

THE BEAST OF HUNGARY

TEODOSIA

Feet don't fail me now.

LAURO

Stop, dreadful monster!

TEODOSIA

Aren't you afraid of me?

LAURO

I don't get scared. I'm a nobleman.

TEODOSIA

And what is your purpose?

LAURO

To kill you or capture you.

TEODOSIA

You would kill me?

LAURO

My God!

TEODOSIA

What?

LAURO

Can it be? Such a lovely face on such a monstrous body? The villagers ran away from you? They should have wooed you instead. Could you be the one responsible for so much missing bread and cattle?

TEODOSIA

I needed food.

LAURO

Peasants are easily scared...

TEODOSIA

Their fear kept me safe.

LAURO

So lovely yet so fearsome, and strong as Hercules! Are you a harpy or a mermaid?

TEODOSIA

Time has not yet healed the wound of my misfortune. Since you are determined to follow me, I must tell you my story.

LAURO

Tell me.

TEODOSIA

Listen well.

LAURO

I will.

TEODOSIA

I am Queen Theodosia,
wife of Primislao,
the King of Hungary.

LAURO

You, the Queen?

TEODOSIA

Yes. When I first arrived in Hungary from England, I was so homesick, I asked my husband to bring my younger sister Faustina to keep me company. She envied my life, and grew so sick with jealousy she told my husband Primislao that I'd once loved the King of Scotland. She said I still pined for him, and would do anything to marry him, even bring him Primislao's head on a platter. Primislao believed Faustina and ordered his servants to bring me to this mountain and threw me to the wild beasts. They left me for dead but my innocence protected me from any attack. The beasts grew tame at my feet, leading me to their caves and bringing me food. Months passed, and with the skins the beasts brought me, I fashioned clothes so I could seek food in the villages near by. The shepherds fled from me, but I managed to trap one, who told me the King, my husband, had married my sister. Forgive my tears.

LAURO

Your tears are pearls in a sea of sorrows. Please, continue.

TEODOSIA

They say Faustina gave birth two or three times, though her children do not live past the anniversary of the day they threw me to the beasts. I hope that will happen again—she is pregnant once more.

LAURO

Do not weep, my dear lady, or you may never taste revenge

on so cruel a sister. Heaven has led me to you. I beg you, come with me to my house, where you can have the privacy that you desire. My late parents left me these lands. You'll have fine jewels and silks, after living in the woods. What say you?

TEODOSIA

If I go, The King and tyrant Queen will surely discover I am alive. Let me be—I am used to my fate and no longer feel the sting of hurt. Give me your word you will not tell anyone I am Teodosia.

LAURO

I would never. All I ask is to see you and serve you.

TEODOSIA

You may visit me in these caves, but see that you come alone. Tell me your name.

LAURO

Lauro.

TEODOSIA

An apt name. In the shade of your laurel-branches, I will be safe.

LAURO

People are coming. You hide by the brook and I'll retreat into this ditch.

TEODOSIA

Heaven keep you, Lauro.

LAURO

May the heavens return to you your husband and your crown.

TEODOSIA

That is in God's hands, for no good ever comes from seeking revenge.

SELVAGIO

Be seated so the Council may begin.

BARTOLO

Let's do this in good order. We can hold a council as good as any at court, for what matters to us.

SELVAGIO

Sit here, Llorente.

LLORENTE

Gladly.

SELVAGIO

You are a councilor, and, besides, I like having you at my side.

BARTOLO

Benito, sit.

BENITO

This is good. Let this Council begin!

SELVAGIO

The first matter is to bring a doctor to town. Hiring one here would cost less than riding into court with our chamber pots so they can diagnose our ills.

BARTOLO

Selvagio is right. We must find a doctor.

LLORENTE

I concur.

BENITO

The doctor is the constable of a town's good health.

BARTOLO

A dance instructor is also in order, for when it is time to dance.

LLORENTE

You're right. What festivities are planned to celebrate the Holy Days?

SELVAGIO

Plays, which as you know, give everyone great joy.

BENITO

Who is the playwright?

SELVAGIO

The Barber, who is half-schooled.

LLORENTE

Call him straightaway!

BARTOLO

Crier, go call the Barber.

SELVAGIO

We've had better years, since we started these devotions.

BENITO

Let these be good ones—I'll help pay.

BARBERO

The aldermen as well?

PREGONERO

Everyone is calling for you.

BARTOLO

God keep you, good sirs.

BENITO

Ah, Pablos, our very own horse-doctor. Are you still bleeding the nymphs of Parnassus?

BARBERO

I am, but gently, for it's hard to find that vein of inspiration.

SELVAGIO

How about the holy plays?

BARBERO

I no longer write them.

SELVAGIO

Why?

BARBERO

I swore not to. If you want simple tales of ladies and lovers, I can do that. But high verse and subtle prose only confuse people. I might soon quit even the human comedies, so no one can fault me. I first invented playwriting in Hungary. Now, after perfecting the art, I can be Lope no longer. My harvest is a heap of writers who scorn the flowers for the barley. You can't please everyone. I prefer safer employment. Some here think that if they can read a sonnet, they should criticize my work. I'll honor those who treat me fairly, but as for everyone else, I'll hang up my pen as others their sword.

SELVAGIO

You're right. A man is never appreciated in his own country.

BARTOLO

A tiger is more tender!

LLORENTE

On behalf of your friends here, please forgive those who would defame you.

BARBERO

The Muses know my intention is to please the wise.

BARTOLO

Will you write me a thousand sonnets?

BARBERO

A thousand?

BARTOLO

I'd like to send them to the King.

BARBERO

He has more and better poets—peasants do not stand a chance. But I will try.

BARTOLO

When?

BARBERO

Within an hour.

LLORENTE

An hour?

BARBERO

Sooner!

BENITO

Hush, that cannot be—composing is like giving birth.

BARBERO

For those who lack my talent.

PASCUAL

I must go in, even if it upsets the Council.

PREGONERO

Stop, Pascual!

PASCUAL

I will not.

SELVAGIO

Who is it?

PASCUAL

It is I, bearing good news, for which you'll owe me a debt of gratitude.

SELVAGIO

No, not owe, it shall be paid.

PASCUAL

The King comes to our woods to hunt today! Faustina comes with him, even though she is pregnant.

SELVAGIO

To the devil with her, for she is to blame for the death of the Queen.

PASCUAL

Let's make the most of it and ask them to hunt down and kill the beast that wreaks havoc on our village.

BENITO

Why, yesterday Lorenza was out delivering a load of bread when the beast leapt in front of her. She fled, leaving the bread, and when Silván returned that night it has all been eaten: bread, basket, and donkey.

BARTOLO

Unbearable! We must speak to the King.

BENITO

Who will do it?

SELVAGIO

Is he close by?

PASCUAL

He is.

SELVAGIO

Let us both go, though I fear I may get tongue-tied.

LLORENTE

Why does that matter?

BARBERO

You should choose your words carefully.

SELVAGIO

I would like your advice, as an educated man.

BARBERO

Let's go, I'll advise you as we walk. Not too long, not too short...

BARTOLO

That beast dies today.

BENITO

I'd give all I own to see its body laid out here.

HUNTER

This sweet and pleasant fountain, surrounded by trees, will remedy your exhaustion and heat.

FAUSTINA

This meadow is a paradise where nature displays its peerless art.

KING OF HUNGARY

Before you climb the rugged slopes, my darling, rest on this soft green meadow. A garland of snow crowns its fields of emerald green, while its fountains reflect your beauty. Listen as the birds echo the harmonies of love, while the brooks and the valley echo their response. Behold this green alley, notice the scent of flowers in the air. Rest here, dear wife, so you may better climb the rugged mountain after the fierce heat declines.

