

THE COURAGE TO RIGHT A WOMAN'S WRONGS

ANA CARO MALLÉN DE SOTO

Translated by the UCLA Working Group on the *Comedia* in Translation and Performance:

Marta Albalá Pelegrín  
Adrián Collado  
Carla Della Gatta  
Paul Fitzgibbon Cella  
Barbara Fuchs  
Rafael Jaime  
Robin Kello  
Jennifer L. Monti  
Laura Muñoz  
Javier Patiño Loira  
Payton Phillips Quintanilla  
Kathryn Renton  
Rhonda Sharrah  
Cheché Silveyra  
Aina Soley  
Veronica Toro  
Elizabeth Warren

Our translations are free to use for educational and performance purposes with [attribution](#) to Diversifying the Classics, under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

We are happy to discuss and consult on performances and adaptations.

Notify us at [diversifyingtheclassics.ucla@gmail.com](mailto:diversifyingtheclassics.ucla@gmail.com) prior to use.

© 2019

Published by Juan de la Cuesta, 2021

This translation was first performed as a staged reading in collaboration with the Department of Theater in the School of Theater, Film, and Television at UCLA in the fall of 2019. We are immensely grateful to director Michael Hackett and his cast of first-year MFA acting and directing students (listed below) for the thoughtful questions and observations which helped refine this translation.

Newt Arlando Delgado  
Ruby Arreguin  
Sarah Boneysteele  
Molly Corkins  
Claire Edmonds  
Oyemen Ehikhamhen  
May Fei  
Noelle Franco  
Joseph Henderson  
Natalia Noble  
Jacob Salazar  
Tiger Yip

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The *Comedia* in Context.....1

A Note on the Playwright.....5

Introduction—Marta Albalá Pelegrín and Rafael Jaime.....6

Pronunciation Guide.....21

*The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs*

    Characters.....22

    Act I.....23

    Act II.....49

    Act III.....78

## **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 *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. 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 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 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 400 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 writers 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."

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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

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

---

<sup>2</sup> 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, 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 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, 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. 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, Fernando inquires about her, 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 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 Argentario, 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 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 (Estíngana 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.

#### References and Further Reading

- Bayliss, Robert. "The best man in the play: Female agency in a gender-inclusive comedia." *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 59, no. 2 (2008): 303-323. <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/10350>.
- Brightwell, Peter. "The Spanish System and the Twelve Year's Truce." *The English Historical Review* 89, no. 351 (1974): 270-292. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/565843>.
- Escabias, Juana. "Ana María Caro Mallén de Torres: una esclava en los corrales de comedias del siglo XVII." *Epos: Revista de filología* 28 (2012): 177-193. <http://revistas.uned.es/index.php/EPOS/article/view/12270/11493>.

- Esteban Estríngana, Alicia. “‘What a princess, Good God!’: The Heritage and Legacy of Infanta Isabel.” *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels*, edited by Cordula van Wyhe, 414-443. London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2011.
- Fernández, Esther. “Los corrales de comedias del siglo XVII madrileño: espacios de sensualidad urbana.” *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 60, no. 1 (2008): 71-90.  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/391699/pdf>.
- Flynn, Dennis O. and Arturo Giraldez. “Silk for Silver: Manila-Macao Trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.” *Philippine Studies* 44, no. 1 (1996): 52-68.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42634185>.
- García-Reidy, Alejandro. “Celebrities and the stage: theatrical stardom in early modern Spain.” *Renaissance Studies* 32, no. 2 (2016): 1-19.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/rest.12251>.
- Gómez, Jesús. “Una visión sobre el personaje del gracioso en la crítica actual.” In *La construcción de un personaje: el gracioso*, edited by Luciano García Lorenzo, 11-22. Madrid: Fundamentos, 2005. <http://www.gbv.de/dms/sub-hamburg/505471426.pdf>.
- José Prades, Juana de. *Teoría sobre los personajes de la comedia nueva en cinco dramaturgos*. Madrid: CSIC, 1963.
- Montauban, Jannine. “‘Descuidóse la poeta; ustedes se lo perdonen’: el gracioso en las comedias de Ana Caro.” *Hispanic Research Journal* 12, no. 1 (2011): 18-33.  
<https://doi.org/10.1179/174582011X12869673314100>.
- Mújica, Barbara L. “Women Fight Back.” In *A New Anthology of Early Modern Spanish Theater: Play and Playtext*, edited by Barbara L. Mujica, 502-510. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Parker, Geoffrey. “Why Did the Dutch Revolt Last Eighty Years?” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976): 53-72. [www.jstor.org/stable/3679072](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3679072).
- Petersen, Elizabeth Marie Cruz. *Women's Somatic Training in Early Modern Spanish Theater*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.
- Poska, Allyson M. and Schultz, Kirsten. “Women and Gender. Structures and roles (1400-1820).” In *The Iberian World 1450-1820*, edited by Fernando Bouza, Pedro Cardim, and Antonio Feros, 166-188. New York, NY: Routledge, 2020.
- Sanz Ayán, Carmen. “More Than Faded Beauties: Women Theater Managers of Early Modern Spain.” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10, no. 1 (2015): 114-121.  
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/emw/issue/view/1715>.
- Soufas, Teresa. “Ana Caro's Re-Evaluation of the mujer varonil and Her Theatrics in *Valor, agravio y mujer*.” In *The Perception of Women in Spanish Theater of the Golden Age*, edited by Anita K. Stoll and Dawn L. Smith, 85-106. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1991. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30040405>.
- van Wyhe, Cordula, editor. Introduction. *Isabel Clara Eugenia: Female Sovereignty in the Courts of Madrid and Brussels*. 8-19. London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2011.
- Zabaleta, Juan de. *El día de fiesta por la tarde*, edited by José María Díez Borque. Madrid: Cupsa Editorial, 1977.

## 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*

ACT I  
SCENE 1

*On both sides of the stage are stairs covered in myrtle branches, like mountain trails, to the top of the set. Down one of these come ESTELA and LISARDA, dressed for the hunt, with short spears. Thunder and stormy winds accompany their descent.*

LISARDA	This way, my brave Estela. This path will see us down from the remote mountain— this proud giant who challenges the stars— to the valley below, til the heavens turn merciful and temper their harsh blows, unfurrowing their knitted brows. Follow me, cousin!	5
---------	--	---

*They slowly descend as they speak*

ESTELA	Which way? I am frozen through!	10
	Cursèd be my ambition, a thousand times over, and that fleeing deer who dashed my hopes, wounded my pride and evaded my fateful blow!	15
	Though its swift flight encouraged my pursuit, I now quake in its footsteps. Oh, heavens! / ¡Válgame el cielo!	20
	See how the crystal spheres jolt the planets from their orbits! <sup>1</sup> How the turbulent heavens, full of terror and wonder, stage Phaeton's fall anew! <sup>2</sup>	25
	See how, as their axes shudder, all balance is undone! See how the elements, angry and disordered, hail down upon us, amid deafening thunder	30

---

<sup>1</sup> The Ptolemaic system imagined concentric spheres surrounding the earth, around which the planets completed their orbits.

