LOPE DE VEGA

WOMEN AND SERVANTS



Translated by Barbara Fuchs

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Act I



Persons in Act I

COUNT PRÓSPERO
CLARIDÁN, VALET
TEODORO, SECRETARY
RISELO, GENTLEMAN
MARS, FOOTMAN
LOPE, FOOTMAN
EMILIANO, OLD MAN
DON PEDRO, HIS SON
FLORENCIO, OLD MAN
LUCIANA, HIS DAUGHTER
VIOLANTE, HER SISTER
INÉS, SERVANT
[OTHER SERVANTS]

ACT I

Count Próspero enters taking off his clothes, accompanied by his valet, Claridán, Riselo, and others servants who carry a tray for his ruff

COUNT Take these—by my life, this gaming has tired me out.

CLARIDÁN Losing is so tiresome.

COUNT As is winning.

CLARIDÁN Well put, and yet they say that when a wise man was asked how a king should be raised, he said "let him play and let him win, for it refreshes the blood like nothing else."

COUNT The very wisdom of the Greeks! And was this maxim in verse or in prose?

CLARIDÁN I found it in my sleep, while I waited up for you till two in the morning. Off with your clothes, by God—your losses are keeping you up!

COUNT How you rush me!

CLARIDÁN Isn't it time for bed?

RISELO With all this chitchat, it's now time to wake up. Dawn herself begins to stir.

COUNT A most poetic image!

CLARIDÁN Go to sleep, enough!

COUNT Claridán, those who lose always have to talk about it. If only there were someone to play billiards with me!

CLARIDÁN Such a glutton for punishment, like an ass at a millwheel.

RISELO All the camels in Egypt couldn't take the pounding of this wheel.

COUNT Chess—now that's a fine game.

CLARIDÁN Let's give this night its happy ending—go to bed already, by God!

COUNT Is there anything quite like two honorable men, sitting at chess and insulting each other with a few good lines?

RISELO It's a game of reason; it's meant to improve the spirits.

COUNT No one has ever written down such things as they say.

RISELO Games should be games, and not lessons.

COUNT Yesterday I saw some men playing a thing they call croquet.

RISELO It's good exercise.

COUNT I frown on so much exercise. Why so quiet, Claridán?

CLARIDÁN To see if you'll stop talking and go to bed!

COUNT Tennis, now that's dashing!

RISELO A jack with its feet up makes for a less dangerous game.

COUNT Ah, but if that goes on for a night or two, it can be very dangerous, and bad for your health.

CLARIDÁN So—has your lordship decided not to go to bed?

RISELO He's trying to make up by night for what he loses by day.

COUNT What happened to Florianica, from Cod Street?

CLARIDÁN (There will be no sleeping tonight.)

COUNT Is she poorly?

RISELO She is none too rich.

COUNT I suspect she has fallen in love.

RISELO She is not well served by those men in fancy dress who run around the court these days.

COUNT Nothing to say, Claridán?

CLARIDÁN I am sleeping, my lord, for the night is almost over.

COUNT Sleeping on your feet?

CLARIDÁN I'm always up—I eat on my feet and sleep on my feet.

COUNT All right, leave me now.

CLARIDÁN And shall we go to sleep?

COUNT Yes.

CLARIDÁN God give you a good day.

The Count, alone

COUNT Claridán's worries have worried me anew. How he sets me on edge! And if he woos where I woo? It would be madness not to be jealous—why, if I weren't jealous, I wouldn't be in love. By God, I may be rushing to see what I would much rather not see… No reason, love? I'm not afraid to be afraid, but it's not without a cause. What shall I lose if I find out? No, I want to see this, for this fear comes from love. Teodoro, Teodoro!

Enter Teodoro, his secretary

TEODORO My lord, my lord.

COUNT Come here. Who is in my room?

TEODORO No one; Fabio and Lidoro went back to their rooms, and so did Claridán.

COUNT I must see a certain lady. Give me some dashing clothes—a cape and doublet, I'll just wear this collar.

TEODORO Which steel?

COUNT The one I took off, and that buckler from Seville.

TEODORO I'll see to it. (Though not gladly; this does not bode well for me!)

He exits

COUNT Such a rush and bother! Better safe than sorry, though. Now I'll know whether Claridán woos where I do. I've been jealous of him since yesterday.

Teodoro returns

TEODORO Here are your sword, and your cape, and your doublet, and your hat.

COUNT Give them here.

TEODORO Would your lordship like my company?

COUNT (That would be to show my weakness, and my love must not hear that I am letting the secret out.)

He gets dressed

TEODORO I'd like to come with you.

COUNT Don't lose your sleep, Teodoro. I'll be perfectly safe.

TEODORO Then God guide you and may you come back safely.

COUNT That is my plan.

The Count exits

TEODORO I am jealous of the Count—for over two weeks he's been eyeing what I adore, and gold mounts a brave assault. A man has no sense if he does not watch out for gold—there's no catapult, no cannon, no artillery more effective in breaking down any resistance, or corrupting chaste honesty. There's nothing to lose in just seeing whether he's headed over there. He won't know me even if he happens to see me. This is jealousy, no doubt, though I wish I could stop it. Unless it's nipped in the bud, it always ends badly.

He exits

Enter Claridán, with torches, dressed in black, and Mars, footman

CLARIDÁN You watch the street, Mars, and see if you hear anything.

MARS Only your footsteps, sir. There is nothing to fear. Go and talk to her at your leisure. Mars is by your side, the very god of war—what can you fear?[1] Just leave me on this corner, and you'll see how all who pass by tremble at the sight of me.

CLARIDÁN Walk over that way; if you stand on this corner, you'll look like a big playbill, and they'll all want to take a look at you.

[1] In the original Spanish, this servant's name is Martes, with reference both to the god of war and his planet (*Marte*) and the day of the week (*martes*), which is an unlucky day in Spain. I have preserved the references to the god of war, and replaced the day-of-the-week humor with references to the planet.

MARS Just go and stop telling me what to do; there's nothing for anyone to read or to find here.

CLARIDÁN And if Violante is in bed?

MARS It was late when she got out of her coach. But never fear, a woman in love won't fall asleep!

CLARIDÁN Here I come!

MARS (And I tremble, for this street is deserted. If someone draws a blade, there'll be no barber to stitch me up, not even a pole.[2] And nowhere on this backdrop are there any open doors… It would be good in a fight to have at least a barber's bowl!)

CLARIDÁN What do you hide from me, jealous shutters?

Violante, above

VIOLANTE When absence breeds jealousy, sleep does not come easily.

CLARIDÁN You know it was not my fault—any palace man will have the same excuse. The Count wouldn't go to bed—what was I to do?

VIOLANTE Nothing is worse in love than excuses. Even those faults that love condemns are less painful than the excuses made for them! Tomorrow, my sister and I shall take our steel-water and get our exercise.[3]

CLARIDÁN And I shall spend the night waiting for that happy morrow! Has she gone to bed? What is she doing?

VIOLANTE She was tired and went to bed.

Enter the Count

COUNT (Jealous fears, born of love, never lie! She is at the window, by God!)

MARS (Here comes a man with his cloak over his face; big as a house! One, did I say? No, there's two of them! Two, no, three, over there! I'll just make my way over here…)

[2] Early modern barbers also practiced surgery and bloodletting.
[3] "Steel-water" (*el acero*) was a fashionable treatment for oppilation—a form of female anemia—in early modern Madrid. It required young women to ingest water in which an iron rod had been doused and then to take a walk or other exercise. See the Introduction (p. 10).

COUNT (It's Claridán—I am done for. My jealousy was justified. And yet it may not be Luciana he speaks to. How can I tell if it's her sister without giving myself away? I will make a scene.) Help! Murder!

CLARIDÁN My lady, my servant Mars, valiant to a fault, calls for help. I must go to him, for he was keeping guard for me.

VIOLANTE Don't risk your life for his, if he is in such danger. I am so frightened!