FAUSTINA

No beauty, though great, can rival your own. Without the warmth of your love, this meadow would be worth nothing.

KING OF HUNGARY

May the heavens grant you long life, for nothing pleases me when we are apart.

SELVAGIO

Careful as you come near.

BARTOLO

Have you learned your lines?

SELVAGIO

I studied them well, though I forget them all when I look upon the king.

KING OF HUNGARY

What people are these?

HUNTER

Peasants from the village, sir.

SELVAGIO

Please hear us, as is your grace's ...

KING OF HUNGARY

Asses? Indeed!

FAUSTINA

A fitting name for them.

SELVAGIO

As is your grace's will, will you help defeat a beast
that lays waste to our fields and steals our food? You would give us life by giving it death.

KING OF HUNGARY

Asses around me and beasts in the hills. It has long been said that a beast lives in these woods.

BARTOLO

Yes—they've even printed its likeness and sung of its trespasses.

KING OF HUNGARY

Why have you not killed it before?

BARTOLO

We have few horses or weapons. This beast is unlike any other; it can run and talk and even
force damsels.

KING OF HUNGARY

Damsels?

BARTOLO

Unless fear has made them lie, I can name at least six.

KING OF HUNGARY

What does it look like?

SELVAGIO

I tremble to speak of it. It looks like a person, more or less.

KING OF HUNGARY

A creditable fool.

Does it speak?

BARTOLO

Yes.

KING OF HUNGARY

Is it strong?

BARTOLO

It spares no one, with a face to the front, and a back in the back, and a body like a giant's.

KING OF HUNGARY

Hush, do not frighten the queen.

FAUSTINA

The beast does not frighten me, but the heat makes me faint.

HUNTER

This meadow is not as cool as those woods, my lord.

FAUSTINA

Oh, merciful heavens, what is this I feel?

KING OF HUNGARY

The woods are a better place. You can rest there, Faustina.

SELVAGIO

Come this way, my lord, I know these dense woods and their beauty well.

KING OF HUNGARY

All of you, find a place in the shade of the trees while my wife rests. When the sun descends, we shall see if we can find this beast.

FAUSTINA

What dreadful pains...

KING OF HUNGARY

It will not escape now, even with Pegasus's wings.

LLORENTE

Off they go to seek respite from the rays of the sun. If only one would strike you, o fierce and cruel woman, more unjust than the beast that roams these hills. You had Queen Theodosia killed, the King's own wife, your dear sister, beloved by all. I hear voices. What's this? Could it be the beast of Hungary?

TEODOSIA

Stop!

LLORENTE

Not this!

TEODOSIA

Do not fear, good man. I will not harm you.

LLORENTE

Have mercy on me! What blazing eyes!

TEODOSIA

Listen to me!

LLORENTE

Then will you let me go?

TEODOSIA

Yes, once you've heard me out.

LLORENTE

What do you want?

TEODOSIA

To know who passes through here.

LLORENTE

I fear you won't like the answer.

TEODOSIA

Why not?

LLORENTE

It is the King and the tyrant sister of Queen Theodosia, who have come to kill you.

TEODOSIA

It is not the first time they've tried.

LLORENTE

You do not seem as savage as they say.

TEODOSIA

I am savage indeed, for I was sent here to live and die among the beasts.

LLORENTE

Hide and save yourself, they're coming to kill you!

TEODOSIA

The heavens protect me.

LLORENTE

They may lie in wait for you! As for me, now I've seen your face, lovelier than the stars, I know no fear. Where do you dwell? I will bring you bread and wine.

TEODOSIA

The woods are my home. Go now, and tell no one what you have seen.

LLORENTE

I will not say a word. God keep you!

TEODOSIA

My own blood was not as loyal.

LLORENTE

This whom you call a beast seems instead a goddess of love.

TEODOSIA

O snow-capped hills that rival the sun, I have been your wild beast for years, only to die at the hands of those who plotted it from the first. Though heaven and earth unite in my protection, who but death could end my sorrow?

FAUSTINA

Surely some unknown fate has brought me to this mountain, and distracted my king with a boar, leaving me to fend for myself. I had scarcely heard speak of that beast of Hungary when I was overcome by a deathly swoon. I fainted on the grass and when I came to, found the fruit of my womb, ill-fated issue, born of treachery. Terrified of the beast, I swaddled the child as best I could, so it would not fall from my belly to feed another's. I must find my husband but dare not call out, for that might call the beast to me.

TEODOSIA

This is my enemy, my sister Faustina. Could it be? The heavens brought you here so that I may take my revenge. You denied the blood we share, you will not enjoy its fruit. The sight of you lessens my pain. I fear I will be recognized; I'll hide my face behind my hair. Here I am before you!

FAUSTINA

Heavens! I am lost! My King, my lord, help!

TEODOSIA

She fainted at the sight of me. Did she recognize the one whom she wished to deprive of life, realm, and honor? Now would be the time for revenge, if my nobility would allow it. They have made me a beast, but I am ever a woman. This will be my vengeance: I will take her bastard fruit for my own. I will spare the babe's life, but she shall never see her child again. I will make this baby a beast like me to live with me and bear witness to my sorrow. May the Heavens never give you another babe! And may they put an end to this beastly life of mine! I hear voices. I had better climb up to my cave, where it is safe.

HUNTER

This way, the Queen's not here!

TEODOSIA

God help me!

KING OF HUNGARY

Search the woods!

HUNTER

The horses cannot make their way up!

KING OF HUNGARY

All my happiness is gone!

HUNTER

Is that a figure I see?

KING OF HUNGARY

If it is she, she must surely be dead.

HUNTER

It is she.

KING OF HUNGARY

Awaken, my darling. See how I bathe your face in tears of love.

FAUSTINA

Who are you?

KING OF HUNGARY

Oh gods, give her breath! Has she fainted? Is she hurt?

HUNTER

I fear both are true.

KING OF HUNGARY

My Faustina!

FAUSTINA

My lord!

KING OF HUNGARY

What's wrong?

FAUSTINA

That ferocious animal...

KING OF HUNGARY

It was madness to leave her here.

FAUSTINA

...came towards me and towered over me like a giant. It took the fruit of my womb, which I delivered after you left for the hunt. But perhaps you'll be relieved—it was a girl.

KING OF HUNGARY

Stern Heavens, why are we never granted heirs? But you are alive. Let us get you to safety.

FAUSTINA

Fear stops me from confessing I deserve all this and more...

KING OF HUNGARY

Hunters and trackers, a beast has taken my daughter! If it has killed her, it must die. The first man to see it or kill it will have these lands as reward.

HUNTER

The beast will soon be dead.

KING OF HUNGARY

Do not despair, my wife, show now your courage.

FAUSTINA

In such profound pain, life itself falters.

KING OF HUNGARY

All my earthly joy is now become sorrow. To whoever vanquishes the beast, I pledge my very crown.

PLÁCIDO

To shore, to shore!

FULGENCIO

Let no sailor on land, Arfindo.

ARFINDO

All of you, stay on the ship!

PLÁCIDO

Stop! None shall come ashore.

FULGENCIO
To shore!

ARFINDO
What isle is this?

PLÁCIDO
Truthfully, I don't know if it is an island or a continent.

FULGENCIO
What does it matter, when we are so far from Spain?

ARFINDO
It would be good to know where we are leaving this innocent child.

FULGENCIO
If he's to feed the birds and the beasts, it matters little. We must leave him, Arfindo, and heaven have mercy on us.

ARFINDO
I do as the Count's ordered. His daughter disobeyed him and secretly married her cousin, Now he wants them both killed. And as for the child, his grandson, this will be his strange death, or at least, if fortune spares him, he will be banished far from Barcelona.