<sup>2</sup> *Phaeton*: In Greek mythology, the son of Helios, the sun god, who insisted on driving his father's chariot across the sky. Unable to control the horses, he died in a fiery crash.

and icy air!  
 See how Aeolus,<sup>3</sup> 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—

---

<sup>3</sup> *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, 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...	95     100
<i>JUAN walks down to the first level of the stage</i>		
	Tie the mules to a tree, Tomillo, and come down to this meadow while they graze.	
<i>TOMILLO, from above, while making his way down</i>		
TOMILLO	What meadow? Tigers, rhinoceri, crocodiles, alligators, the cyclops Polyphemus, <sup>4</sup> damned souls and devils, (God forgive me) will come for you there.	105     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. So now the truth is nonsense?	120
JUAN	Listen! I hear muffled voices.	
TOMILLO	Perhaps it's a satyr or a faun. <sup>5</sup>	

---

<sup>4</sup> *Polyphemus*: the man-eating giant in Homer's *Odyssey*.

<sup>5</sup> *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? <sup>6</sup>	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

---

<sup>6</sup> 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







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,<sup>9</sup>  
 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 Córdoba,  
 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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. 275  
 I was driven away by envy,  
 that many-headed Hydra  
 that refuses to die,<sup>10</sup>  
 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,

---

<sup>10</sup> *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            (*Aside*) 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.

*The women exit with LUDOVICO, TOMILLO and companions*

FERNANDO        My friend,  
 a mysterious force draws me to you,  
 some natural inclination  
 or sympathetic star. 325  
 Come with me to Brussels.

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                (*Aside*) 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. 335

(*Aloud*) As I was saying, Fernando,  
 while I was seeking solace in Seville,  
 I saw a woman in church  
 one Tuesday in May,  
 the Day of the Cross, 340

which I now carry on my back.<sup>11</sup>  
 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.<sup>12</sup>  
 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,

---

<sup>11</sup> *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.

<sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup>	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 <sup>14</sup> honors Estela's obligation to you, and what all of us owe you. Meanwhile, my house and all I own are at your disposal.	405 410
	Let us go together to the Infanta. <sup>15</sup> She will reward you, and so my obligations will be satisfied.	415

---

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> *Infanta*: title used for a daughter of the ruling monarch of Spain.

JUAN                    By God, how can I ever thank you  
for such favors!

FERNANDO            Come. 420

*Enter TOMILLO*

TOMILLO             My lord, the mules await.

FERNANDO            And the carriage?

TOMILLO             Maybe it's chasing Apollo's chariot  
across the skies?<sup>16</sup>  
Either way, it hasn't made it through the forest. 425

*Exit all*

## SCENE 2

*Enter LEONOR, dressed gallantly as a man, and RIBETE, her servant*

LEONOR             This attire will enable me  
to recover my lost honor.

RIBETE               You look like the god of love himself.  
What a dashing figure,  
what a well-turned leg, 430  
what a shapely foot!<sup>17</sup>  
For a noblewoman of such tender years,  
you have shown great daring.

LEONOR             When passion rules,  
lovers lose all sense. 435  
But I am not led by love.  
Spurred by the wrongs done to me,  
I instead follow reason  
amid the blows of my unyielding fate.  
All for that first moment of weakness, 440  
when my faculties were overcome!  
I discovered that ingrate—

---

<sup>16</sup> *Apollo*: god of the sun in Greek mythology. He travels around the sphere of the world carrying the sun in his horse carriage.

<sup>17</sup> Part of the appeal of cross-dressing plots in this period was that the actresses would wear form-fitting, leg-revealing costumes. Ribete here is emphasizing the eroticism of the cross-dressed lady.

	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, <sup>18</sup>	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! <sup>19</sup> Anyway, back to our purpose here: will you kill him, then?	475 480

---

<sup>18</sup> *Camilla*: a fierce female warrior in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup>	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

---

<sup>20</sup> 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                Ribete, we must find my brother,  
                                  or everything will be lost.

RIBETE                And if he recognizes you?

LEONOR                Impossible.                                515  
                                  I was only six years old when he left.  
                                  He won't remember my face.  
                                  As long as he takes me in,  
                                  my courage will avenge my wrongs.

RIBETE                So now you're Don Leonardo,                                520  
                                  some newfangled Lord Ponce de León?<sup>21</sup>

LEONOR                Yes, that's my name now.

RIBETE                Oh master, and how the women  
                                  will be pestering me  
                                  with their love letters to you!                                525  
                                  Just like in a play,  
                                  where the fool is the go-between  
                                  and must take care of everything.  
                                  There's no plot, no scene,  
                                  where a servant with good taste                                530  
                                  won't come in handy.  
                                  Without him, there goes Troy!<sup>22</sup>  
                                  Is there anything more delicious  
                                  than when a servant yokes together  
                                  the stables and the court,                                        535  
                                  or makes a fierce thundering king  
                                  laugh at his wild antics?

LEONOR                There are people coming.  
                                  Come this way.

*Enter FERNANDO and LUDOVICO, talking*

FERNANDO            ...And that is what I wanted to tell you.                                540

LUDOVICO            I am amazed!

---

<sup>21</sup> *Juan Ponce de León* (POHN-SHE DEH LEH-OHN): a conquistador famous for his quest for the fountain of youth.

<sup>22</sup> There is a tradition from classical literature to the early modern period that the city of Troy was undermined by scheming. Ribete is referencing this in connection to the archetypical scheming servant in *comedia*, the *gracioso*.

FERNANDO                 Don Juan de Córdoba's brave courage  
is even more worthy of admiration  
than his luck, although he certainly is fortunate.  
The Infanta favors him for his bravery.                                 545  
Indeed, he is now her steward.

LEONOR                     Ay Ribete!

LUDOVICO                 He well deserves it.  
And tell me, does Estela  
now favor Don Juan?   550

FERNANDO                 I believe so.  
Her gratitude affords him  
that rare satisfaction.

*The two speak aside*

LEONOR                     Don Juan de Córdoba!  
Oh God / ¡Ay Dios, that's what he said!                                 555  
Could it be that ingrate, here today?  
I can hardly disguise my dismay.