[Claridán exits]

The Count enters from the other side

COUNT (The things love comes up with, to distract from jealousy! I want to come near—oh those blasted shutters!)

VIOLANTE Who is that?

COUNT Claridán, whose feet won't run after what his sword cannot find. Speak to me, Luciana!

VIOLANTE This is a fine trick—a different voice, a different soul! You are no more Claridán than I am Luciana!

COUNT The heavens have relieved my jealousy! He is courting Violante!

VIOLANTE Sir, I know you not, and so I must close this window.

COUNT Close it, since you are not Luciana; that is not her voice.

Enter Claridán

CLARIDÁN (Another suitor in my place so soon? His sword is out for some offense he received, I'm sure of it, and I never even had time to find him. Mars is so far gone that he's quit his sphere. So I return to the place I left and find that it's common ground now, and I cannot even approach.)
Ah, good sir!

COUNT What do you want?

CLARIDÁN To save you the wait, if what you await is in that house, save your grace.

COUNT I was waiting for a servant whom I thought disloyal. But I'm no longer worried about him. I thought he had left me ready for bed and then come to serve the lady whom I serve, but I may have been wrong about

that. He does not court whom I thought he did; my imagination was taking liberties, for I serve Luciana, and Claridán, Violante.

CLARIDÁN Is it the Count, my lord?

COUNT The very same.

CLARIDÁN My lord!

COUNT Stay, for you know full well where my love lies. Violante loves you, tell her to work on Luciana. Luciana will do the same for her sister as that sister does for your sake, and then I will be a good friend to you... For once Luciana loves me I will come with you at night. I have said enough. Good night to you, Claridán.

CLARIDÁN Sir, I will come with you.

COUNT You must not lose for my sake the favor you receive at this window. I know what that's like.

CLARIDÁN But sir…

COUNT Stop, I insist, and make the most of this opportunity. Stay, stay here.

The Count exits

CLARIDÁN He leaves me in his debt, although thoroughly confused. But when does love fail to bring shame and sorrow? He loves Luciana, and he knows what I long for.

Enter Teodoro

TEODORO (It's the Count! What's this I see? It's as I feared. He's at the door! What shall I do? What a hard fate! How could beauty prove constant, where there is neither truth nor faithfulness?)

CLARIDÁN Who goes there?

TEODORO Just a passer-by.

CLARIDÁN Well, then, pass by.

TEODORO And if I were just to pass by—there are things in this house that might detain me.

CLARIDÁN Well, don't stop here, for I'll defend it.

TEODORO And I shall offend.

CLARIDÁN Is that Teodoro?

TEODORO Is that Claridán?

CLARIDÁN I am Claridán.

TEODORO And I, Teodoro.

CLARIDÁN For the sake of my master's honor—a gallant lover he—I must forbid you from coming near this house.

TEODORO I have my suspicions, and I've come to see what will be the death of me.

CLARIDÁN The Count just left this place. He told me that he adores Luciana, and humbly asked her sister and me to tell her so. I could not make any excuses, although our friendship cried out against it, Teodoro. The Count is our master, in the end.

TEODORO The Count will be the end of me! I adore Luciana. This is killing me!

CLARIDÁN If you fall out with him, Teodoro, you lose everything. Just remember two things: Luciana loves you for her husband and her equal, but if she treats the Count poorly, you will pay. If these women, and you and I, fool him, if Luciana just keeps putting him off, what lover would not give up? You know that fine gentlemen can't abide delays. When he sees that this love truly has no end, he'll sing another tune. And you, standing firm at your post, will enjoy the rewards of your devotion, without losing a thing.

TEODORO You're right. I would be a fool not to take your advice. I leave my honor in your good hands.

CLARIDÁN The sun's coming up now, but I know they'll go take their exercise tomorrow. You'll have a chance to talk to them then.

TEODORO Is there anything worse than making people jealous, Claridán?

CLARIDÁN Come, let us change our clothes. And never fear—once a woman falls in love, there is no power strong enough to make her forget it. Love shows its strength even in women of no great rank—what will it not do in noble ones?

They exit

Enter Florencio, an old man

FLORENCIO Does this house know no master? Hello there, servants! Lope, Laurencio, Inés! Ah, here they are. Hello! At this rate, the sun will be up before anyone answers me.

Enter Lope, footman, getting dressed

LOPE May I live to see seventy, like you! All you old men are up so early—you've so little time left, you can't waste it in sleep. Plus it's too much like death, and makes you afraid.

FLORENCIO You're wrong, you ignorant fool. Roosters are up earlier than anyone, and they're young. And so are the birds and the beasts, as Nature bids. Only man, sinful and weak, sleeps more than his due.

LOPE Young men sleep because they are nice and moist; old ones are all dried up.[4]

FLORENCIO A fine philosopher! Remember, the ladies are to go to the park.

LOPE Inés, my lord, will tell you where they are.

Enter Inés

INÉS You will wake all the neighbors with your shouting.

FLORENCIO Inés, wake Violante and Luciana; it's very late.

INÉS They're getting dressed.

FLORENCIO Ah, strong steel-water! The sun has long been up, and I want them to do the same.

[Exit Florencio]

LOPE Good morning to you, my lady.

INÉS You're clearly having a bad one—to judge from your face, at any rate.

LOPE Did you sleep well?

INÉS Well enough.

[4] Lope cites humoral theory, which associated youth with humidity and age with dryness.

LOPE We could not sleep for a certain incident.

INÉS You're in poor health.

LOPE In love, actually, which takes its toll even in your sleep. Did you dream?

INÉS I did.

LOPE Dreamed what?

INÉS Gardens, pools, flowers, fountains, rivers.

LOPE I never dream of water. I dreamt of bulls.

INÉS That's a bad sign.

LOPE So it is! And what was worse, they chased me through the town and climbed into the attic. Do you know what that means?

INÉS You're not a cattle man, neither cows nor sheep nor a farmer of any kind. I think this is a dream about horns.[5]

LOPE Let me tell you, my lady Inés…

INÉS Hush, here are our masters.

Enter Violante, Luciana and Florencio, old man

LUCIANA Do not be surprised that we took so long to get out of bed. We only take our steel-water because we have to.

FLORENCIO Go get it, Lope.

LOPE Here I go!

[Exit Lope]

FLORENCIO If you're to get the most out of this treatment, which some in Madrid call a vice, why insist on going to the park?

VIOLANTE Nowhere else can I get such good exercise—it tires me out for a good long while.

[5] Horns were associated with being a cuckold. If the bulls in Lope's dream have nothing to do with animal husbandry, as Inés helpfully points out, then they may refer to his sexual jealousy.

Enter Lope with two small golden cups on a tray

LOPE Here are the two doses—if you can swallow them! Even if they were made with precious metal, who could keep them down? It's the perfect tonic for hypochondriac guts. Let the apothecary drink it—only he knows what's in it, or rather, what's in it for him!

Each takes her glass

INÉS Someone is here to see you.

FLORENCIO I will be right back.

[Exit Florencio]

LUCIANA Now that my father is gone, Lope, take these and dump them in the street.

LOPE Well done!

[LUCIANA] This will do nothing to quench the fire of love in my breast.

INÉS I tricked him to get rid of him—I feel sorry for you with those potions.

VIOLANTE Quick; give us our cloaks, for love awaits!

Florencio returns

FLORENCIO There was no one in the hall.

INÉS He must have left.

FLORENCIO Did you take your waters?

LUCIANA The things we do for our health! So bitter!

FLORENCIO You should know, daughter, that blessed health does not come easily—we must suffer for it, and this is what the doctor ordered. Let Lope and Inés go with you.

VIOLANTE God keep you!

Exeunt

FLORENCIO At least until I can marry you off, which is my heart's desire. Ah, the cares of a father, who cannot rest until he has found a remedy for what weighs on his very soul!

Enter Emiliano, old man, and Don Pedro, his son

EMILIANO Long may you delight, Florencio my friend, in those beautiful angels, like two suns, that I just saw on their way to the park. I confess, they made me jealous of you, and for good reason.