PLÁCIDO
His life is in God's hands now.

ARFINDO
The Count was more of a barbarian than a father in this. Why imprison his nephew, son to the King of Naples?

FULGENCIO
When the desire for revenge overcomes family ties, all reason is lost. Had the offense been but a month or year, the Count claimed, he would have been merciful. But given the child's age, he wanted the parents to die in prison, and the child brought here to die.

PLÁCIDO
This is a strange land indeed. Rugged hills, a small river, narrow brooks and thick woods with no path in sight. Come, Felipe, wait here while we hunt for food for our journey back to Barcelona.

NIÑO
Shouldn't I come with you?

ARFINDO

We're going quite far, and Plácido prefers to go alone. You would soon get tired, sweetheart. Better wait here and play with the pretty flowers. Sit, pick some lilies, throw rocks at the birds, and lay down for a nap if we take too long.

NIÑO

Don't try to fool me. Tell me the truth: is it my grandfather's wish that I should die in this solitude? Then kill me now. The sooner I die, the sooner I will ask God for revenge.

FULGENCIO

What beast could contemplate such cruelty!

ARFINDO

If you let the boy's innocence get to you, you won't be able to do as the Count wishes.

FULGENCIO

Felipe, stay here. If you get hungry, you'll find the treats I packed for you.

NIÑO

Can't I go with you?

ARFINDO

And if you get tired?

NIÑO

I won't.

ARFINDO

You will, this wilderness is treacherous terrain. God keep you!

NIÑO

Don't take too long...

FULGENCIO

Such tender innocence could soften a stone.

ARFINDO

Let's go.

NIÑO

All alone in this place! I suspect they will go and leave me here to die. I'll climb this rock and look out to sea.

LLORENTE

He who finds the beast will have a fine reward.

LAURO

The terrain is so rough that tracking will be difficult. What sorrow it would be to see the Queen captured, though at least she would die avenged, having taken Faustina's child.

NIÑO

What's this? They are sailing off! This is my grandfather's doing. What will I do all alone in this wilderness?

LAURO

Do you hear a voice coming from those trees?

BENITO

It's probably just a bird singing to the sun.

NIÑO

What will I do alone in this strange land?

LLORENTE

It's the babble of a fountain, voicing its sad murmur.

LAURO

That's not a bird or a stream; it's a human voice.

NIÑO

Am I to blame for the wrong done to my grandfather? Oh! I hear animals stirring. Have mercy, kind Heavens, they've come to eat me up!

LAURO

Stop, I can see him now .

BENITO

I can't.

LAURO

Can't you see the boy on that rock, weeping?

BENITO

It's true!

LLORENTE

He could move the stones to tears.

BENITO

He wears fine clothes.

LAURO

Come down, child, and tell us what troubles you.

NIÑO

Please don't kill me! I come from a distant land.

LAURO

He speaks Spanish!

LLORENTE

You've been to Spain. You can understand him.

LAURO

Yes, three years I lived there. Come down child, don't be afraid!

NIÑO

Are you Christians?

LAURO

Can't you tell?

NIÑO

So you're Moors?

LAURO

All the moor loving.

NIÑO

You won't harm me then?

LAURO

By no means.

NIÑO

Then I'm coming down.

LAURO

The ways of Heaven are strange indeed.

NIÑO

Please don't hurt me.

LAURO

How has a Spaniard like you come to be in this place?

NIÑO

Well, sir...

LAURO
Tell me.

NIÑO
The Count of Barcelona has a daughter. I am her son, and my father is the son of a king that lives beyond the sea. My father did not marry my mother and now my grandfather holds her prisoner and had me left here, so as not to kill one so young. What land is this?

LAURO
Hungary.

NIÑO
Tell me: in Hungary, do they kill the children whose grandfathers hate them?

LAURO
Such innocence! No child, we give them food, treats, toys, clothes, gifts, and more. I'll take you to my house which will be your home. The Count may one day repent and come seek you as his rightful heir.

NIÑO
I pray it may be so. Is your house near here?

LAURO
Just behind those rocks.

NIÑO
Do you have children?

LAURO
One like you, sweetheart.

NIÑO
Has he been in school long?

LAURO
No, my prince, my house is too far from the village.

NIÑO
I will teach him how to read.

LAURO
Though letters may be useful, it would be better if you gave him arms. Kings reward the men who serve them.

NIÑO

That's when they reign, not when they are banished to foreign lands.

LAURO
What divine wit!

LLORENTE
What is he saying? We don't speak his language.

LAURO
New and strange things that one day you'll surely learn. Let's go, my child, so you can meet the woman who will be your mother until you find your own.

NIÑO
I will serve her as my lady and my aunt.

LAURO
May Heaven one day grant you the kingdoms of Naples and Aragon. What is your name?

NIÑO
Felipe.

LAURO
A strong name. If you are like the Macedonian, and sire another Alexander, you shall rule the world. What's this?

NIÑO
The food they left me before sailing off.

LAURO
You shall eat better here. Let's go, my lord, and leave this forest behind. God will make you a king yet.

TEODOSIA
Why do I always have to scold you and remind you to stay put? How can you be so reckless, and make me search for you in the woods? Rosaura, we are two wild beasts hunted by armed men. If they see you, we will be captured or killed.

ROSAURA
Who could resist the curiosity? I heeded your warnings when I was a little girl, but now I am grown, and my nature rebels against your harsh commands. What is that above?

TEODOSIA
Heaven, where the Creator lives.

ROSAURA

Isn't He the one you say created all things?

TEODOSIA

Yes.

ROSAURA

And didn't he make a man whose name was Adam?

TEODOSIA

Like a sculptor at his craft, He formed Adam.

ROSAURA

And didn't He make a woman from Adam's rib, and told them to be as one flesh?

TEODOSIA

Yes, to increase mankind. He made them in pairs, and blessed the earth with their offspring.

ROSAURA

You say that of all His animals, only man lifts his head towards Heaven.

TEODOSIA

Yes, only man does so.

ROSAURA

How then can you say we are two beasts? Don't you see the contradiction? If I am an animal, then how can I enter the kingdom of Heaven? If I have a soul, then I cannot be a beast.

TEODOSIA

You are a beast because you are treated as such. Men hunt you as prey.

ROSAURA

But if woman was given to man as his companion, how can he hunt what he ought to love?

TEODOSIA

You are not a woman.

ROSAURA

Then what?

TEODOSIA

A thing degenerate from what you were before!

ROSAURA

Who engendered me? You say I was not born a plant, since I have a soul that lifts my thoughts to Heaven.

TEODOSIA

It was this very mountain, snow and ice.

ROSAURA

Please! The mountain might engender trees and flowers, the snow can only freeze.

TEODOSIA

And these deer and birds you see, were they not born of the mountain?

ROSAURA

No, you're wrong. Birds may fly in the wind, but they hatch on earth, I am no bird. I cannot fly, and I can speak.

TEODOSIA

You're mistaken.

ROSAURA

Why?

TEODOSIA

Because I know their tongue.

ROSAURA

You?

TEODOSIA

Me.

ROSAURA

Then tell me what that nightingale just said.

TEODOSIA

She says she loves her husband.

ROSAURA

She only says that love by nature makes all nature love.

TEODOSIA

How do you know, when you can't understand them?

ROSAURA

And how do you explain this, when their voices are nothing like mine? If you understand them, perhaps you are a bird and I am something else.

TEODOSIA

Enough questions!

ROSAURA

Mother, don't be upset because I want to understand.

TEODOSIA

Wild beasts are to be silent, they are not to understand, argue, or question.

ROSAURA

If I am a beast, then every beast has a mate for company. The does need stags to make more deer. If I am a beast, what animal was your mate? Show me my father.