FERNANDO                 But I will speak to her on your behalf.

LUDOVICO                 Can Estela aspire  
to anything more?   560  
Her wealth, her beauty,  
who better to bestow them upon  
than me?

FERNANDO                 Well said.

LUDOVICO                 Is there in all of Flanders a man  
more handsome, more gentlemanly?                                     565

RIBETE                     *(Aside)* I'll be damned.

FERNANDO                 Leave this matter to me.

LUDOVICO                 Agreed. Just make sure,  
as you are my friend,   570  
that it all comes to a good end.

*Exit* LUDOVICO

FERNANDO	What a nuisance!	
LEONOR	Ribete, I want to approach him and ask about my brother.	
RIBETE	Would he know him?	575
LEONOR	Of course.	
FERNANDO	May I help you with something, gentleman?	
LEONOR	No, sir; I would just like to inquire about a captain.	
FERNANDO	A captain? What's his name?	580
LEONOR	<i>takes out some letters</i>	
LEONOR	These will say: Don Fernando de Ribera, Master of the Horse and Captain of the Guard for Her Highness.	585
FERNANDO	<i>(Aside)</i> How dashing! Could those letters be from Leonor? <i>(Aloud)</i> I stand here before you. Give me those papers.	
LEONOR	Oh, what luck!	590
FERNANDO	Are they from my sister?	
LEONOR	<i>gives him the letters</i>	
LEONOR	You will recognize her hand. <i>(Aside)</i> Ribete, I'm so nervous.	
FERNANDO	<i>reads while LEONOR and RIBETE speak aside</i>	
RIBETE	Why?	
LEONOR	At seeing my brother.	595
RIBETE	Is this the famous courage of Seville?	

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 heavens<sup>23</sup>  
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.

---

<sup>23</sup> 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,<sup>24</sup>  
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,

---

<sup>24</sup> *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<sup>25</sup> 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                   *(Aside)* How cruel! / ¡Ay cruel!  
*(Aloud)* 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.                   760  
You'll hear of it  
soon enough. Fineo!

*Enter FINEO*

FINEO                    Yes, sir.

FERNANDO               Prepare Don Leonardo's room  
for him at once.                   765

LEONOR                   *(Aside)* This is killing me!

RIBETE                   *(Aside)* 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*

---

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

RIBETE (Aside) There goes the show!  
 Is anyone listening? Hello, hey! 775  
 If he's embarked on a new romance  
 maybe it's time for us to do the same  
 and head for home. Here comes  
 the lightning, the tempests, the trials,  
 the vipers, the basilisks,<sup>26</sup> 780  
 the storms, the torrents  
 pouring from her eyes.  
 If the first time she is tested we get  
 raptures, sleepless nights,  
 furies, rages, jealousy, 785  
 flashing sparks, and thunderbolts,  
 what will come next?  
 I expect she's thinking  
 of what havoc she can wreak now,  
 like a true Amazon.<sup>27</sup> 790  
 (Aloud) Oh, my lady!  
 With whom do I have the pleasure of speaking?

LEONOR Leave me, you fool!

*She cuffs* RIBETE

RIBETE Beelzebub! What else can I call you?  
 You're giving the devil a run for his money! 795  
 Who do you take me for, Don Juan?  
 Where did that come from!  
 That was quite a wallop!

LEONOR Go away! Leave me be!

*Exit* RIBETE

When, oh when, oh Heavens 800  
 will you rain down your fury upon him?  
 When will there be consequences?  
 Where has justice fled?  
 Where has it gone?  
 How can it cover up 805  
 such iniquity as this?  
 Justice undoes itself  
 in pleading for a villain!

<sup>26</sup> *Basilisk*: mythical snake-like creature that could kill with its sight.

<sup>27</sup> *Amazons*: In Greek mythology, female warriors known for their strength and skills in war.

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?<sup>28</sup>  
 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,

---

<sup>28</sup> *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,  
d 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! <sup>29</sup>	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

---

<sup>29</sup> *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.

just as I humbly kneel before you now...  
*(Aside)* How can I do this?  
Oh God! / ¡Por Dios! How can I say this to her?  
*(To ESTELA)* I beg of you—

ESTELA                      What you beg of me                                      920  
matters little, Don Fernando,  
when I have no desire to choose.

FERNANDO                    That's enough for me.

ESTELA                      Do not speak to me                                      925  
of Don Juan or Prince Ludovico.

FERNANDO                    *(Aside)* Her disdain is music to my ears!  
Now I can act on my own love!

LEONOR                      *(Aside)* She hates Don Juan!  
What luck!

ESTELA                      And you, Don Leonardo,                                    930  
have you nothing to say to me  
after so many days away?  
I cannot believe you behave this way,  
ignoring all the rules of courtesy  
and your obligations as a gentleman!                                      935

FERNANDO                    Since you will not decide, I bid you farewell.

ESTELA                      Goodbye, then.

FERNANDO                    And you, Leonardo, will you stay?

LEONOR                      Yes, cousin.

ESTELA                      Fernando, tell both of them for me,                                    940  
that I am not in love  
nor do I plan to marry.

*Exit* FERNANDO

LEONOR                      My silence, beautiful Estela,  
speaks volumes without saying a word:  
silent adoration is a language all its own.                                    945  
Already I have confessed  
what only eyes such as yours

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?  
 Would he not grieve  
 when you are gone?

ESTELA                      How glib is your tongue!  
                                     But enough, Leonardo, no more.  
                                     Tonight, in the courtyard,  
                                     beneath my window,<sup>30</sup>  
                                     I wish to speak to you alone.

LEONOR                     My soul shall fly to obey you.

ESTELA                     Goodbye, then.

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?

RIBETE                     It seems my prediction  
                                     is unfolding nicely.  
                                     Estela, blinded by love,  
                                     imagines she can coax fire  
                                     from damp wood and two cold stones.  
                                     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.  
                                     See how vain he looks!  
                                     But I need his friendship.

---

<sup>30</sup> 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?

RIBETE                    Whatever I want.

TOMILLO                It's not like that here.  
Where are you from?                    1130

RIBETE                    Madrid.

TOMILLO                How long have you been here?

RIBETE                    Far too long! It's been six months.

TOMILLO                And what is new in Madrid?

RIBETE                    Everything there is old hat.                    1135  
The only new thing is the poets  
and only because there are so many of them.  
Even women want to write poetry  
and dare to write plays.

TOMILLO                God spare me! / ¡*Válgame Dios!*                    1140  
Wouldn't they be better off  
sewing and spinning?  
Women poets!