FLORENCIO Emiliano, I have been asking myself what I might do about them, for I am worried about them, at their sad age and in my tired state.

EMILIANO Had I two sons I would take all your cares away. I can do half—I offer you Don Pedro.

FLORENCIO And I would consider myself happy, and much obliged to you.

EMILIANO Although I would visit you anyway, obliged as I am to any of my friends, I must confess that today I come for my own sake. Do you know my son?

FLORENCIO I don't think I've met him.

EMILIANO Come, Pedro, and kiss Florencio's hands.

DON PEDRO If I can gain your love, greatest enterprise of all, then I thank my lucky stars.

EMILIANO He is a brave and honorable lad.

FLORENCIO He is your son, and that tells me all I need to know about his worth and his mind.

DON PEDRO I am your servant, a name that honors my father, me, and our house.

EMILIANO Pedro is a very courtly gentleman, an example to all, even headed in times of peace and a real man in combat. If we marry him to Violante, to whom he is much inclined, our friendship will only grow.

FLORENCIO Although I am the father, Emiliano, and stand to gain the most from this, I cannot give my approval, my word, or her hand, until I know Violante's pleasure. I'm sure we can count on it just soon as she sees him, for young women are easily pleased, and Pedro is brave and smart. They're off to the park this morning, after taking their steel-

water, for Luciana looks a little peaked lately. We'll just have to wait for our chance.

EMILIANO Don Pedro would be so fortunate to have her that he would gladly wait a thousand years, and certainly till they return from their exercise.

DON PEDRO (I have waited over a year for this already!)

EMILIANO Do you think Pedro is like other young men today, with no good sense, who look run-down as soon as they get a beard? He doesn't ruin anyone else's happiness, nor does he fall for his own reflection in the mirror. He gives no food for ladies' gossip, nor does he make up stories about others' reputations. He doesn't pretend to know what he has no idea about, nor is he uneasy in public. His soul is discreet and his lips are sealed. He is kind and gentle with friends; he broadcasts the good and hushes the bad; he flees from fools and honors the wise.

FLORENCIO As long as he can keep his mouth closed.

EMILIANO He studied a bit; he knows Latin.

FLORENCIO It's good of you to praise what you have made.

DON PEDRO I'm unworthy of such great praise. But let my soul make up for what this breast might lack.

EMILIANO Love allows me to praise him thus, and all the more so when it's to his advantage.

FLORENCIO Let us pass the time meanwhile.

DON PEDRO My love is true! May heaven help me!

They exit

Enter Claridán, Teodoro and Mars

CLARIDÁN While we are waiting, ask him how he got away.

TEODORO I don't dare.

CLARIDÁN Why not, while we're out here in the park?

TEODORO Mars, Claridán here says you're no such Mars with your sword, and that you're more for safety than for impressing the ladies, because he left you on that corner and found you trembling in the house.

MARS That's what I get, for not being chicken? If it hadn't been for me, they would have shot him to pieces with their pistols.

TEODORO My God! And how is that?

MARS There were ten men coming against him—I mean eleven with huge swords, thirteen with their shields, without counting the four or six with their fine French pistols. I come out to meet them, and on the bridge, like that brave Roman, hacking them right and left, I stop them and make them flee.[6] And because men must be prudent, and fear death at the hands of the law, I chose to hide at home, and save myself from the greed of officers.[7]

TEODORO So how was it that no-one injured you, with so many swords and pistols flying?

MARS It was just one wound.

TEODORO And who cured you so quickly?

MARS There are some fine healers who, just by speaking Greek, can sew up the biggest gashes. Have you not seen them work?

TEODORO Do they come from Greece?

MARS No, no, they learn it all here—I want to study it now. I'll learn to call bread *panino* and wine *weeno*!

CLARIDÁN Enough of that nonsense!

TEODORO By your life, Claridán, this drunk is really something!

CLARIDÁN Here come Violante and Luciana.

TEODORO The flowers take on a sweeter scent.

MARS Spoken like a stud!

TEODORO Shut up, you animal!

MARS I will.

[6] Publius Horatius Cocles, a legendary Roman soldier who defended a bridge into Rome and singlehandedly held off the Etruscan forces.
[7] Whom he would have to bribe if arrested.

Enter Violante, Luciana, Lope and Inés

VIOLANTE There they are, Luciana.

LUCIANA I know that Teodoro must be here, because I am in quite a state.

CLARIDÁN To offer these fields to those who are like spring itself, who honor these shores with their footsteps—this would never do. Yours are the water and the flowers, and they are but your shadow.

MARS (What a fine greeting! Like something from one of those pastoral novels!)[8]

VIOLANTE These fields well suit April and May, for so your gentle selves seem to be. Take a seat, if you will, for we are tired.

TEODORO Nothing but silence for me? Are you not pleased to see me?

LUCIANA Love knows I am, Teodoro, but, absorbed in looking at you, I had not given my lips license to speak. I adore you with my eyes only.

TEODORO Oh trees, let me write on your bark, so that my words may live and grow when I am gone, as Medoro wrote in his woods to his beautiful beloved, though under a less fortunate star.[9] "I adore you with my eyes only."

LUCIANA Put down your dagger, that is too much. There is no need to carve in tree-bark what lies in the soul. To love me in return is enough.

CLARIDÁN What do you say to this, Violante?

VIOLANTE I think lukewarm lovers are like painters who just focus on the background.

CLARIDÁN I could not believe it either.

LOPE And why are you so quiet, sister? No longer Inés, but like a moon around that Mars. What joy can come of marrying a man with such a violent name?

[8] Mars mocks Claridán's elaborate metaphors by pointing out their conventionality: they invoke the hallmarks of Renaissance pastoral literature, which features idealized shepherds discussing love and poetry in fields and forests.

[9] In Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), the Saracen soldier Medoro wins the elusive princess Angelica, whom Orlando and several other knights pursue. Angelica nurses the wounded Medoro in a remote cottage in the woods, and when he recovers they inscribe their names on trees as a mark of their love. When Orlando finds the carving, it drives him mad with jealousy.

INÉS Mr. Lope, don't treat me like this. I may not take the steel water, but I can be steely in my disdain. How do you know, you footman you, that I am devoted to Mars?

LOPE Is that what has you so upset?

INÉS I hate jealousy of any kind.

MARS Were you calling me?

INÉS No, sir.

MARS I heard something about Mars, and that's me, so I came so you could favor me.

LOPE You move along now; I've got this all taken care of.

MARS If Inés is happy with that, then I won't look at her any more, no matter what love says.

INÉS Good sirs, let the lords have their rivalries, for the greater they are, the more they share the same dainty dish. Don't sulk. Women are like gardens: everyone can look upon them, but only their masters enjoy the fruit of their love.

MARS Well said.

LOPE Well said for him, perhaps!

TEODORO Oh, beautiful Luciana, how vain my hopes seem now that you know the Count loves you! A servant cannot compete with his master, my lady. I must step aside or the Count will kill me, and although I would hazard my life in your service, I must instead lament that I have lost you. Neither the Count nor the whole world will do so much, for love binds my soul with hoops of steel. Nothing is too difficult for a woman in love.

TEODORO A jealous soul can neither live nor suffer nor love.

MARS Sir, here comes the Count.

CLARIDÁN The Count?

TEODORO So it is—that's his coach.

VIOLANTE Stay, that will be best, for we'll find a thousand excuses. And if he's already seen you, fleeing will only arouse his suspicions, for he's in love and quite jealous.

TEODORO I've never been luckier.

MARS He's getting out.

Enter the Count

TEODORO (This jealousy will be the death of me!)

COUNT This looks like a Flemish painting—a great work! Here are trees, gallants, ladies, flowers, a lovely meadow, hills in the distance, fountains, all good…

CLARIDÁN When you do the forests such honor, their flowers make carpets for you.

COUNT Beautiful ladies…

LUCIANA Great lord…

TEODORO And when love gets you a little heated, the trees offer their shade.