TEODOSIA

I was your mother and father.

ROSAURA

That, Mother, is madness.

TEODOSIA

Mother-of-pearl engenders pearls from dew. The shell opens in the sea, welcoming the new dawn. Humans, too, are formed by the sun, and by the stars under which they are born.

ROSAURA

I don't deny that the sun engenders, but for a self to reproduce, another self must be there.

TEODOSIA

That is what I'm saying. The sun made you inside of me.

ROSAURA

Well, Mother, if you should one day cease to be, I would like another self for company. Tell me when and how you joined with the sun so that I may form a self, just as you did with me.

TEODOSIA

What gave you this idea?

ROSAURA

Unless my eyes deceived me, today I saw something that looked like me. It must be that sun you mentioned.

TEODOSIA

You saw a man?

ROSAURA

So those were men I saw. You may be right.

TEODOSIA

Ah, Rosaura, you will be the death of me!

ROSAURA

Hidden among the brambles, I saw him remove the things that adorned him, and bathe in the fountain pool. Bless the mother that delivered him! I laughed when he covered himself again, saying to myself, "You look better with nothing."

TEODOSIA

Enough!

ROSAURA

What if it was the sun, my father?

TEODOSIA

The sun would burn you up, should it look upon you.

ROSAURA

Oh, Mother! You're right. Since I saw him, every part of me feels like it is dying. The sun must have ignited me. I cannot eat, sleep, or be still. Dear Mother, did you feel the same when you saw the sun?

TEODOSIA

What are you saying? You saw men?

ROSAURA

No, not men. I saw the naked sun.

TEODOSIA

Heavens above, I will kill you if you stray from this cave again. Aren't you afraid the sun will hurt you or take you away?

ROSAURA

What should I do if I see him again?

TEODOSIA

Be warned: he may kill you if he catches you. To make him flee from you, make the sign of the cross I taught you.

ROSAURA

The cross will make him flee?

TEODOSIA

Yes, Rosaura.

ROSAURA

Then I shall defend myself with it.

TEODOSIA

Come through the thicket here, where the hunting is plentiful.

ROSAURA

Mother, if the sun did not burn so, it would be the loveliest creature.

LAURO

What a strange tale.

VELARDO

All true!

FELIPE

But Father, wasn't the wild beast that terrorized the village killed years ago?

LAURO

It's been twenty years since it was hunted. No cave was left unchecked, no stone unturned. I thought it dead.

FELIPE

Old man Alberto used to tell his winter's tale of the Beast of Hungary. He swore it was killed when Princess Faustina bore a young girl and the beast—strong and powerful as ever—stole the baby and took her into the mountains.

LAURO

It was in then that it met its unlucky end.

FELIPE

Is there no heir to the crown?

LAURO

No Felipe. One day you will know the sorrow this tale holds for me.

FELIPE

I will then be even more in your debt, as you raised me.

LAURO

Years ago, where that olive tree now stands, I found you at sunset.

FELIPE

God keep you. You preserved the flickering flame of my life.

LAURO

Tell me, you saw the wild beast that lives in these hills?

VELARDO

Beasts, you mean. There are two.

LAURO

Fear made you see double.

VELARDO

I have never been more afraid, but there were two.

LAURO

Did they come close to you?

VELARDO

I saw them running close behind me and leapt into the river to escape. The older one threw rocks at me.

LAURO

So you weren't seeing double?

VELARDO

There were two.

FELIPE

If it was fear, tell me now.

VELARDO

I saw them with my own eyes, two of them, fast and strong. I am no village gossip. I pride myself on telling the truth. There are generations of savages here; believe me, I saw them.

FELIPE

You're sure?

VELARDO

Yes. I tell you, they are always chasing me.

FELIPE

Why?

VELARDO

Because the Heavens willed it so.

LAURO

I know the beast is the Queen, who I thought might remain chaste, yet it seems she has given birth. This cannot be the baby she took from Faustina, who, I remember well, brought it to the king, all torn to pieces. No, she must have had some secret dalliance with a shepherd.

FELIPE

What say you, Lauro?

LAURO

Say nothing of what you saw when you go back to the city, Velardo.

VELARDO

I will not. I've long tried to free myself from these animals—they are nothing but trouble. Now I'd like to wrap myself in two skins of wine.

FELIPE

Wouldn't drinking it be better?

VELARDO

I wouldn't want people to talk.

LAURO

Now that we are alone, my child, tell me: doesn't it burden you to live in this poor state, when you are nephew to a King and grandson to a Count? Don't you long to know where you were born and raised? Are you happy in this humble cabin? Do you not long for the grandeur that is your birthright? Don't you hate this lowliness, or feel stirrings towards wealth and country? Dear Felipe, set sail for Spain so that I may see you crowned before my death. I raised you and I long to see you restored to your own country. What say you?

FELIPE

This cannot be love, Father, for love does not live in such harsh words. I know no princes or counts. I only wish to serve you as I must.

LAURO

You are gallant, generous, and brave; the envy of Mars and Phoebus. My house does little to serve you. I would like to see you in a decent place; here there is only poverty.

FELIPE

Are you worried I will spend what you have, Lauro?

LAURO

My love does not deserve such harshness. I have never known you to be ungrateful; it suits you poorly.

FELIPE

I was wrong, Father, I don't want you to think ill of me. The scepter, kingdom, and country you speak of do not interest me. I love you more than all the gold in the world. In the end, crowns lie

heavy on the grinning skulls of ambitious men. I would much rather hear your tales and your advice, seated at our rustic table, far greater than any palace. What better friends, servants, and vassals could I ask for than these faithful peasants, whom many kings might envy? Here the flowers are a rich carpet and the birds serenade. The rich man lives in a city full of worries, ambitions, and doubts; I live among the oaks and sheep, where only the rivers murmur.

LAURO

My son, though you try to comfort me, I want you treated as you deserve. You must go to Spain to know of your mother's fate, if she has been released from prison, and whether the Count still reigns, or your father in his place. When the time is right, you may come back to visit me, or take me to live with you, for I don't want to lose you.

FELIPE

So be it, Father. Don't cry. I shall go and return.

LAURO

God knows my sorrow.

FELIPE

Wait, don't go.

LAURO

We shall speak more of it at nightfall. God keep you, and me too, so that I may live to see you again.

FELIPE

I can't deny my desire to see you again, Spain. When I remember my high birth, I feel obliged to return, though doing so may risk my life. Yet if my mother died at the hands of my grandfather, and if Heaven punished my father, then it makes little sense to go. It is not prudent to seek change when it could be for the worse.

ROSAURA

My mother does not know I've come to gaze again upon the sun. She warns me that it's dangerous, and that I may burn, but I like this fire, and it only grows worse when he is far. I cannot live without him, cannot eat, cannot sleep. Theodosia insists I should not see the one my soul desires most, but I must know, and I will. She says he'll flee from the cross, and that will take care of my fear. Angels do not flee from the cross, and if he does not, then I'll know he is an angel too. So now the cross. By Heaven, he does not flee! Clearly he must be an angel! Perhaps he did not see it. I will call out to him and try once more, just in case. Hello, hello!

FELIPE

Who goes there?

ROSAURA

Behold the cross!

FELIPE
Good God!

ROSAURA
Do you flee? You must be a devil.

FELIPE
How can I flee? Shame will not permit it. I will unsheathe my sword. Here I am,
you savage beast! Though I tremble in fear,
I shall kill it or be killed.

ROSAURA
Behold the cross!

FELIPE
I could say the same to you. But you, demon, say it to me?

ROSAURA
An angel then, since he stays.

FELIPE
Who are you, fair beast, whose beautiful face stops my hands and stills my sword? Are you a
demon or a woman?

