse and empties it

Ah yes, here you are,	
you sweet repository of hope and <i>escudos</i> ! ⁵⁰	
How I revere you!	
I take you into my heart,	
sacred treasury of that rich metal	2390
that tempted Midas and Croesus. ⁵¹	
I'll take my leave while he sleeps	
and leave him those other jewels	
to look after when he awakes.	

Exit FLORA and enter RIBETE

RIBETE	Leonor is furious	2395
	and she won't say why.	
	She won't listen,	
	and nothing will calm her down.	
	She would not tell me why	
	she was meeting Don Juan	2400
	in the gardens this evening,	
	I don't know what she's up to.	
	My God! / ¡Válgame Dios! What could it be?	
	I will follow her—	
	this won't end well.	2405

⁵⁰ *Escudo*: Spanish coin.

⁵¹ *Midas and Croesus*: Greek mythological figures associated with great wealth and a tragic end.

than a life of disrepute.
 This is well reasoned.
 Oh, honor, there's no respite
 from jealousy and despair! 2460

Enter LEONOR

LEONOR Forgive my delay: Estela has kept me
 and would not let me leave her side.

JUAN Her love does not trouble me—
 my honor is my only concern. 2465
 I've called you here, Leonardo,
 so we can die at each other's hands.

LEONOR That is my hope too, Don Juan.

Enter RIBETE at the door

RIBETE *(Aside)* Such tender words!
 What am I waiting for? 2470
 My fears are confirmed.
 Leonor's brother is with Estela—
 I must find him right away.
 Leonor, your enterprise must come to an end.

Exit RIBETE

LEONOR On this day, Don Juan, my disgrace
 will end, by God! / *¡por Dios!* 2475
 Your death will finally free me
 to marry the one I love.

JUAN That may indeed be your good fortune,
 but all misfortune is mine. 2480
 Even if my sword struck you first,
 and you died soon after,
 none of it would matter.

My grave injury, this gross dishonor,
 would not go away. 2485

Having endured such shame,
 I could never marry Leonor
 who so lightly shared her favors with you,
 having once been mine.
 And if you should kill me and marry her,
 you'd be marrying my widow. 2490

	Joy of joys, indeed, but you needn't worry— none of that will happen. I will kill you now, and you must try to kill me, so that as our lives meet their end, so will my suffering and your hopes for happiness.	2495
LEONOR	Don Juan, I want to kill you, not to die not when I plan to enjoy that divine prize. But enough of this chatter— let our swords do the talking.	2500
JUAN	To kill and be killed: that's the best I can hope for.	2505
<i>FERNANDO and LUDOVICO enter and draw their swords</i>		
FERNANDO	My lord, Ribete has asked me to come without delay, for Don Juan and Leonardo are dueling. What's all this?	2510
LUDOVICO	Gentlemen, two friends with their swords unsheathed?	
FERNANDO	I'm here in the nick of time.	
JUAN	Can this be true? <i>(Aside)</i> Nothing ever goes my way! Oh, ungracious fortune! Must this too happen to me?	2515
FERNANDO	Ah, you must be testing your swords! Is this a drill? Have you been studying that manual— what is it called? "Mastering the Sword"?— with its recommendations on that most noble art? Don Juan, you're not quarreling with my cousin? Is this friendship, I ask you?	2520 2525
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> See what you've forced me to, Leonor!	

- the ties between you,
had she not accepted my love,
would you still love her? 2640
- JUAN I would adore her.
- LEONOR Well, you'll see Leonor soon enough,
and perhaps you'll get your just deserts.
- JUAN Where is she? 2645
- LEONOR In Brussels.
- JUAN What?
- LEONOR Wait here a moment.
- Exit LEONOR and enter ESTELA, LISARDA, FLORA, RIBETE, and TOMILLO*
- ESTELA Is Don Leonardo really
at odds with Don Juan? 2650
- RIBETE As far as I can tell.
- TOMILLO Oh, my purse and my *escudos*!
- LISARDA Leonardo is not with them.
- ESTELA Gentlemen, what has happened here?
- FERNANDO I do not know what to say,
I am speechless. 2655
- LISARDA Ludovico, listen.
- LUDOVICO (*Aside*) I cannot bear the sight of Estela,
having heard her disdainful scorn
with my own ears. 2660
(*Aloud*) What is that you say, beautiful Lisarda?
- LISARDA What happened to Don Leonardo?
Where is he?
- LUDOVICO Come over here and I'll tell you.
- FERNANDO (*Aside*) If only this could have been prevented! 2665

Today I must either redeem my honor
or die in the attempt.
Oh, sister, I am losing my mind!

TOMILLO	Flora, come here for a moment.	
FLORA	Where, nitwit?	2670
TOMILLO	Ribete...	
RIBETE	What is going on?	
TOMILLO	I am such an ass.	
RIBETE	<i>(Aside)</i> Where is Leonor? She's gotten into such a bind!	2675
<i>Enter LEONOR, dressed as an elegant lady</i>		
LEONOR	Brother, Prince, husband, I will forgive you for your low opinion of my love, for now you'll see how I've come here, constant and resolute...	2680
RIBETE	What is this?	
LEONOR	...from Spain all the way to Flanders, risking death time and again: first, as I fought with Ludovico beneath Estela's window, and wounded my own husband, and today, when only my respect for the crown stayed my hand, confusing my own brother with extraordinary schemes, and just now, daring and brave, ready to take Don Juan's life to regain my chaste honor. And had he not shown regret, by God, I would have done it, emboldened by my courage to right a woman's wrongs. I was Leonardo, and now am Leonor again. Will you love me?	2685 2690 2695 2700

Its creator, a modest woman,
begs you to forgive its faults.