COUNT Teodoro, you here?

TEODORO I am keeping Claridán company, so that no harm comes to him if anyone is jealous.

COUNT How is your treatment progressing?

LUCIANA Very well.

COUNT It seems like the steel-water just arms you against me. But perhaps your disdain comes from love?

LUCIANA My lord, although I am not merciful, I have never been cruel or disdainful.

COUNT You have looked cruelly upon me.

LUCIANA That would have been quite rude of me, for a lady can be honest and yet esteem such devotion. Such love as your lordship's does not merit ingratitude.

TEODORO (The love that burns in my breast will make me rash!)

COUNT Were that true, my lady, I would serve you with my life itself.

LUCIANA I cannot regret being loved like this, but only how little I, a poor woman, deserve such high hopes.

TEODORO (I will lose my mind if this goes much further. Violante, you must fend off the first sign of love or you'll see me go mad!)

VIOLANTE My lord, we are so exposed here, to all who can see us. Let us move to that grove, where you'll be able to speak at greater ease—we have been long gone from home. And Claridán surprised us on our way with lunch, so gallant! Forgive me, my lord, if I speak out of turn.

COUNT I am sorry I didn't know, offended, even! You should have told me, Claridán, so that I could have shown these ladies proper courtesy. Now then, you go ahead, and you to serve them, for I will walk back to town along these banks, which Flora decks with her blooms.[10]

LUCIANA May the heavens keep you.

Exeunt; the Count remains

COUNT Bring the coach, Riselo. I will hide here instead—these trees will disguise me and so disabuse me. Teodoro seemed impatient. What if he loves Luciana? Two jealous lovers quickly find each other out. These are servants, after all, and their loyalty to their friends is greater than to those they serve. I adore this woman. Yet if she favors Teodoro I would be a fool to do so, given that I could choose not to love her. Trees, hide me if you will; it need not turn your nymphs green with envy! I just want to see whether I am right to be jealous. Favor me, you who shade and give cover to so many lovers!

He hides

Enter Teodoro and Luciana, holding him by the cape

LUCIANA Would any but a fool so disdain my honor? Come back and sit down, Teodoro, come back to our lunch. Oh, you are being so stupid.

TEODORO I confess I am stupid—I'm running away from you, and yet I can't live without you. But, oh Luciana, what am I to do? Who can advise me, and save me from myself, when I am doing myself such harm?

LUCIANA Come, don't be tedious, eat, don't be rude. It's late, and soon we'll have to get back.

[10] Roman goddess of spring and flowers.

TEODORO You want me to eat, Luciana? I'd rather eat poison, I'd rather lose my life, a thousand lives!

COUNT (This is good! Whoever set out to listen to his suspicions, and heard any better than this?)

LUCIANA You have no reason to be so angry.

TEODORO I admit as much, but I cannot help myself—you make me so jealous of the Count, who is, after all, rich, handsome, and my master! It's killing me!

LUCIANA May an evil fire consume the Count!

COUNT (An evil fire? Ha! A good fire would burn me up quicker!)

LUCIANA What did you expect me to do with a lord, and your lord, no less? Should I have been rude in response to such courtesy? Not villagers, not the lowliest folk would merit such treatment. Teodoro, I am who I am, and if I heed you and love you it's because I long for the marriage we've agreed to. But the Count does not court me in that way, and I have to keep up appearances, for Florencio is a gentleman of the first rank and I will not be ungrateful, simply for the love I bear him, and even more for he is my father, and a good father at that!

COUNT (My suit will prosper! I am reassured. Aren't these good servants?)

TEODORO Do you realize what you are saying to me? The fury of my jealousy cannot be quelled!

LUCIANA And what do you expect me to do, Teodoro?

TEODORO Swear to me, as you see me dying here, that you will scorn the Count. Say that you will never let him into your heart, that you will tear up his letters, that you will not listen to his entreaties, that you will mock and disdain his fine gifts. Say that he is ungainly, malformed, the measure of all ugly men.

LUCIANA Agreed.

COUNT (Over my dead body! I won't lower myself to such things. See what the world has come to over love! What a good servant Teodoro is! How he argues my case! I am forever in his debt.)

LUCIANA I swear, Teodoro, I do.

TEODORO Swear upon your eyes.

LUCIANA Upon them, to despise Próspero, your lord, most extremely, not to admit any letters from him or listen to his pleas, to disdain his gifts, take him as the measure of all ugly men, and to speak ill of his appearance. Will that get you back to lunch?

TEODORO I will serve you most willingly, satisfied with your promise. In turn I swear to love you a thousand years after I die, to be your husband and keep, as long as I might, the chastest thoughts, the most honest desires, not to look upon any other beauty except with disdain, nor to think of anyone else's pleasure. When I see a beautiful brow, whether on a blonde or a brunette, I will just say, "This is but a shadow of your brow and your hair." When I see green eyes, or black, rounded or almond-shaped, light or dark blue, I will just say at once, "All of these are Luciana's slaves, for her eyes are more beautiful." "Her mouth and rosy lips," I will say…

LUCIANA Stop, or we'll have to go without lunch.

TEODORO Forgive me if I carry on, for love runs on when it runs on jealousy!

Exeunt

COUNT Well, I swear not upon the ungrateful, proud eyes of the most foolish of women, but upon those of blind love,[11] not to take a revenge they can see, betraying what I am about. That would be beneath me, since these are my servants. Instead, without letting on how these four have offended me, I shall use subtle plots to make them all fall into my hands. Then, when they beg for mercy, they shall find none in my breast. I could kill Teodoro in an instant, if I allowed myself to be ruled by such low thoughts, and I would make of that traitor Claridán a lesson to those who would be disloyal to their masters! But, given that this is love and that they were both raised in my house, I will use my wits against them, betraying the betrayer, flattering the flatterer, showing no loyalty to the disloyal. Tit for tat! The four of them shall not deceive me, no matter what they know, for if it's my doing I cannot be deceived, as long as I've got my wits about me!

End of Act I

[11] i.e. Cupid, generally depicted as blind.

Act II



Persons in Act II

TEODORO
CLARIDÁN
LOPE
INÉS
LUCIANA
VIOLANTE
EMILIANO
DON PEDRO
FLORENCIO
THE COUNT
RISELO
TWO TURKS
[SERVANTS]

ACT II

Enter Teodoro and Claridán

TEODORO And how did the Count take finding us here together?

CLARIDÁN I don't know what he thinks about you. He is distracted and won't answer.

TEODORO He must not imagine that Luciana favors my love.

CLARIDÁN He seemed distressed.

TEODORO And even if he realizes it, what can we do about it?

CLARIDÁN Some trick, so that even when he perceives the harm, he will not take it out on you.

TEODORO Yes, but won't that go against the loyalty, obedience, and honesty one owes one's master?

CLARIDÁN No, Teodoro, for you loved her before the Count, and your love for her is true and legitimate. After all, she is to be your wife, and he only wants to dishonor her. So your love must protect her from one who offends her.

TEODORO So it would not be disloyal for Luciana to defend herself?

CLARIDÁN It would do her credit, for his suit is vain and foolish.

TEODORO She has sworn on her life that she will disdain him, that she will hate to find him below her window or on the street, that she will consider him the very measure of ugliness.

CLARIDÁN Well, as long as she stays firm, she will find a way around him.

TEODORO Women, Claridán, always prefer their equals. They're not so certain about unequal matches. Love doesn't flow from the lesser to the greater, but ebbs instead.

CLARIDÁN Lower your voice.

TEODORO What?

CLARIDÁN The Count.

Enter the Count

COUNT Teodoro, put on your traveling clothes at once, God save you, for you leave this afternoon. I have been informed that the Marquess, my nephew, is ill. You shall take him this letter and tell him how very worried I am about him, and that I shall come in person if he gets worse.

TEODORO As a matter of fact, my own health isn't so good at the moment, and any of your footmen would be a better emissary, and wouldn't neglect your papers.