ROSAURA
He speaks like me; I can understand him.

FELIPE
If this is the dreadful monster, fear has made us all blind. Nature in her wisdom could never have
made a monster so beautiful.

ROSAURA
I have seen the sun up close, and his fire is tempered by his beauty.

FELIPE
And they call this a beast in Hungary? Either they are the beasts, or you are a celestial animal.

ROSAURA
Now I feel his fire in me, so gentle that its absence would be the end of me.

FELIPE
Part your hair so I may see your face. I won't do you any harm.

ROSAURA
I'll do it, if you let me see you.

FELIPE

Are you, by chance, a woman?

ROSAURA

What is the name for a creature who loves a creature like you?

FELIPE

Woman.

ROSAURA

Then that is what I am.

FELIPE

Do you love me?

ROSAURA

I don't know what that is like. Describe it to me and if it is like what I feel in my breast, I'll know it is love.

FELIPE

I suspect love to be thus: to look by chance and feel pleasure; to imprint the soul through the eyes; to impress upon the memory when the soul attempts to turn away. To submit all the senses to thoughts of the other. To have as center, rest, and glory such submission of the soul. To hang your life on the other's will. This is love. Only you know if you have it.

ROSAURA

A wondrous thing you have described!

FELIPE

That is love's care,
its longing, its fear.

ROSAURA

I sense what I feel now.

FELIPE

Then speak from your heart.

ROSAURA

Listen to me, then, so you can tell me if it's love. I saw, I wondered, and then I lost myself to the pleasure of wondering, to the dreaming. In your absence I felt sorrow, but could still daydream about you, which brought me both joy and sorrow. I flee from reason and seek pleasure. And that is the least of it!

FELIPE

Well said. Your rags cover a noble spirit.

ROSAURA

What, but Love, could teach an animal?

FELIPE

Where were you born?

ROSAURA

Me? Here.

FELIPE

To whom?

ROSAURA

Another like me.

FELIPE

Yes, but who engendered you?

ROSAURA

The sun.

FELIPE

The sun?

ROSAURA

Yes, my dearest.

FELIPE

The sun and man, you mean.

ROSAURA

What is a "man"?

FELIPE

Me.

ROSAURA

You?

FELIPE

Such is my essence and my name.

ROSAURA

I love you more and more. So, my mother couldn't make me from the sun?

FELIPE

No. Not her and not the sun, without me.

ROSAURA

Strange.... If I wanted to make another me, might the sun then come with thee?

FELIPE

Perhaps, if it doesn't rain.

ROSAURA

Then I'll wait for a cloudless day.

FELIPE

How strange of nature to give such beauty to a monster! This must be the daughter of that first beast, who must have been overcome by love. Do you like the sight of me?

ROSAURA

You drive me wild.

FELIPE

Restrain your love, as I must first love you back.

ROSAURA

So, when a woman loves a man, he doesn't fall in love too?

FELIPE

The man might not love her.

ROSAURA

Why not?

FELIPE

He might love another.

ROSAURA

And where is this "Another"?

FELIPE

In his heart, first.

ROSAURA

So you could love another?

FELIPE

I could.

ROSAURA
How unfortunate!

FELIPE
Not to worry though, for I love you in extreme. Where can I find you again?

ROSAURA
Right here.

FELIPE
I hear voices. You're in danger—hide here, while I go see who it is. But first, tell me your name.

ROSAURA
Rosaura

FELIPE
Rosaura?

ROSAURA
Yes. Tell me yours.

FELIPE
I'm Felipe.

ROSAURA
Will you come see me?

FELIPE
Of course!

ROSAURA
But what of "Another"? Don't you love her?

FELIPE
By God, no. I burn for you.

ROSAURA
I'll wait for you here then.

FELIPE
We'll meet here.

ROSAURA

Man is the most beautiful beast I've seen. He leaves, and I want to cry, shamelessly. Forgive me for calling you, Felipe, just to hear the sound of your name. Felipe, Felipe! I imagine Another has you in her arms—this is what they call jealousy. Better be careful, Another! I'll kill you if you keep him from me.

SILVANA

How could they leave me here, all by myself! I'm trembling. They say the beast is back in these woods and struck Pascual with a branch, scaring everyone away. They even left the flowers they picked behind. Heaven help me!

ROSAURA

I can't make it out, but this beast is no man. There's no beard, for one. This beast resembles me. I'll get closer. Who are you?

SILVANA

Oh no!

ROSAURA

Abandon all hope! Tell me now, what are you?

SILVANA

What's this now?

ROSAURA

What beast, tell me!

SILVANA

I'm dead now, if I can't get away. I'm not the one you're looking for—I'm another!

ROSAURA

Another?

SILVANA

Yes, I swear.

ROSAURA

What luck—I found Another!

SILVANA

That's right, I am another.

ROSAURA

Do you know the most beautiful beast that roams this land?

SILVANA

What's it called?

ROSAURA
Felipe.

SILVANA
Yes.

ROSAURA
She doesn't deny it! Tell me, unlucky Another, who is Felipe?

SILVANA
A young man, son of Lauro and Phoebus himself. He lives not far from here.

ROSAURA
Do you love him?

SILVANA
Well, yes. My aunt raised him.

ROSAURA
Who?

SILVANA
Another woman.

ROSAURA
There's another Another?

SILVANA
The village is crammed with them.

ROSAURA
I'm done for! Faithless Felipe has another and another. I will kill one of them, then, since you won't come Traitor! Where do you meet Felipe?

SILVANA
Everyone knows that. Help me, Souls in Purgatory!

ROSAURA
Tell me, where?

SILVANA
At the feast, during the dance.

ROSAURA
What is the dance?

SILVANA
The roundelay.

ROSAURA
Show me.

SILVANA
We hold on to each other, and Benito plays the music.

ROSAURA
Go on.

SILVANA
Oh, St Anthony—strike her blind!

ROSAURA
Like this?

SILVANA
Oh God. Like this, we move here and there. If only I could get away.

ROSAURA
By the heavens, Another, you won't live another day!

SILVANA
She'll kill me!

ROSAURA
You will not dance with the man I'm dying for!

TEODOSIA
What are you doing? Why do you want to kill this woman?

SILVANA
Help me!

ROSAURA
She's no woman—she's Another.

SILVANA
More savages—unlucky me!

TEODOSIA
Leave, woman!

SILVANA
Heavens save me!

ROSAURA
I don't know much, but I know that if you let her go, she will be with Felipe.

TEODOSIA
Who's Felipe?

ROSAURA
Felipe is the sun you spoke of; he told me he's a man, and he loves Another in his village, and this is that Another.

TEODOSIA
Oh no! Did you speak to someone?

ROSAURA
No, I don't know who "Someone" is. But I spoke to Felipe, the most beautiful of beasts.

TEODOSIA
What Felipe?

ROSAURA
The one that engendered you with me.

TEODOSIA
She's met a man.

ROSAURA
Yes, mother. The one from the fountain. Speak his name, which is the only thing that relieves me in his absence.

TEODOSIA
Did you make the sign of the cross?

ROSAURA
As many as I could, but it didn't do anything. He's an angel, not a demon, so he withstood it.

TEODOSIA
Weren't you afraid of him?

ROSAURA
Don't you see? I spoke to him, and he spoke to me of love. He told me what he felt, and knows everything I feel. I begged him to join with me and the sun.

TEODOSIA

Did he?

ROSAURA

No, he left, and my soul followed him. He said he'd love me if he didn't love Another. And just then, this beast wandered in. She said she was Another, Another who loves Felipe. Can you believe it?