RIBETE                    Oh yes! But it's not as new as you think,  
when there's Argentaria, Sappho, Areta,                    1145  
Blaesilla, and the thousand  
modern women who make  
Italy shine with splendor today,<sup>31</sup>  
making up for the boldness  
of their new vanity.                    1150

TOMILLO                And tell me—

RIBETE                    Christ Almighty,  
that's a lot of questions!

*Exit* TOMILLO and RIBETE

---

<sup>31</sup> Famous intellectual women from antiquity: *Argentaria* was said to have assisted her husband, the Roman poet Lucan, with one of his great works; *Sappho* was a lyric poet in ancient Greece; *Areta* was a Greek philosopher; *Blaesilla* was the daughter of Saint Paula.

SCENE 2

*Enter JUAN alone*

JUAN                    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.  
There is such pain in this pleasure,                    1160  
this jealousy that wracks me  
is hell in different form.  
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—  
 my breast, an ardent volcano,  
 my soul, an Etna of fire.<sup>32</sup>  
 A poet once said: 1200  
 “He who loves more, deserves more,”<sup>33</sup>  
 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?<sup>34</sup>  
 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.

---

<sup>32</sup> *Mt. Etna*: a volcano in Sicily.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> A reference to Cupid, often depicted wearing a blindfold.

JUAN	I shall kiss this letter a thousand times, for it is hers. Let me read it.	1230
RIBETE	<i>(Aside)</i> Read. I'm sure it will be all spark and no fire.	
JUAN <i>reads</i>		
JUAN	What good fortune! Now, perhaps, I'll have my prize, born of firm resolve, and not of simple luck. I've overcome the disdain of the beautiful Estela. She calls to me at last! Come, oh my joy, not too fast, lest I die of delight in such glory, when all my sorrows could not kill me.	1235       1240
RIBETE	That's just it.	1245
JUAN	Take this chain— I wish I could give you the world. Oh, sweet letter!	
RIBETE	<i>(Aside)</i> I'm sure there's less to it than he thinks.	1250
JUAN	Am I dreaming or awake? Do I dare answer? It will be my great pleasure to obey her, my friend. Tell the one who owns my heart that I am hers.	1255
RIBETE	Goodbye, then.	
JUAN	And to you. We must speak again— I'm sure we will be great friends.	1260
RIBETE	But of course!	
<i>Exit</i> RIBETE		

JUAN                   Hurry on, Apollo's fiery chariot,  
make room for the night,  
whose darkness follows your flight.<sup>35</sup>  
Today my hope will try its luck,                   1265  
for Estela herself urges me on.  
Though the prize might take some time,  
these high hopes are worth far more  
than any humble conquest.

*Exit* JUAN

### SCENE 3

*Enter* LEONOR, *cloaked*<sup>36</sup>

LEONOR               Oh, where do I wander                   1270  
in my madness, impelled  
by the savage force of love?  
How, in all its blindness,  
against impossible odds,  
can it still persuade me                   1275  
that I will triumph?  
Oh Honor, how you grieve me,  
play with me, offend me!  
If only Ribete would come  
so I might know whether               1280  
he was able to give the letter  
to that ingrate for whom I risk so much.  
But here he comes:  
what news, Ribete?

*Enter* RIBETE

RIBETE               Well, I'm here. I gave the note           1285  
to that sweet angel,  
who gave me this shiny trinket,  
thinking the letter was from Estela.  
He told me to deliver it  
to the one who has his heart,           1290  
and to say he is hers,  
and will come speak to her soon.

---

<sup>35</sup> Reference to the sun coach driven by Apollo, Greek god of the sun (see note 15).

<sup>36</sup> In original *comedia* productions, red cloaks were worn to indicate that a scene took place at night.



LEONOR	Very well.	
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, <sup>37</sup> whose boldness alone wreaks 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, <sup>38</sup> 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.	1320

---

<sup>37</sup> *Mars*: Roman god of war.

<sup>38</sup> *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.

She spoke to me  
right here the other day.

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

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

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,  
I would know if he is the prince.

JUAN *and* LEONOR *walk toward each other*

LEONOR             I must speak to him  
and settle this once and for all.  
Who goes there?                                 1360

JUAN                 One who goes  
where he pleases.

LEONOR             (*Aside*) It’s him. A fine response!  
(*Aloud*) Well, *he* won’t pass unless I allow it.

JUAN                 Who are you to get in my way?                 1365

LEONOR             The devil.

JUAN                 The devil? Nicely played!  
I’m not afraid of a devil.

LEONOR             I am like a hundred,  
thousand, million devils                         1370  
when I get angry.

JUAN                 That’s quite a legion!

LEONOR             Are you mocking me?

JUAN                 How could one man  
defend himself from so many?                 1375  
And so I humbly ask you—  
if devils listen to that sort of thing—  
that you send them away.  
What on earth could they want here?  
(*Aside*) So insolent—                                 1380  
he should be glad he found me  
just as I awaited  
the chance to speak to Estela.

LEONOR             In fact, they’d like to rain sorrows  
on ingrates such as you.                         1385

JUAN                 And if I won’t let them?

LEONOR                 Won't you?

JUAN                     Those are feisty devils!  
Settle down, my man.

LEONOR                 And you are very ill-mannered.                                 1390  
Either you let me stay here,  
or we'll have to fight.  
You choose.

JUAN                     Have you gone mad?   1395  
I've been very patient  
in putting up with such nonsense,  
but this is no small matter.  
It'd be too bad to have to kill you,  
but to leave would be even worse.  
Men like me are never swayed                                 1400  
by petty insults such as these.  
Besides, I have given my word  
to hold this place for a friend.

LEONOR                 Well, if men such as you   1405  
kept their word on weightier matters,  
as both reason and justice demand,  
there'd be no need for revenge.  
Why do people even give their word  
when they don't know how to keep it?  
Is that fitting? Is that fine?                                     1410  
Is that polite? Is that nice?

JUAN                     *(Aside)* This is no lark—  
he clearly takes me for one who's offended him.  
Best to leave him in the dark.  
*(Aloud)* I do not understand you, by God! / *¡por Dios vivo!* 1415

LEONOR                 Well, I understand myself just fine.  
And it should be clear that I know you,  
since you know that I speak the truth.

JUAN                     Your boldness shows   1420  
such courage and such daring,  
I find myself growing fond of you.