COUNT You're always making excuses! You know I only trust you with anything having to do with my nephew, and he knows that I prefer you.

TEODORO I will make ready to leave.

COUNT I am forever in your debt, but be quick, now.

TEODORO As soon as I receive my charge.

COUNT (They think they've fooled me, but I know their game. By God, Teodoro will leave the court today!)

Exit the Count

TEODORO The ruses I hoped to avoid have only gotten worse. What do you think of this?

CLARIDÁN I don't know, but there's no avoiding it.

TEODORO He's just trying to get rid of me; it's a clever ploy, to take advantage of being my master!

CLARIDÁN And is he so deluded that he thinks that in a couple of weeks he will conquer Luciana? That is laughable.

TEODORO Claridán, these are women we're talking about. Today is one thing and tomorrow another. In two weeks, perhaps, with the Count here and no Teodoro to be found, he and his gold will find a way, however unjust. Antiquity left us a great example in Atalanta, whose greed got the best of her honesty.[12] And if three golden apples were enough to stop her in

[12] In the myth of Atalanta and Hippomenes, the virginal huntress agreed to marry only the man who could outrun her. Many failed, until Hippomenes sought help from Aphrodite, goddess of love, who gave him three golden apples that distracted Atalanta and allowed him to defeat her and subsequently marry her.

her tracks, what will pounds and pounds of treasure do for one who's not even running away?

CLARIDÁN Fear is a vile thing.

TEODORO How can I love without jealousy?

CLARIDÁN Stop your foolish worries, your vain fears. Trust in Luciana's virtue.

TEODORO I want to see her before I go.

CLARIDÁN I hope to see you return to her arms in good health and good cheer.

TEODORO And then we shall be married!

CLARIDÁN Those are the best ties. Until then, keep quiet.

TEODORO Luciana is rich. If the Count fails me, love will see to me, for Florencio can be my master.

[Exeunt]

Enter Luciana and Inés, her servant

LUCIANA I no longer dare go out to the park, because of the Count.

INÉS If he burns so, seeing you there will only add fuel to the fire. It might be better if you did not take the steel-water.

LUCIANA I will give up those moments in order not to encourage him. I swore to Teodoro, Inés, that I would not accept any letters from the Count, but it will work against us. For if I treat him badly, he will realize that Teodoro is behind it, and seek his revenge. When men are jealous they don't stop to think about what can or cannot be done.

INÉS If that jealousy is all about you not receiving his letters, you must take them secretly.

LUCIANA And my oath?

INÉS I'll get to that. Just listen, and don't lose any more sleep over it. Did you say which hand wouldn't take any letters?

LUCIANA No.

INÉS Well, then you have an easy way out! Even if you can't remember exactly what you swore, if you said the right, then you'll just take them with the left. It makes me laugh to hear lovers speak of truth when they're apart—that's just fine nonsense! When a woman says, "I cannot even dine, I am so miserable," she will have lunch ten times over, because lunch is not dinner, see? When she says she has not slept, she means "in her clothes," for of course she slept once she got undressed. And when she says, "When I don't see you I find everything tiresome," of course she's not referring to parties, or men, or money. If she swears over and over again "to be your slave for life," clearly it's because life is but as a day. Is there any religion—look at the examples I come up with!—that can make a meal last from one day to the next? And in love, which is a tyrannical faith, no woman should save a man for tomorrow when she can have him today.

LUCIANA You must be joking, Inés; surely you are not serious.

INÉS This is all just nonsense; I'm just joking with you. An honorable woman should profess only truth, constancy, and chastity until love leads to holy marriage.

LUCIANA Is that Teodoro?

INÉS The very same.

LUCIANA How did he get in here, Inés?

INÉS His jealousy must have led the way.

Enter Teodoro, saddened

TEODORO I must go where the jealous Count sends me. And so I come to say goodbye, and to die. Love must excuse my great daring.[13]

LUCIANA Teodoro, my great sorrow excuses yours. Where is the Count sending you?

TEODORO I don't know if it's a pretext, or if circumstances force him to do this. I go this very day to his cousin, with this letter.

LUCIANA Have you opened it?

TEODORO I, open it?

[13] It is unseemly for Teodoro, a young man, to enter Florencio's house.

LUCIANA You know full well that he's jealous, and yet you think it mad? Does it have an envelope?

TEODORO Yes.

LUCIANA So you'll give it a new one.

TEODORO That would be an outright betrayal, and show no loyalty on my part.

LUCIANA All is fair in love and war. Love has no master, but disdains them all. It has only one lord, and that one elected, as in Genoa or Venice.[14] Open the letter!

TEODORO There—it's come out of its shell.

LUCIANA Read it or I will.

TEODORO This is what it says.

LUCIANA Go on!

[Teodoro] reads

TEODORO Nephew, my life depends on your making whatever excuses necessary to keep Teodoro, my secretary, in your house for six or seven months. He is vexing a certain suit of mine and, rather than kill him, this has seemed the safest remedy. These are matters that I would only entrust to your quick wit and one of my own blood. God keep you.

LUCIANA What do you think?

TEODORO I will go mad!

LUCIANA Are women worth something, then?

TEODORO There is no-one like you.

LUCIANA Well, whatever I have discovered won't solve anything unless I right this wrong.

TEODORO Can this be helped?

LUCIANA Yes.

TEODORO What help, then?

[14] In the Renaissance, the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice were republics, and elected their leaders.

LUCIANA Wait here for me, and you shall see a remarkable trick.

She exits

TEODORO Plato knew philosophy, Xenophon economics, Livy his history, and Anacreon, love. Plutarch knew morals, Ptolemy, geography, and Columbus of the lands beyond; Ovid, friendship, Virgil, the countryside, and Arnaldus the alchemy of gold. Horace had his lyric poetry, Homer sang of war, Zeuxis knew painting and taught it, too.[15] But if the art of trickery is a science, it is Luciana's own!

Enter Lope

LOPE How well you look in this house, Teodoro, how well you look!

TEODORO The sight of you tempers the fire that consumes me. I will always be in your debt.

LOPE You sailed right in here! How well you look!

TEODORO No, I row on the galleys of love![16]

LOPE And did someone force you into this house?

TEODORO It was my pleasure to come, but I am forced to go.

Enter Luciana

LUCIANA Lope.

LOPE My lady?

LUCIANA Deliver this letter most carefully.

TEODORO To whom do you write?

LUCIANA The Count.

TEODORO You, the Count?

LUCIANA His response will show you what I have written him.

[15] Teodoro lists various great figures from antiquity through the Renaissance as examples of excellence in their respective fields, from the philosopher Plato to the Valencian alchemist Arnau de Vilanova to the navigator Christopher Columbus himself.

[16] Serious crimes in early modern Spain could lead to a sentence of forced labor rowing on the king's galleys, hence the joke on whether Teodoro has been forced into the house.

TEODORO This troubles me all the more.

LUCIANA Go, Lope.

LOPE I'm going.

Exit Lope

TEODORO I cannot bear the suspense, my lady.

LUCIANA I've solved your departure.

TEODORO You will be the ruin of me!

LUCIANA Hush, Teodoro, don't fret. You will pretend to go, and then hide in my house.

TEODORO In your house? How?

LUCIANA My father himself shall hide you, Teodoro.

TEODORO Are you trying to ruin everything?

LUCIANA You will see such a plan as will amaze you!

TEODORO Let us tread carefully—plans can be dangerous. Tell me what you intend to do.

Enter Claridán and Violante

VIOLANTE The Count is the only problem here.

CLARIDÁN Just show your displeasure, and that will take the wind out of his sails. Love needs hope to spur it on. It's true that he'll try to conquer her in Teodoro's absence.

VIOLANTE All the Count's efforts will be in vain. Gold has no place here—we're upstanding people.

CLARIDÁN A great miracle is here!

TEODORO (This goes well, by my life!)

LUCIANA Isn't this a lovely plot?

TEODORO Delightful.