TEODOSIA

Oh, Rosaura! You'll be the end of me. Since your instinct tells you you're a woman, know that beast is a man, and with him you risk the best of your womanhood. It's a great dishonor to subject yourself to a man like that.

ROSAURA

Then tell me, mother, how to cure myself of love!

TEODOSIA

There are some men who are called husbands.

ROSAURA

And this is mine?

TEODOSIA

No, not if he doesn't love you. That's dishonor.

ROSAURA

So he can't be my husband?

TEODOSIA

When the time comes, you could be his woman.

ROSAURA

The time has come.

TEODOSIA

It's shameful for an honorable woman to declare her love. The laws of love say the man should be the one to love—for a woman to beg is most base.

ROSAURA

Those laws are wrong.

TEODOSIA

Don't say such a thing.

ROSAURA

Beauty must be sought after. If a woman can't get by without a husband, then why wouldn't she beg for what she lacks?

TEODOSIA

I hear people. Wait while I see what's going on.

ROSAURA

No matter what you say, I'll follow my instincts to love my match.

ROSAURA

Felipe!

FELIPE

My Rosaura, how I've missed you!

ROSAURA

I lost my patience, seeing that you were with Another. But I caught Another, and took my revenge.

FELIPE

It's true another loves me, but I don't want to love her. Not since seeing you.

ROSAURA

I spoke with my mother. She says I'm a woman, and I can love you as a husband, with honor. Is that the truth?

FELIPE

That is the more perfect love, for it doesn't offend the heavens. She speaks true.

ROSAURA

Will you please me today?

FELIPE

Say what you wish.

ROSAURA

Plead with me. Beg for me, as if to make me surrender at your words. My mother said this is very important for a woman's honor. Then I'll be your woman, and you'll be my husband.

FELIPE

That's fair. Wooing, serving, and pleading are meant for men. And so, I beg you to love me.

ROSAURA

Even if you didn't beg, and even if it dishonored my name, I would surrender to you. I am your woman.

FELIPE

And I your husband.

ROSAURA
I ask one thing of you.

FELIPE
What?

ROSAURA
That for the rest of your life, you will never love Another.

FELIPE
You alone will be loved as my true wife. But I must warn you not to love another either.

ROSAURA
There are more?

FELIPE
Indeed.

ROSAURA
Where?

FELIPE
Everywhere.

ROSAURA
Don't worry about me loving Another.

FELIPE
Such a simple thing!

RISELO
Here is that fearsome beast.

VELARDO
Ready your weapons.

TIRSO
You go ahead, Silvana.

ROSAURA
What is this?

FELIPE
Armed villagers. Searching for you—?

SILVANA

Come on everyone, the beast is here!

FELIPE

Stop, peasants.

TIRSO

He should stop, on his life!

FELIPE

Get behind me. I fear they'll kill you.

ROSAURA

I'll find higher ground.

FELIPE

Go up and wait for me.

RISELO

Out of the way, Felipe! Don't use your noble sword to defend such a vile beast.

FELIPE

It's not right for you to kill it.

FENICIA

What are you saying?

TIRSO

Get out of the way!

FELIPE

You dare threaten a man like me?

SILVANA

While you prevent them, the beast has fled.

RISELO

That was wrong of you, yet we are also in the wrong for respecting you. Get back! One who defends a monster is no Christian.

FELIPE

Stop, Riselo! The beast is no animal—it's a woman!

RISELO

How could a woman so mistreat another woman?

TIRSO

Let's force him out of the way.

FELIPE

I said stop, Riselo!

RISELO

I will not! Oh, but I am slain!

FELIPE

I warned you!

FENICIA

Is Riselo dead?

SILVANA

Yes.

VELARDO

Shoot your crossbow, Tirso!

FELIPE

Get back!

TIRSO

No! Turn yourself in, or I'll shoot!

FELIPE

Wait!

SILVANA

Take him or kill him!

FENICIA

Kill him, kill him!

FELIPE

Friends, I surrender myself. This is all Riselo's fault.

TIRSO

Put down your weapons.

FELIPE

How vile, for a noble man like me to surrender to these peasants.

TIRSO

Take him to prison!

VELARDO

To prison!

SILVANA

Let him feel my vengeance!

FELIPE

How could this be?

ROSAURA

What did they say? He's captured? They surely mean to kill him. How can I allow this? Where's my strength? These trees once saw me tear wild beasts apart. They are ashamed of me now, a wife who lets her husband suffer pain and death. Clear springs, whose waters I turned red with the blood of slain beasts—you whisper now and weep, wondering how I could've let four knaves carry away such an angel. Out, vile heart! I'll either free him or die with him in prison. I will free him who delivered me. Wait, Felipe. Say not that I was a woman in loving you, a coward in abandoning you, and a beast in fleeing.

VELARDO

Secure the chains.

LAURO

Do justice, men, but have mercy, if my person means anything to you.

TIRSO

You've raised a son the devil would be proud of, who killed the best man in the village to protect a beast. What mercy can there be?

FELIPE

Father, let them do their will.

LAURO

There's no malice like that of an angry mob!

SILVANA

Was Riselo's death not malice?

LAURO

Silvana, if my son's death is justice for you—my son whom your own aunt raised—then let it be done, but know you take his life and mine.

SILVANA

When you consider the case, Lauro, my fury seems but little.

FELIPE

Father, must you plead with such base people?

VELARDO

How well he calms our wrath! By the sun I swear he will ride an ass, with fourteen cavalry, robed in eighty pounds of iron, and be at court within the hour. I won't have him in the village.

LAURO

I have my wealth, and the king of Hungary will know who this boy is, for he is the finest of Castile, of Spanish blood—

FELIPE

Stop, father, don't reveal my secret! Let them take my life.

ROSAURA

Hand over my husband!

SILVANA

Surround her, catch her!

FENICIA

Kill her, or capture her alive to take to the king!

VELARDO

My head!

FELIPE

Rosaura, my lady, my love, my wife! God, if only I could help her!

TIRSO

Step aside! I'll stop her with my weapon.

FELIPE

Surrender, my love!

ROSAURA

You want me to die?

FELIPE

No!

ROSAURA

What would you have me do?

FELIPE

I'd have you live.

ROSAURA
Does my living give you joy?

FELIPE
As much as my own life.

ROSAURA
Then I surrender.

TIRSO
Get her!

LAURO
Heavens, what's this enigma?

FELIPE
Don't worry, father.

FENICIA
What fortune!

VELARDO
Friends; we've brought peace to the land. As we serve God and King, we'll take her to prison.

TIRSO
The king will favor our village.

SILVANA
Let Felipe go with her!

LAURO
Oh heavens! Such troubles in my old age?

ROSAURA
Felipe!

FELIPE
Rosaura, darling!

ROSAURA
With you, I fear not death.

FELIPE
With you, I care not for life.

KING OF HUNGARY

The monster is a beautiful beast.

FAUSTINA

A monster of beauty.

KING OF HUNGARY

Nature has never made such a beauty.

FAUSTINA

Where was it found?

KING OF HUNGARY

It came of its own will, in aid of a man who was its friend. Don't be shocked, it's happened before, that a beast befriends a man.

FAUSTINA

I know, my lord. I once heard of a dolphin who loved a fair young man. He would swim on the shore, and they would play, but once winter came, or perhaps once the boy died, the dolphin left the water in search of his beloved. He died in pain, and would not return to sea without his love.

KING OF HUNGARY

I've heard such tales of elephants and horses. Good thing this monster loves that villager, offering its own life to free him, though it was in vain.

FAUSTINA

To find such gratitude in animals and wild beasts, makes all the more shameful the ingratitude of men.

KING OF HUNGARY

A lion once showed gratitude to a slave who drew a thorn from its paw.