LEONOR                 Your fond feelings are in vain.  
This is not the first time

	that you have <i>grown fond</i> of me, but it was always a fiction, since you are treacherous, fickle, false, faithless, deceitful, duplicitous, savage, godless, unjust, ungrateful, and untrue to your word.	1425
JUAN	Look, I have given no one cause to speak against me this way, and yet here you are, spewing accusations I don't understand.	1430
LEONOR	You don't understand, you fickle man? Did you not feign, promise, plead, oblige, persuade, and pledge, swear by the faith and word of a nobleman, and then, betraying your blood, honor, and obligation, flee at the first chance, disdain with no reason, and leave without a goodbye?	1435  1440
JUAN	You're mistaken.	
LEONOR	I had better be mistaken. A great man for an escape, you are!	1445
JUAN	The rays of the sun would lose their light before I'd fail to keep my word.	
LEONOR	Well, look: I know one who knows full well you gave your word. You made a solemn promise never to break it, and as soon as your desire was satisfied, it was all over.	1450  1455
JUAN	You are mistaken.	
LEONOR	I had better be mistaken.	
JUAN	I do not understand you.	
LEONOR	<i>I</i> do.	

JUAN Listen to me— 1460

LEONOR I want to hear no more falsehoods  
from those lips of yours.  
They will only lie again.

JUAN Consider—

LEONOR I'll consider nothing. 1465  
How considerate were you?  
Draw your sword.

JUAN Neither my sense nor my courage  
can let this pass any longer.  
There is no other way out. 1470

*They begin to fight and LUDOVICO enters*

LUDOVICO Don Leonardo told me  
to wait here for Estela.  
I suspect she is late.

JUAN I have tried to be patient and polite,  
since you clearly take me for another man,  
but you seem determined to fight. 1475

LUDOVICO A fight, here!

LEONOR Most disloyal of men,  
I know you well.

JUAN Well, then, 1480  
let's fight!

*They fight*

LUDOVICO That's Don Juan. Oh Fortune,  
finish off my rival!  
I can kill him  
if I just help his enemy. 1485

*LUDOVICO moves to fight at LEONOR's side*

I'm on your side!  
Let the villain die!

LEONOR	He will not.	
LEONOR <i>moves to JUAN's side</i>		
	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 <i>fights</i> LUDOVICO		
LUDOVICO	Such terrible blows!	1500
LUDOVICO <i>steps back</i>		
LEONOR	That's better. This is not your business. Leave, sir, before it costs you.	
LUDOVICO	<i>(Aside)</i> That's the first reasonable thing he has said. They have not recognized me. I should go now, and not leave Estela waiting.	1505
LUDOVICO <i>retreats with LEONOR chasing him offstage</i>		
LEONOR	That's more like it.	1510
JUAN	That was brave and gallant. <i>(Aside)</i> By heavens! / ¡Válgame el cielo! What is this?	

	For this man to provoke me, and with his sword allow fury to triumph over reason!	1515
	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.	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.	1530 1535
	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.	1540
	No, my happiness depends on killing you myself.	
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	1550



was Prince Ludovico.  
He will soon be back  
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

LUDOVICO *(Aside)* I will pretend to be Leonardo.  
*(Aloud)* I am your slave,  
to my great good fortune.

ESTELA I was worried you wouldn't come.

LUDOVICO Then I am happy I was late. 1585

ESTELA Why?

LUDOVICO Because it made you worry about me,  
most beautiful Estela.

ESTELA What kept you so long?

LUDOVICO I was gambling. 1590

ESTELA Did you win?

LUDOVICO I did.

ESTELA Give me my share.

LUDOVICO What is left to give, when I am all yours?

ESTELA You are just making excuses. 1595  
Come closer, listen.

LUDOVICO Gladly!

*Enter LEONOR, above, dressed as a woman*

LEONOR If only I can speak to him,  
it will be a perfect ploy,  
for once "Estela" dashes his hopes  
he must cease his attempts... 1600

*Enter JUAN*

JUAN Oh, to have followed him  
and then to have lost him  
on the way back from the palace!

LEONOR	( <i>Aside</i> ) This is Don Juan. Go slowly, Love, slowly, for tonight in your game I shall either lose myself or win it all.	1605
JUAN	Ah, here is Estela, surely.	
LEONOR	Who is that?	1610
JUAN	A lost soldier on the lookout in the war of love.	
LEONOR	Brave soldier! Is it Don Juan?	
JUAN	The very one who has surrendered his entire soul to you: memory, will, and intellect, with far more pleasure than pain. I have no faculties left with which to act, no reason to judge, and no strength to fight. All is subject to you, Estela.	1615      1620
LEONOR	What? Do you love me so?	
JUAN	You are clever enough to realize when you look in the mirror— could anyone help but love you?	1625
LEONOR	Though it's true I was once vain enough to pursue a dubious passion, I can't trust the mirror.	
JUAN	It must be a dark glass...	1630
LEONOR	Don Juan, sir, I don't need you to praise my image. I only wish you were less of an ingrate.	
JUAN	I, an ingrate? By heaven, if I do not love you, then let me die in the attempt!	1635
LEONOR	What? Don't you know me better than that? Let's get to the point.	

Why should I believe you?  
Doña Leonor, the lady from Seville,  
was neither foolish, ugly, poor, 1640  
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

LEONOR You are so fickle, Don Juan.  
Were you able to forget her  
without having enjoyed her?

JUAN Only your beauty is to blame for that.

LEONOR My beauty? That is a pretty excuse! 1675  
If you must always love the next beautiful woman,  
you will only trade one for another.

JUAN Listen, please!

*Action switches back to ESTELA and LUDOVICO*

ESTELA (*Aside*) I will show off my wit.

LUDOVICO What of Don Juan? 1680

ESTELA I don't like him.  
Nothing could persuade me to love him.  
I love only you.

LUDOVICO That will drive me to desperation.

JUAN (*Aside*) For Estela to know of this! 1685  
I must be mad!

LEONOR Speak, Don Juan, speak.

JUAN Hear me out.<sup>39</sup>  
Like one who sees the morning star  
gild the horizon before dawn 1690  
and cannot but love its shining glow,  
only to call it dim once he sees the sun  
rise pure and bright to illuminate the sky,  
so it was for me.  
I worshipped in Leonor 1695  
the lovely fire of a star.  
I was a moth to her flame.

---

<sup>39</sup> In the following exchanges, the characters describe their love stories through protracted and complex metaphors. As the two couples fight a battle of wits, the audience can join them in laughing at the pedantic use of poetic clichés and the ridiculous extremes to which they take the imagery, as the characters themselves acknowledge as when Juan comments, “A nice bit of sophistry!” (v. 1775).