LUCIANA Come with me, then.

TEODORO Shall I be safe?

LUCIANA I swear again, Teodoro, what I have already sworn.

Exit both

CLARIDÁN Who was that?

VIOLANTE My sister, and I think that was Teodoro with her.

CLARIDÁN There must have been endless tears when he said goodbye to Luciana. They were probably embarrassed to be seen.

VIOLANTE Oh, Claridán, let him not go away!

CLARIDÁN I'd rather die, in his place.

VIOLANTE I wonder what bad poetry they spoke to each other?

CLARIDÁN Is that what love teaches?

VIOLANTE No, it's my father, and the dreariness of dull suitors!

CLARIDÁN I will hide right here.

VIOLANTE And a good thing, too. Absence leads to deception where love is concerned, and jealousy to disdain.

[Claridán hides]

Enter Florencio, Emiliano and don Pedro

FLORENCIO (Here is Violante. Would you to wait outside, so that I may speak to her more freely?

EMILIANO Don Pedro will dutifully wait; I have things to do.

FLORENCIO Heaven keep you.

DON PEDRO I will wait here, sir, where no one can see me.)

[Exit Emiliano and don Pedro hides]

FLORENCIO Daughter, I am worried about you, at your age. You won't always find safe refuge with me. Yesterday I tried to tell you what I have in mind for your remedy, but perhaps I was not clear? The man I proposed to you is well-born and rich, although I pay no attention to that. His father's name is Emiliano, and his is Don Pedro. You couldn't make a more fitting man than this one I'm proposing.

VIOLANTE My lord, I am humbled by your care, and what pleases you will please me, as your will is my own. I only ask that I may speak to that gentleman in private.

FLORENCIO I know your wit—you will examine him first!

VIOLANTE A horse for sale is taken out to see whether it is swift or slow; then checked from top to bottom, and its teeth examined. Should not women at least see what they are getting?[17]

FLORENCIO You are right, of course. You shall see him. My lord Don Pedro!

VIOLANTE Was he so close?

Enter Don Pedro

DON PEDRO (Never in my life have I been so put out! I hid myself while her father spoke to her, and I found another suitor hidden there, who eyed me with his hand on his dagger. I, who was in the same boat, and equally annoyed, looked at him, and so we hid there, eyeing each other like two figures on a clock! May love make me the more fortunate in my suit!)

FLORENCIO My lord Don Pedro, speak to my Violante, who will tell me of her pleasure and her choice.

DON PEDRO This is a great honor.

FLORENCIO I don't want to be in the way. You will think me too forward, to try to speak to you at such a moment as this.

DON PEDRO I praise your rare understanding, for not everyone can orchestrate a marriage.

[Exit Florencio]

[17] Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) famously includes a similar point, as an explanation for why men and women in Utopia examine each other thoroughly—in the nude—before marriage.

VIOLANTE You seem in good health, tall as you are.

DON PEDRO And if not, we will call the veterinary.

VIOLANTE That's no small thing for a man about town. Are you one of those fencing men? Do you carry your dagger on your belt, hanging just so?

DON PEDRO When I need to, my anger dares me on.

VIOLANTE Are you one of those with a chest like a lamp, with one little chain shining over another?

DON PEDRO To dress up was the gallant thing to do.

VIOLANTE Have you ever had your cassock made into a colorful cape? Do you wear your shoes too tight? Do you often go where you are not called? Do you use long exquisite words, or those children learn with mothers' milk? Do you sign off with "To life and good health!" and chatter where all keep quiet, gossiping about town? Are you descended from the Greeks or from the Goths?[18]

DON PEDRO (By God, a less than saintly love, to examine me like this!)
You're getting ahead of yourself. Tell me, are you afraid of the dead as of the living? What size are your feet? Do you sometimes keep behind an arras a pair of suitors, like a brace of partridge? Do you wear hair shirts and sackcloth, or fancy dress? Do you have bruises on your arms, from trifling with men as if you were a girl playing with your dolls? Are your responses curt or gentle? Are you fond of coaches and bullfights, rather than of cushions and spindles?[19]

VIOLANTE Do you have anything more to add, you trick pony?[20]

DON PEDRO Only that I am not in love, but flaming with anger through every pore!

VIOLANTE Through your pores? Such fine words! Well then, how does this arrangement stand?

DON PEDRO I stand dismissed and offended. But for all this mockery, you must do me one favor.

VIOLANTE I will help you if I can.

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[18] Violante caps off her biting examination of Don Pedro by invoking the pretensions of Spaniards who claimed an ancient genealogy as proof of their nobility.
[19] Don Pedro questions Violante's femininity and decorum by inquiring about everything from the size of her feet, to the man he found hidden where he hid, to her preference for coaches and bullfights—urban pleasures—over cushions and spindles, which invoke the traditional feminine pursuits of sewing and spinning.
[20] The Spanish original has "caballo de oros," which is a card in the Spanish deck of *naipes*.

DON PEDRO I love you for your intelligence and your beauty. To fall out of love so suddenly is a hard lesson to learn, by God, no matter how I try. Would you at least allow me to sit for a moment in this chair?

VIOLANTE Your courtesy, your patience, require as much, but love was never cured in such proximity.

DON PEDRO Just to hear you will serve my purpose.

VIOLANTE And I shall say whatever necessary to persuade you to fall out of love.

DON PEDRO That is enough, I shall leave you now, for there is a figure in these tapestries that may get angry if I speak to you.

VIOLANTE May God bless you, then.

DON PEDRO A pure blessing, for the modern suitor. Heaven keep you.

Exit Don Pedro; enter Claridán

CLARIDÁN What a fool you have been.

VIOLANTE Ah, but a confident one.

CLARIDÁN What was the point of so much nonsense?

VIOLANTE I wanted to scare that boy away, for those who quarrel on the first day are scared—and scarred—for life.

CLARIDÁN And was it not reckless to invite him back?

VIOLANTE Since when do women stick to their word? Do not fear such unequal competition.

CLARIDÁN I love and I fear.

VIOLANTE Luciana and Teodoro are taking a long time. Come, let's console ourselves in their absence.

CLARIDÁN It was a miracle that I didn't kill that man.

VIOLANTE Claridán, this is no time for fighting. Prudence makes the manliest man.

[Exeunt]

Enter the Count, Riselo and Servants, and Lope with the letter

LOPE I was looking for your lordship at your house, with good news in hand, and here I find you at my own door! This letter from Luciana deserves some reward.

COUNT For the sake of the one who sends it, go to my house tomorrow, Lope, and they shall give you a suit of clothes and one hundred *escudos*.[21]

LOPE This letter is like a money order! A fine correspondent! You guessed from the handwriting!

COUNT I have not yet seen the handwriting.

LOPE Read, then.

COUNT Today, sweet love, you conquered me.

Reads

"I have come up with a plan so that you may visit me in my house any time you wish, and it is as follows: the brother of a friend of mine, whose name is Don Pedro, has wounded a rival in a fight. You must talk to my father and tell him that Don Pedro is your relative, and ask that he hide him in our house until we find out whether the wounded man will die. This will give you an excuse to come visit him and see me. God save you."

Was there ever a braver invention? A finer design? I am delighted—she is mine now! Ah, what a good move it was for me to chase Teodoro away from Madrid. You there, ask if I may speak to Florencio!

LOPE As you wish, my lord. I shall go call him.

COUNT Just let him come—Love is on my side today.

Enter Florencio

[21] This is a very handsome gift. Clothes, which were far more valuable in the period than they are today, were often a significant part of a servant's overall compensation. See Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19-21. It is notoriously difficult to fix the value of early modern currency, given that it changed markedly over time. One hundred *escudos* is about half of what Próspero offers Lope as a dowry for Inés at the end of the play (*escudos* are roughly equivalent to *ducados*); for reference, a poor man in 1620 might spend no more than 30 escudos in a year (J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1492-1716* [London, Penguin, 2002], 286). The main point of the exchange is to underscore Próspero's tremendous wealth.