FAUSTINA

It is I who have been beastly and cruel...

KING OF HUNGARY

What is on your mind?

FAUSTINA

The power of love, which gave this monster the courage to sacrifice its own life. Where will it display the beast?

KING OF HUNGARY

If it wasn't so beautiful, then any cage or dungeon would do. But I'd like to keep it alive, given how lovely it is, so I will chain it in a palace hallway during the day, to cheer it up.

FAUSTINA

Yes, but people might harm it. I also don't think it's a beast, for it speaks and feels, and so it will die of rage.

KING OF HUNGARY

I'll find a caretaker for it to protect it, as long as it doesn't harm anyone.

FAUSTINA

That would be good. Find someone who will understand, defend, and guard the beast.

HUNTER

There's a villager who, they say, knows the beast. He used to give it fruit and bread.

KING OF HUNGARY

If he knows the beast, then there is no better keeper. Go call him.

HUNTER

Here he comes.

FAUSTINA

Speak, friend.

TEODOSIA

"Speak, sister," I could say, if she were less cruel, less fierce.

FAUSTINA

Is the beast human? Does it reason? Where did you meet it? How did you come to love such a creature? Has it told you, by chance, that its mother is that other beast, who caused me such misfortune? For I cannot help but think...

KING OF HUNGARY

Hush, my love! Do not rehearse our misfortunes and renew our pains. Hear me, villager.

TEODOSIA

I kiss your noble feet.

KING OF HUNGARY

Then you shall guard this beast, and be rewarded what you are due.

TEODOSIA

May heaven grant you a long life and an heir.

HUNTER
Careful with the monster!

FAUSTINA
It's coming.

TEODOSIA
What are you afraid of?

FAUSTINA
It's the memories, my friend, of that other beast that took so much from me.

VOICE
Careful there!

FAUSTINA
Can I look upon your face, beast, when it is so like the face of the one that caused me such pain?

HUNTER
Watch out for the beast!

VOICE 2
Heaven help me!

ROSAURA
Shouldn't I defend myself, when you're hurting me?

TEODOSIA
Stop!

ROSAURA
Mother, who are these people?

TEODOSIA
I warned you not to call me that.

ROSAURA
Who is that man?

TEODOSIA
He's the one who gave you life.

ROSAURA
What?

TEODOSIA
He's the king.

ROSAURA
What's a "king"?

TEODOSIA
The one who governs the rest.

ROSAURA
Are you afraid?

TEODOSIA
He makes the law.

ROSAURA
And I am his daughter?

TEODOSIA
And daughter to a false queen.

ADMIRAL
May heaven protect you.

TEODOSIA
Quiet now.

KING OF HUNGARY
Admiral, what news is there from England?

ADMIRAL
A false rumor has caused the king to take up arms against you.

FAUSTINA
My father? Why?

ADMIRAL
He challenges your honor, saying you killed the person he loves most in the world. They say that
to become the queen of Hungary—

FAUSTINA
Quiet, say no more.

ADMIRAL

I meant no offense.

KING OF HUNGARY
If it displeases her, speak not.

ADMIRAL
They say Teodosia was a saint.

TEODOSIA
I've certainly suffered like one.

ADMIRAL
Scotland also rises to avenge her. The king insists you offended her innocence.

KING OF HUNGARY
Stop these tales, Admiral. Defend our ports and stop letting your mind wander.

ADMIRAL
We must prepare at once.

KING OF HUNGARY
Teodosia is justly dead, even if these rabblers protest.

ADMIRAL
You shouldn't listen to the masses. They'll punish someone today and lift them up tomorrow.
Don't worry about them lifting up Teodosia now.

ADMIRAL
God knows you and Faustina have a clear conscience.

KING OF HUNGARY
What impertinence!

FAUSTINA
Don't listen to this.

ADMIRAL
You once sought the Pope's dispensation—I hope now God may give you heirs.

FAUSTINA
Teodosia was a traitor to God and King; the king is right to love me, as I was the one who discovered Teodosia's betrayal.

ADMIRAL
Very true.

FAUSTINA

So, friend, be warned: do not doubt why she died.

ROSAURA

Mother, who is this?

TEODOSIA

The Admiral.

ROSAURA

Is it his job to be insolent?

HUNTER

The Justice is here.

KING OF HUNGARY

What do you want?

JUSTICE

Your signature on a death sentence.

KING OF HUNGARY

Say more.

JUSTICE

You've no doubt heard—

KING OF HUNGARY

What?

JUSTICE

That to free that monster, a young man killed another villager.

KING OF HUNGARY

Is he sentenced to death?

JUSTICE

He pleads guilty to this heinous crime.

KING OF HUNGARY

Show me.

JUSTICE

See, it's written here.

ROSAURA

Heavens, do you suffer this? Eyes, do you see this? Arms, do you consent to this? What is the king signing? Do you know what you write? Think again, King! A life given by God should not be taken away lightly. You have the power to give riches, but not life. You should not take away something you cannot give.

KING OF HUNGARY

You're a monster, so I'll excuse you. But know that it's God's will for those guilty to be punished. Kings do justice by the grace of God.

ROSAURA

I don't know of laws, but I know this is injustice. The enemy who caused the harm deserves the punishment.

JUSTICE

That is the law. Unbelievable!

ROSAURA

If I caused it, then kill me. Let the man live, and the monster die!

FAUSTINA

I cannot take this!

TEODOSIA

What will I do now? I can't say who she is.

KING OF HUNGARY

Execute the man.

ROSAURA

Aren't you afraid?

KING OF HUNGARY

Seize her, throw her in prison!

ROSAURA

Imprison me, you dogs?

KING OF HUNGARY

Enough, beast!

JUSTICE

I will execute the sentence.

ROSAURA

Execute? You'll have to kill me before I let Felipe die.

TEODOSIA
Rosaura, wait!

ROSAURA
I will free my beloved.

FAUSTINA
Guards!

ROSAURA
Stay back!

KING OF HUNGARY
Come everyone, the beast is loose!

LAURO
You must seek remedy in this prison, my son.

FELIPE
Father, I am sorry for the troubles I've caused you. But please don't reveal who I am. If my tyrant grandfather is still alive in Spain, I'm sure he will try to kill me again.

LAURO
I fear for you.

JUSTICE
Are you Felipe, from the Meadow of Mirafior?

FELIPE
Yes.

JUSTICE
You are sentenced to death.

LAURO
To death?

FELIPE
Let me appeal to the king for mercy.

JUSTICE
The king himself signed the order.

FELIPE

Then there's nothing to say.

LAURO

I'll go to the king myself, to stop this terrible sentence.

ROSAURA

Away, you vile men!

JUSTICE

I dare not linger. We must bind it hands and feet.

FELIPE

You won't be able to.

JUSTICE

Then I'll shoot it.

ROSAURA

Is this a dream, to see you again, my love, with my own eyes?

FELIPE

Is it possible, with mine?

ROSAURA

Oh, Felipe, what terrible hours I have passed without you!

FELIPE

Oh, Rosaura, how I have felt your absence!

ROSAURA

How have you fared in this dark prison, my love?

FELIPE

How? Without you. Such is my misfortune. How was it without me, in the palace?

ROSAURA

I am an animal without you.

FELIPE

An animal? How, when the sight of you is like the sun?

ROSAURA

What other name is there for one without a soul? Time without you, my soul, makes me an animal.

FELIPE

Oh, Rosaura. I can't deceive you. I am sentenced to death.

ROSAURA

I know, my love. That's why I'm here. Don't be afraid.

FELIPE

I've been afraid, Rosaura, since I fell in love with you. What wonders have you seen in the palace?