	But once I'd glimpsed in you the shining likeness of the sun 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. 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.	1710 1715 1720 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	1735
	in the darkness of the night.	
	It alone brightens the path	
	and offers him hope.	
	And so, though the sun's rays	
	might finally reach him,	1740
	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.	1745
	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	1750
	long before you saw the sun?	
LUDOVICO	That's a strange metaphor, Estela,	
	to compare a rose	
	to Don Juan's courage and gallantry.	
ESTELA	Not so.	1755
LUDOVICO	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.	1760
	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.	1765
	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,	1770
	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.	
JUAN	A nice bit of sophistry!	1775

LEONOR	Forgive me. I must say what I feel. Go, go on back to Spain. An honorable man should not deign to deceive such a noble woman.	
JUAN	My love for you redoubles my feelings of disdain. I've forgotten her, yet this is the reward I get.	1780
LEONOR	Then lose all hope, Don Juan. I only wanted to see you in order to disabuse you.	1785
<i>Exit LEONOR</i>		
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, I will merit fortune's crown.	1790
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.	
<i>Exit ESTELA</i>		
LUDOVICO	I'm blind without your light.	
JUAN	How could Estela respond like that? How could she be so disdainful? 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, lost in doubt and chaos. Don Fernando is to blame. What should I do now,	1800       1805



ungrateful Estela?

LUDOVICO            Though you may now offend,                                1810  
                          ungrateful Estela,  
                          my ploys will win you in the end  
                          if love will not do the trick.

*Exit LUDOVICO*

JUAN                    But, why do I falter?  
                          Where is my courage, my strength?                        1815  
                          I'll follow this amorous deed  
                          through to the end.  
                          I will love the Countess Estela.  
                          I'll stand firm against all others.  
                          My unrivaled affection   1820  
                          will overcome her disdain.  
                          I will treasure her denials  
                          as my greatest favors.  
                          Estela's fury and anger,  
                          her hatred and loathing,                                       1825  
                          her tepid reception,  
                          her brutal rejection,  
                          all conspire against me.  
                          Let my life end here,  
                          amid all this pain.   1830  
                          Yet if Fortune favors the bold,  
                          I'll hazard my life,  
                          and a torment so brief.  
                          Bold and daring,  
                          and firm in my purpose,                                       1835  
                          I'll stand up to her fickleness.

*Exit JUAN*

ACT III  
SCENE 1

*Enter FERNANDO, JUAN, and TOMILLO*

FERNANDO            I would give my life  
                          to satisfy your doubt.  
                          I, speak to Estela?  
                          May I die by my own sword                                 1840  
                          if I—

JUAN                    All right, Don Fernando.  
May the one who ruined my happiness  
and led to such trouble  
be cursed a thousand times over!                    1845  
I believe what you say,  
but, by God there is  
no one else in Flanders  
who knows my story.

FERNANDO            Neither my honor,                    1850  
nor my noble devotion to you,  
would ever allow me to say a word.

JUAN                    You have wronged me,  
and this adds insult to injury.                    1855  
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!

*Enter ESTELA and LISARDA*

FERNANDO            Here comes Estela.

JUAN                    My anxious soul has been                    1860  
longing for her.  
Say nothing.

FERNANDO            Beautiful Estela,                    1865  
lovely Lisarda,  
the dawn breaks late today,  
for here are the sun and the sunrise  
walking side by side.

LISARDA              A new hyperbole.

JUAN                    Hardly new, for Estela is always                    1870  
a radiant sun, and you a shining dawn.

ESTELA                That's quite enough, Don Juan.  
How many times must I acknowledge  
your courage and your courtesy?

JUAN                    It is my misfortune                    1875  
never to please you.

	Instead you reproach me, so aloof and ungrateful.	
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	Are you hearing this, Lisarda? Don Juan says I spoke to him.	
LISARDA	He is clearly confused.	1910
JUAN	Confused? Didn't you say that I won the love of a lady from Seville?	
ESTELA	Don Juan, that's quite enough. This is the first I've heard of it, upon my honor! I haven't said a word about this to you, not at my window, nor below it.	1915
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> Heavens above! / ¡Vive el cielo! I'm crazy! Estela is clearly in love with me, but wants to hide it from Don Fernando and Lisarda. Though I wonder why she now denies that she said those very things to me.	1920
	Oh love! To arms, to arms! Loving thoughts, we must return to the fray. See how Estela encourages our sweet hopes this day!	1925
	I will pretend. <i>(Aloud)</i> Forgive me, it was a jest, to pass the time.	1930
FERNANDO	That was quite the joke, true, but I think it's on you.	1935
LISARDA	Was your lady very beautiful, Don Juan? Because the women of Seville are famed for their beauty.	
JUAN	It was all a jest, by God!	
ESTELA	It was no jest for her, Don Juan. She was deceived.	1940

JUAN	No, by my faith! ( <i>Aside</i> ) Who could imagine such a thing? Oh, love! What is happening to me? Estela now favors me, now dismisses me, insulted by my courtship. She encourages me, then disabuses me, denies that she would choose me, then turns kind and agreeable once more. And I never tire of adoring her in the face of her unceasing changes, her stormy disposition.	1945
FERNANDO	Heaven knows how truly I appreciate your good will, given how fond I am... of Don Juan. ( <i>Aside</i> ) If only the lovely Estela could read between the lines how much I care for her! ( <i>Aloud</i> ) And so I ask, for his sake, that you honor him. ( <i>Aside</i> ) Oh, friendship, what you ask of me!	1955
ESTELA	I will speak with you later, Don Fernando. Don Juan, you should strive to keep your word to ladies.	1960
JUAN	You wrong me unjustly, lovely Estela.	
ESTELA	Leonor was the one wronged.	
JUAN	( <i>Aside</i> ) I must not let on that I know what she speaks of. Estela's had enough of me today. ( <i>Aloud</i> ) Fernando, let's go.	1965
FERNANDO	How angry you've made her! Come. Goodbye, ladies.	
ESTELA	Goodbye.	1970

*Exit* FERNANDO *and* JUAN

Have you ever heard  
a juicier tale?

LISARDA                   What is this, cousin?

ESTELA                    I don't know—by my life! Just wait.  
You can't keep these things                   1980  
from a woman. Call Tomillo.  
He'll tell us the truth.

LISARDA                   You're right. Tomillo!

*Enter TOMILLO*

TOMILLO                   How can I serve you?

ESTELA                    Tell me the truth about something,               1985  
and this purse is yours.

*She offers TOMILLO a purse*

TOMILLO                   *(Aside)* I've got a truth for her.  
*(Aloud)* 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.<sup>40</sup>               1995  
You must mean the one whose house  
Don Juan used to visit, right?

ESTELA                    Yes, perhaps that's it.

TOMILLO                   *(Aside)* 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.

---

<sup>40</sup> 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.

ESTELA	I'll congratulate him on his catch.	2005
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, <sup>41</sup> 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.	2030  2035

---

<sup>41</sup> 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.