LOPE My lord, Count Próspero would speak with you.

FLORENCIO And what does your lordship command? Such a great lord, and in this house? What honor, what mercy is this?

COUNT Your reputation bespeaks your worth and wisdom, Florencio, and brings me here to speak to you. Step aside with me.

FLORENCIO If they may be of service to you, my house and everything I own are yours.

COUNT I need a gentleman whom I might trust in a certain business, Florencio, and, given your good qualities, I have chosen you above all others.

FLORENCIO Once again, I am obliged to serve you.

COUNT Don Pedro, a gentleman of my household, my cousin, no less, exchanged some knife-blows on the street last night, for young men never wait long to bring out their swords. I would like to keep him from the law until the bad blood with his rivals dies down, and I thought that he might be well concealed in your house, since it is so large, with its garden, and somewhat removed. Could you do me this favor?

FLORENCIO I wish this little hut were a castle, to provide fitting lodging for a man of his worth. Let him come a thousand times, and we will do our utmost to serve him.

COUNT I am much obliged, Florencio, and hope my actions will show how much.

FLORENCIO Send him to us at once.

COUNT I shall have him come right away. God save you!

FLORENCIO And may He give you a long and prosperous life, oh great Count!

[Exit the Count]

What good fortune it is for the Count to ask something of me.

LOPE He is a great prince.

FLORENCIO Lope, go inside and call my two daughters, for I want to tell them the news, so that we may all be discreet at home.

LOPE I am sure they will keep it quiet. But here they come. Now you can tell them what is going on.

Enter Luciana, Violante and Inés

FLORENCIO Count Próspero was just at our house, daughters.

VIOLANTE Do we have the wedding of a servant to celebrate, then?

FLORENCIO Not at all, Violante, you are far from the truth. He wants me to hide in our house a man who is neither courting nor getting married. It's one Don Pedro, a cousin of his, whom he's hiding because of some knifing.

LUCIANA And you will take into your house men who bloody their swords?

FLORENCIO Luciana, know that this is how friends are made, and that the Count is a wise prince, highly regarded at court. Should I, to his face, deny him the favor of hiding a man he cherishes? If I have him here for a week, what of it? You should hide yourselves if you find it tiresome.

LUCIANA My lord, no one objects to what is just, and your pleasure makes it thus.

Enter Teodoro

TEODORO I'm not sure if I dare to go in.

LOPE There is a man in the house.

LUCIANA Who is he?

TEODORO Let me kneel before you, oh my lord!

FLORENCIO Let me embrace you instead, for by your looks and your bearing I can see that you are the Count's cousin.

TEODORO The sight of you gives me hope—so noble, so gracious! I am Don Pedro, whom the Count sends to serve you. I need only tell you that harsh enemies dog my footsteps. My life rests with you.

FLORENCIO I will provide all needed remedies.

TEODORO Ladies, forgive me—fugitives are always distracted by the fear of being caught. I am a bad guest, and yet I have no excuse, for I should have some confidence that I have chosen the best refuge. Although I

am beholden to fear, surely I cannot be made prisoner with two such guardian angels.

LUCIANA Rest assured, my lord, that you shall be treated here, if not as you deserve, at least as well as possible.

FLORENCIO Prepare a room for him.

LOPE The whole household aims to please.

FLORENCIO If you would enjoy the garden, spend your time there, and if you would like some books, who are like friends, after all, I have Cinthio's novellas somewhere.[22] Cheer up, for everything will sort itself out in the end, whether it takes money or a good scheme. We will close everything, up and down, in case worst comes to worst. The walls will hold their own, never fear!

TEODORO (I would not, if this villain love did not hand me over to my rival in this disguise. And yet I love full well the one who has me carry on like this.)

FLORENCIO I was often in similar straits when I was as young as you. If you would like to go out at night and see who passes by, you may take my servants. And I might even come out with you, and take up my sword again!

TEODORO May God keep you for how you cheer the afflicted! I shall not go out, my lord—my rival is strong, and word will come to his ears. But in the meantime, until things die down, I will get your advice on how to trick a certain old man, my lady's father, so that I might see her and make her mine.

FLORENCIO He who loves bravely does not fear an unlucky star. I will tell you some great tricks you can use on that father, for you are a fine young man, Don Pedro. Here you shall find refuge from the bad luck that dogs you.

TEODORO If your good fortune saves me, I am lucky indeed.

FLORENCIO Will you wait in the garden until your room is ready?

TEODORO Willingly!

[22] The Ferrarese Giovanni Battista Giraldi, known as Cinthio (1504-73), wrote one of the most influential collections of Renaissance novellas, the *Ecatommiti* or hundred stories (1565). His novellas served as sources for many plays across Europe, including Shakespeare's *Othello* and several plays by Lope de Vega himself.

Exit Teodoro

FLORENCIO Daughters, I am never shocked at what I have been through myself. I was young once, and in danger; I fought, and was imprisoned for it, and then the time came for me to settle down. We must attend to this fine gentleman, if you would please me.

LUCIANA I would be delighted to serve him, if that is your pleasure.

LOPE Who are these people?

INÉS Two Turks and a page.

FLORENCIO Turks in my house?

INÉS What shall I tell them?

FLORENCIO Let the Turks or whoever they are in. They won't take us captive.[23]

LUCIANA (How well my trick has worked on him!

VIOLANTE He is now urging you on!)

Enter Riselo, and two Turks with platters and a silver jug

RISELO The Count, my lord, has sent me to bring this food with the utmost discretion, but did not tell me for whom.

FLORENCIO This was not necessary, sir. Thank God we have enough to feed him here. Lope and Inés, take the dishes, since it is his lordship's wish.

TURCO We'll come back for the plate tonight. Keep the jug.

LOPE And didn't one of you Turks bring the wine?

TURCO In Spain we toast with bacon.[24]

Exeunt

[23] Early modern Spaniards would have been far more familiar with North African and indigenous Muslims than with Ottoman Turks. Próspero's slaves thus become here exotic objects of fascination. Ottoman Turks enslaved in Spain might have been captured at sea or on the battlefront, as part of the ongoing Mediterranean conflicts of the period. Conversely, the Ottomans and their North African allies also captured and enslaved Christians, primarily via corsair raids.

[24] The Turk's rueful joke refers to the Islamic prohibitions against consuming either alcohol or pork— these items are so endemic to Spain, he seems to suggest, that the Spaniards toast with bacon.

FLORENCIO I am sorry that the Count does not trust our house to host his cousin properly. He must wish to do his part in this matter, and yet it matters not, as he will be gone so soon.

Enter Claridán

CLARIDÁN I am here, with your permission, with a message for Don Pedro from the Count.

FLORENCIO He just stepped into the garden, and they have taken some food out to him.

CLARIDÁN I am the Count's valet—he hides no secrets from me.

FLORENCIO No-one will prevent you, but I shall go talk to him first.

Exit Florencio

CLARIDÁN God go with you! What ingenious feat is this? I can hardly keep from laughing! But what shall we do if the Count wishes to see this Don Pedro?

LUCIANA We will think of something to distract him while we get married.

VIOLANTE There are a thousand more plots where that one came from!

LUCIANA There is nothing to worry about. Don't you see, the Count thinks that Teodoro is well on his way from Madrid, while he himself hides him in my house and feeds him!

CLARIDÁN I am seeing it now, Luciana. His own cleverness, his conceitedness, have led him to this madness. But here comes Lope in a rush!

Enter Lope

LOPE Teodoro and my master are at the table, Claridán, for the old man has invited himself to sit down. They are like father-in law and son-in-law already, but now Don Pedro is here.

VIOLANTE My suitor?

LOPE Yes.

VIOLANTE An infinitely tiresome man!

CLARIDÁN Violante, let us be civil to him, for my fate hangs on this Don Pedro.

VIOLANTE Let him tire out the world, then, as long as it matters so much to you. Come inside, Claridán, this house is the Count's now.