ROSAURA

I saw busy lives go by. King and queen, heads of justice and state. I saw the Flood and I saw Hell, and I saw Judgement Day: flood of those who beg for favor, A hell of ambition in high places. A judgment in the strange multitude, which reveals our true natures. I saw riches worth nothing, and artifice that could not quite render what abounds in the fields. I found flattery and adulation, ceremonies galore. I saw the greatness of crowns and people marching up and down on a staircase made of glass. I saw the honors envied by so many, so long when life is so short. I saw useless men ingratiate themselves, while the wise could barely get in the door. Finally, in sadness, I concluded: it would all be lovely if there was no death in the world.

FELIPE

No one who heard you speak would call you an animal. They say the clearest wisdom comes naturally.

ROSAURA

You will leave this prison today?

FELIPE

That's what the king says, but I'll be sent to die.

ROSAURA

Not while I'm alive.

TEODOSIA

Don't shoot!

JUSTICE

I must, if it resists!

TEODOSIA

Surrender yourself, Rosaura!

ROSAURA

Surrender, with Felipe captive? You must not know how I feel.

KING OF HUNGARY

This mortal state in which I live in a palace where I was once esteemed makes me wonder if the heavens are against me. My coldness to Faustina worries her, as if she's guilty. I suspect Teodosia was innocent. My suffering cries to the heavens! England approaches, despite our letters requesting peace. The Prince of Scotland comes furious, demanding Faustina's death. These winds promise ruin. And I, lost and confused, will listen and wait. Is that Faustina I hear, talking to the Admiral? I will hide.

FAUSTINA

Don't contradict me.

ADMIRAL

You will make everything worse.

FAUSTINA

I made you Admiral, though you were a poor knight. Together we forged letters from the king of Scotland, visiting death upon my innocent sister. Now that my father approaches to punish me and absolve Teodosia, the king sees my guilt and looks at me with angry eyes.

ADMIRAL

What move will you make against the king?

FAUSTINA

I will poison him and make you king if you will defend me from my father.

ADMIRAL

I must oblige you, for the promise of such glory. I will forsake my loyalty.

FAUSTINA

I'll poison him today, using these roses in my hair. The ones on the right are poisoned, but not the ones on the left, a ploy from Cleopatra herself.

ADMIRAL

It's not safe to talk here.

FAUSTINA

Follow me then.

KING OF HUNGARY

How fortunate that I chose to hide here, for I never trusted the Admiral. And now I know what's between them! Faustina, I must see you die.

HUNTER

The ambassador of the Count of Barcelona is here.

EMBASSADOR

Your majesty.

KING OF HUNGARY

How is the Count?

EMBASSADOR

He is troubled and afflicted. He sent this letter, explaining what ails him.

KING OF HUNGARY

Go on.

EMBASSADOR

The old Count, may God rest his soul, raised a nephew in his house, son of the king of Aragon and Naples. He raised him with his daughter, Laura Moncada, cousins in blood, nobility, beauty, and destiny. They loved each other so much they wed and had a son in secret, a beautiful boy raised in their own home, claiming he was another's. When the Count learned the truth, he imprisoned his nephew, sent Laura to a nunnery, and condemned the boy to death. He ordered three knights to sail with him far away from Spain, and to abandon him on an island, a mountain, or a forest. The three did as they were told. The Count's stubbornness was such that no one could convince him to release his nephew—not his wife's tears, nor letters from the Pope, nor threats from Aragon, nor pleading from Castile and France. Now the old Count has died, his daughter has married her beloved cousin, and they want their son back. An aged knight who took the boy so long ago is helping to search for him, and sends this request. He says, my lord, that the boy was left in Hungary, on a bare mountain in the north, surrounded by water and facing Spain. The boy Felipe, if he yet lives in some town or village, would be 29 or 30 now. All this, my lord, to say we must send emissaries to find the boy, if he still lives. Thus begs the Count and the sorrowful Countess.

KING OF HUNGARY

What a strange turn of events!

LAURO

Let me kiss your feet, sir, for you, ambassador, seek my beloved prisoner. Please listen to me. I am a Spaniard. Years ago, while hunting at the foot of that great mountain, I heard Felipe's cries. I helped him down from a craggy height, and he told me who he was, and who abandoned him. Those men were named Plácido and Arfindo.

EMBASSADOR

Old man, you speak true! What other proof besides these names?

LAURO

I saved the clothes he wore, and the jewels too. I have no interest in deceiving the king, much less when I contemplate my death.

KING OF HUNGARY
Send for him!

EMBASSADOR
It's clear it is he.

LAURO
Indeed! But be careful, the beast is loose in the prison!

KING OF HUNGARY
How?

LAURO
It heard of the death sentence and went to save him.

KING OF HUNGARY
Has anyone ever heard the like? Bring them here together.

LAURO
God has granted me this blessing.

KING OF HUNGARY
My Court will hear of the service you've rendered.

EMBASSADOR
There is no need to tell me who he is—the very image of the Count! My lord, it has been so long! Let me kiss your noble hands.

FELIPE
Who are you?

EMBASSADOR
Ambassador from your parents.

KING OF HUNGARY
So regal is his presence that it must be true. Give me your arms.

FELIPE
I cannot take in such honor amid such troubles. Let me kiss your hands, my lord.

KING OF HUNGARY

Your arms, Felipe.

ROSAURA

He's a count and a gentleman? I've lost him now.

KING OF HUNGARY

Come now, Felipe. You and the Ambassador must dine with me.

FELIPE

We are much obliged.

ROSAURA

Hello there, King!

KING OF HUNGARY

Fierce beast, what do you want?

ROSAURA

To dine with him.

KING OF HUNGARY

Its frenzy has returned.

ROSAURA

Please, Felipe, don't go and leave me here alone.

FELIPE

Be quiet and wait.

ROSAURA

Already you speak to me like a lord.

KING OF HUNGARY

Tie her to that pillar, but loosen the chain.

ROSAURA

Tie me up?

TEODOSIA

Grant me license, sirs, though but a humble peasant, to tell you who the beast of Hungary really is. She is Faustina's daughter, birthed in the wilderness.

FAUSTINA

That is a wild lie, born of this peasant's ambition!

FELIPE

Hear her out, my lord, for she speaks true. I've loved her since I saw her in the wilderness. She has rare beauty and understanding, and she is your very image.

FAUSTINA

To give a kingdom to a monster requires more evidence! Interrogate this knave!

TEODOSIA

I am sick of punishment! Will you trust a witness?

FAUSTINA

There is no convincing witness, and even if there was I wouldn't believe.

KING OF HUNGARY

I wouldn't believe unless the dead Queen Teodosia herself said so.

TEODOSIA

I am Teodosia, my lord.

KING OF HUNGARY

What?

FAUSTINA

Who?

TEODOSIA

I am the queen. I lived in the mountains, in the form of a beast. I took this child.

KING OF HUNGARY

Let me see your face, my lady. It is you, undoubtedly! You arrived just in time, when wickedness is revealed. Today I discovered the betrayals of the queen. That ingrate, that beast, sought to poison me! Do not speak, Faustina, it may cost you your life!

FELIPE

My lord, your prudence is great fortune.

KING OF HUNGARY

At my table today I welcome Felipe of Moncada, son of the Countess of Barcelona, raised in these wild mountains since childhood. And I weep for my dear Teodosia.

TEODOSIA

My lord, do not presume to embrace me without guaranteeing two things: that Felipe shall have Rosaura, so he can take her to Spain; and that you will pardon Faustina, provided she take religious vows.

KING OF HUNGARY

I pardon Faustina.

FELIPE

As for you, my beloved beast—I will make stronger chains for you of my arms.

ROSAURA

All these truths you've heard, and now we've reached the end. So ends the story of the Beast of Hungary.

END