	Clearly you have no real memory of me nor space for myself in all that is thine. 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, 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 carried within you, as you are in me, 'til I see myself in your eyes appear.	2045  2050
ESTELA	In short: you're not yourself without me.	
LEONOR	I will never deserve you, and so my love will never know the satisfaction of knowing you love me.	2055
ESTELA	And is love so suspicious?	
LISARDA	Love must be wise.	
LEONOR	There will be no satisfaction in your loving me, given my qualities.	2060
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.	
<i>Exit ESTELA and LISARDA</i>		
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—<sup>42</sup>  
 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?

---

<sup>42</sup> Argos: A hundred-eyed giant from Greek mythology.

I only wish I'd loved Estela  
devotedly, faithfully,  
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.<sup>43</sup>

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!<sup>44</sup>  
She's taken my very life. 2175

LEONOR (*Aside*) Who is he bargaining with now?  
(*Aloud*) You seem surprised.

---

<sup>43</sup> 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 "Leonor."

<sup>44</sup> *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).

JUAN                     Oh heavens! It seems to me  
I've seen this lady before  
and that this portrait                     2180  
was once mine.  
(*Aside*) My reason  
must surrender  
to the truth before my eyes.

LEONOR                    You must know                     2185  
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,             2190  
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,                     2195  
a crime with death.

JUAN                     (*Aside*) What's happening to me?  
How could I resist  
when confronted with my dishonor?  
Why did I not stop this talk of infamy?     2200  
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.<sup>45</sup>  
Leave me be, jealous thoughts.             2205  
I must forgive her.  
Only I am to blame.  
I abandoned her. I was the ingrate.  
What am I to do  
amid such confusion?                     2210  
(*Aloud*) Don Leonardo...

LEONOR                    (*Aside*) The traitor seems  
to be coming around.  
(*Aloud*) What's this you say?

JUAN                     (*Aside*) I don't know what I'm saying—     2215

---

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

I burn in a jealous rage.  
 I'm lost in a labyrinth  
 with no way out but death,  
 for Leonor is no Ariadne.<sup>46</sup>  
 (*Aloud*) In this portrait I've seen my death. 2220

LEONOR (*Aside*) Oh, ungrateful fool,  
 so blind, so distracted  
 you don't even recognize me!  
 What could be more foolish  
 than to recognize the copy, 2225  
 but not the original?  
 Has deceit so blinded him  
 he can't see the truth before his very eyes?

JUAN (*Aside*) This is unbearable.  
 (*Aloud*) What are your obligations to this lady? 2230

LEONOR I've earned her embrace  
 and her favor—  
 you can imagine the rest.

JUAN (*Aside*) Undo me now,  
 oh my mad thoughts. 2235  
 Now, outrageous sorrows, fill my soul!  
 Seize me now, body and mind!  
 Leonor was our shared misfortune.  
 No more niceties,  
 I must break my silence. 2240  
 (*Aloud*) That woman, that monster,  
 that prodigy of easy virtue!  
 I left her, yet now jealousy does  
 what love could not.  
 Now I love her, and surrender 2245  
 to the arrows of that winged boy.  
 Yet even if I were to kill you,  
 I can find no way forward,  
 for the wrong she's done to me  
 will ring in my ears forever. 2250  
 Who could imagine that Leonor  
 would stain her honor like that?

LEONOR (*Aside*) He speaks against me,  
 though no less in my favor.

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ariadne*: In Greek mythology, a Cretan princess who helped Theseus safely negotiate the Minotaur's labyrinth.

He's said all he knows, 2255  
but let's tighten the screws a bit more.  
*(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.<sup>47</sup>

FERNANDO *(Aside)* What's this I see? What's this I hear?  
*(Aloud)* Don Juan, Leonardo, 2285

---

<sup>47</sup> *Luis Pacheco de Narváez*: Famous 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

what are you talking about?

LEONOR           The art of swordplay.

FERNANDO       And why are you so pale,  
Don Juan?

JUAN             Honor requires                                 2290  
that we stop now.  
Find me later, Leonardo.

JUAN *starts to exit*

LEONOR           I will, for I must abide  
by the principles of your doctrine.  
(*Aside*) Oh, heavens! / ¡Ah, cielos!                                 2295

JUAN             (*Aside*) What is Fernando doing here?

LEONOR           (*Aside*) My brother, here, now?  
I can't believe it!

JUAN             I am headed this evening  
to the gardens of Armindo.   2300  
You should come, too, if you wish,  
for a bit of practice.

LEONOR           I'd like nothing more.

JUAN             Are you staying here, Fernando?

FERNANDO        Yes.   2305

JUAN             Goodbye, then.  
Are we agreed then, Don Leonardo?

LEONOR           Agreed.

*Exit JUAN*

FERNANDO        Is he gone?

LEONOR           Yes.   2310

FERNANDO        Estela told me  
that Prince Ludovico courts her,

and that she is obliged to Don Juan.  
And yet it seems to me  
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
TOMILLO	To hell with it all. I'll just lie down here for a little while. <i>(Lies down)</i> Oh, the ground is so nice and soft! Like it was made to break my bones. Alright, enough is enough. I can't resist. Sleep, I surrender to you.	2345
TOMILLO	<i>falls asleep</i>	
FLORA	Now he's sleeping like a log— the drink worked like a charm. Let's have a look at what relics this saint has on him. <sup>48</sup>	2350
	<i>She begins emptying his pockets</i>	
	Let's see. Here is a mustache comb— it must be four hundred years old. This here appears to be a handkerchief— once so white, so clean, and now so ruined by tobacco and phlegm! Here's his dice made of bones— a holy relic! And a deck of cards— his sacred book of prayers and devotions. I can't find the purse, and I don't think I will, among so much hallowed junk. What's this? A snuff box of horn. A fine material, worthy of its owner. <sup>49</sup> Men and the things they go for! I know a man who inhaled more dust than snuff with every snort. I'll turn him over and examine him again.	2355 2360 2365 2370

---

<sup>48</sup> As Flora digs through Tomillo's pockets to rob him, she ironically refers to the old junk in his pockets as holy relics. The purse she eventually finds could either be the purse he received from Fernando at the beginning of the play or the one Estela gave him in exchange for information.

<sup>49</sup> Horn, or "cuerno" is a play on the term for a cuckold, "cornudo."

*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 *escudos!*<sup>50</sup>  
How I revere you!  
I take you into my heart,  
sacred treasury of that rich metal 2390  
that tempted Midas and Croesus.<sup>51</sup>  
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

TOMILLO How I've slept...

---

<sup>50</sup> *Escudo*: Spanish coin.

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

It felt like a year,  
and still I cannot wake up.  
I'll just roll to the other side.

RIBETE                      This poor fool's                      2410  
   drunk as a skunk.

TOMILLO                      Hush.

RIBETE                      Tomillo! Are you asleep?

TOMILLO                      No.

RIBETE                      Dreaming, then?                      2415

TOMILLO                      No, not that either.  
   This fool wakes me,  
   and then asks if I'm asleep.

RIBETE                      Is all this junk yours?

TOMILLO                      (*Sits up*) No clue. What's this?                      2420  
   My purse!

TOMILLO *searches around frantically*

RIBETE                      Where did you leave it?

TOMILLO                      I don't know.

RIBETE                      Hold on. Don't fret.  
   Let's look for it.                      2425

TOMILLO                      What's the point?  
   I did not guard it well,  
   and so I've been replaced  
   by a more able protector.  
   Oh, my dear purse!                      2430

RIBETE                      You could call for it in song.

TOMILLO                      "*Nero, you sit on high and gaze,  
   while Rome's consumed in deadly blaze.*"<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Verses from a popular song that appears in *La Celestina* and is referenced in works by Lope de Vega and Cervantes.







you no longer care for who I am?  
 And you, dear cousin,  
 how can you be so foolish  
 and behave so rashly? 2535  
 Have you lost your mind?

LEONOR I only do what I must.  
 You insult my just cause  
 without reason.

FERNANDO Tell me, then, what's this about? 2540

LEONOR Don Juan should say.

JUAN *(Aside)* How could I speak plainly  
 when I have been wronged  
 and the danger is clear?

FERNANDO What? Will you not respond? 2545

JUAN *(Aside)* How could the heavens permit this!  
*(Aloud)* Let Leonardo state the cause.  
*(Aside)* This is killing me.

LEONOR Oh, you want me to announce  
 all of your fickle misdeeds? 2550  
 Then listen closely,  
 Fernando and Ludovico.  
 Dear cousin, as you've told me,  
 Don Juan has already shared with you  
 the secrets of his love, 2555  
 his fickleness, and how he came to be here,  
 and what has transpired since,  
 how he served Estela  
 and wooed her dishonorably.  
 Listen now and you will hear 2560  
 the worst part of all.  
 Doña Leonor de Ribera,  
 your sister, admired by all,  
 sought by countless noble suitors—  
 how can I put this... 2565

FERNANDO Go on, Leonardo, get to the point.

JUAN Wait, wait, Leonardo.  
*(Aside)* Can this be true?

Could she be Fernando's sister?

LEONOR           It was your sister, Doña Leonor,           2570  
                           who was the cause  
                           of Don Juan's misdeeds.

JUAN               *(Aside)* Now Fortune has played  
                           its hand in full.

FERNANDO        Go on, go on,                                   2575  
                           though I fear I may lack the wits  
                           and the patience to hear you out.  
                           *(Aside)* Unworthy gentleman, ingrate,  
                           and to think that you  
                           might have married Estela!               2580

LEONOR           Don Juan promised to marry her—  
                           the excuse that lies behind  
                           so much innocence undone.  
                           But then he left her, the ingrate,  
                           just as I came to love her                   2585  
                           with such deep devotion  
                           that it took my breath away.  
                           My very life was warmed  
                           by the sweet fire of Leonor's beauty,  
                           though she burned at the injustice       2590  
                           of Don Juan's betrayal.  
                           And swearing me first to secrecy—  
                           lovers will swear anything—  
                           she told me her pitiful story  
                           while her eyes shed copious pearls.       2595  
                           So I, a faithful lover,  
                           promised to avenge her wrongs  
                           by killing Don Juan,  
                           and, having laid the story to rest  
                           through a duel, to marry her myself.       2600  
                           And marry her I shall,  
                           Don Fernando, unless I die  
                           at the hands of my enemy.  
                           I came to Flanders,  
                           knowing he was in Brussels.               2605  
                           You see, I must avenge this wrong.  
                           Noble as I am, I seek only honor.  
                           It is mine now, as is Leonor.

JUAN               By heavens, / ¡Vive el cielo! that will never be!



FERNANDO	Can such confusion be possible? Today I lose both life and honor! Ah, wanton sister! Don Juan, is this how you repay my friendship?	2610
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> I am too ashamed to look at him. <i>(Aloud)</i> Had I known she was your sister...	2615
FERNANDO	<i>(to JUAN)</i> What would you have done? <i>(to LUDOVICO)</i> I cannot find a way out of this, Ludovico.	
LEONOR	I adore her.	
JUAN	I love her.	2620
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> Isn't that nice!	
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> Isn't this awful!	
LEONOR	<i>(Aside)</i> Isn't this more like it!	
JUAN	<i>(Aside)</i> Isn't this cause for jealousy! <i>(Aloud)</i> I cannot marry Doña Leonor, it's true, even if Leonardo were to be killed. I will die first. Oh, if only she had kept her honor!	2625
FERNANDO	I am lost in a labyrinth! Don Juan has a point, a good one, for how can I marry her to Leonardo, when Don Juan still lives? That's it. We must all kill each other. I can see no other way out.	2630     2635
LUDOVICO	By God, / ¡ <i>Por Dios!</i> neither do I! And that would be so barbaric and violent.	
LEONOR	So had Leonor not broken the ties between you, had she not accepted my love, would you still love her?	2640
JUAN	I would adore her.	



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
JUAN	I will adore you.	
RIBETE	And so Leonor's scheming has come to an end.	

FERNANDO	Sister, I am amazed at such good fortune.	2705
LUDOVICO	Could there be a happier ending?	
ESTELA	Leonardo, have you been deceiving me?	
LEONOR	I had no choice, Estela.	
ESTELA	Let us be sisters then, beautiful Leonor. Fernando, give me your hand as my husband and lord.	2710
FERNANDO	We have Leonor to thank for this happiness. I am yours.	
LUDOVICO	Lovely Lisarda, now that I've lost Estela, let me find solace in your beauty. Give me your hand.	2715
LISARDA	I give you my hand and my soul.	
RIBETE	Flora, they are three for three. But there's only you left for the two of us. No, we'll leave you to the wolves, you little lost lamb.	2720
ESTELA	I'll give her to you, along with six thousand <i>escudos</i> .	
RIBETE	I'll accept for the <i>escudos</i> . The fool who takes such a wife will surely need them.	2725
TOMILLO	And me—I've lost everything— Flora, purse and <i>escudos</i> .	
LEONOR	And so ends, wise senate, <i>The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs</i> . Its creator, a modest woman, begs you to forgive its faults.	2730

END OF THE PLAY