CLARIDÁN I am going to see how Teodoro is doing.

LOPE He and the old man are telling a million stories as they eat; there was new life inside that jug the Count sent.

[Exit Claridán]

Enter don Pedro

DON PEDRO Perhaps you feel, Violante, that I am too forward. Yet be patient in hating me, as I am in loving you. For although in my arrogance I swore to fall out of love, it is not as easy as falling in love. Men fall in love so quickly, until they basically go mad, and then, bit by bit, take their distance and fall out of love again. A man might approach love with the best intentions, ready to give his all, and yet find that he walks on a path well trod, through a vale of tears. I've come to ask you for another three day's time, at least, in order to forget you. For I cannot persuade you, Violante, that I hate you from simply listening to you, when I hardly know you. When I walk away and think I shall forget you it turns out I am headed straight for love. I've looked elsewhere, and found some others who are by no means bad, but they don't have that disdain that makes me long for you. You must try harder to hate me, my lady; but no, for if you do, then I will love you all the more. For me to hate you, you must love me, and that you will not do.

VIOLANTE What a fine speech to persuade me, Don Pedro!

DON PEDRO I speak nothing but the truth.

VIOLANTE So, then, your request is for three days in which to get over your love?

DON PEDRO Neither three nor three thousand will suffice, when I so fear to lose those eyes…

VIOLANTE And so many beauties all around don't make you love?

DON PEDRO Just as the man who has eaten can contemplate a prince's table without appetite, so am I irked by any other beauties I see. All my desire for them is dead: all I see is you.

VIOLANTE But Don Pedro, I need you to hate me.

DON PEDRO And I need to love you!

LOPE The Count is here.

LUCIANA Well, hush then, and sit here, so you can better pretend between the two of us.

Enter the Count

COUNT God save you.

LUCIANA I am delighted the Count is here for such an occasion.

COUNT I thought I would find just the two of you.

LUCIANA This is my lord Don Pedro, for whose sake I wrote that letter.

COUNT Consider me at your service, my lord.

DON PEDRO I am sorry I did not recognize you.

COUNT I wrote Florencio this morning asking him to take you as a son into his house, and he promised to do so. I can see he takes good care of you, for the house is locked up, and no one can get past the patio who looks suspicious.

LUCIANA (See, the Count is talking to him about what was in my letter!)

DON PEDRO The nobility that matches the ancient valor of your arms, the captured flags, the crowned helmet, the annals, the histories that fame reveres, kept as remembrances in the archives of time itself—what could these all foretell except that this generous hand would take me under its protection, giving Florencio, in his own house, a thousand pieces of advice worthy of such noble blood! For I have more love than merit or hope—although the cruel Violante always responds with ingratitude.

COUNT So, you love Violante and that is why you are in this house? The quarrel is not so great as her sister has told me?

DON PEDRO Her sister favors me, as does Florencio, but that is not enough.

COUNT I thought you had just been brought here because of the wounds, Don Pedro.

DON PEDRO I have wounds, o great Count, that pierce my very soul, and the greatest of them is that she hates me for no reason.

COUNT So you gave those for her sake?

DON PEDRO For her sake and to please her I will do terrible feats!

COUNT Had I known that Violante treated you like thus I would have tried to win her over. Is this how she repays you for putting yourself in danger amid all those knife blows?

DON PEDRO She repays me so that love thrusts at my soul from all sides.

COUNT But the quarrel has suited you perfectly, for now you may hide here and court your lady.

DON PEDRO I have my quarrels with her, full bloody and bizarre; she wants me to hate her and has ordered me to forget her.

COUNT The justices won't find you, no matter how long they look.

DON PEDRO She shows no justice, and I beg for pity.

COUNT Forgive me, Luciana, for speaking to Don Pedro, whom I wished to meet. I am sorry to be so long.

LUCIANA Well, now that you know what is going on, I beg of you to favor him.

COUNT Whatever pleases you. Don't you want news of Teodoro?

LUCIANA Teodoro proves very tiresome in this house while it awaits a new master.

COUNT He has left Madrid.

LUCIANA God save us!

COUNT May He keep you. Your very soul seemed to cry out.

LUCIANA People will talk.

COUNT Tonight, when the clock strikes ten, I wish to speak to you alone.

LUCIANA If Don Pedro is not up and about, I will come out.

COUNT I know all his sorrows, and I shall share mine before I leave the house.

LUCIANA And so, Teodoro just left?

COUNT This absence of Teodoro's has really touched you.

LUCIANA Did he go very far on his journey?

COUNT Just to see a nephew of mine.

LUCIANA And will he be back soon?

COUNT If he takes long, it will seem like a short time to you, if not, it will be a long absence, more than six months.

LUCIANA May he be in good health, and yet never return.

COUNT And for those words, I promise you a fine chain with a hundred diamonds! I shall go now, I don't want to let on, for a lover gives himself away by overstaying his welcome.

VIOLANTE My sister shows, oh noble Próspero, that she is much beholden to you.

COUNT (One word, Don Pedro.

DON PEDRO What is it that your lordship commands, to this your slave?

COUNT Since I brought you to this house, and am helping you conquer the graceful Violante, you must do the same for me with the divine Luciana.

DON PEDRO I am very much in your debt, and shall serve your lordship as best I can.

COUNT If any enemies should appear, my sword shall be at your side, for those of noblemen are the most reliable.

DON PEDRO I am a thousand times your servant.

COUNT And why are you coming with me?

DON PEDRO I shall see you to the door.

COUNT What! You must not even look through it! Do you not realize that someone might see you through a door or a window and notify the authorities?

DON PEDRO That is nothing to me—it is not a crime to get married.

COUNT Until the wounded man gets back on his feet, it's best for them not to know what is going on.)
Goodbye, ladies.

LUCIANA Goodbye.

[Exit the Count]

VIOLANTE Such great nobility.

DON PEDRO Unmatched—lords like these capture your very soul.

LOPE He gave me this ring on his way out.

INÉS And me this golden purse.

LOPE Is there any such prince?

INÉS Generosity rules all things.

DON PEDRO And for a lord to be so frank, so modest!

LOPE It is a mistake not to be, as some are not. No hat ever showed any more wear because its owner was courteous.

DON PEDRO I am quite fond of him, but his mind does not impress me.

LUCIANA Why is that?

DON PEDRO He speaks in metaphors—I don't know what he's talking about, with so many wounds, prisoners, laws, swords, fugitives, and things of that sort.

LUCIANA That's just the new fashion in the court.

DON PEDRO But I take up your time. God save you.

VIOLANTE And you.

DON PEDRO From your unjust revenge!

Exit don Pedro

LUCIANA What do you think?

VIOLANTE It's the most marvelous plan I have ever seen—the Count thinks he speaks to a Don Pedro who is in hiding because of the pretend knifing, and speaks to him in such a way that they mislead each other. Meanwhile, Teodoro is in your house by the Count's command—even though he thinks he's sent him a thousand leagues away from you, Luciana—and all by our father's pleasure, so that they both shower Teodoro with attentions.

LUCIANA Lope, you go ahead and see whether father-in-law and son-in law are playing cards, or what they are discussing.

LOPE I will. There's good fishing in troubled waters…

[Exit Lope]

LUCIANA So then, Violante, you like my plan?

VIOLANTE By your hand, women and servants shall turn Spain upside down!

End of Act II

Act III



Persons in Act III

EMILIANO
FLORENCIO
DON PEDRO
THE COUNT
RISELO
CLARIDÁN
VIOLANTE
LOPE
INÉS
MARS
LUCIANA
TEODORO
[SERVANTS]

ACT III

Enter Emiliano and Florencio

EMILIANO It gives me great pleasure, Florencio, for Don Pedro to be so warmly welcomed in your house.

FLORENCIO Who told you that? No-one should know he has sought refuge with me.

EMILIANO I am just grateful that you honor him so.

FLORENCIO I must tell you, this is all Count Próspero's doing, and fear of the law.

EMILIANO What fear, what law, and to what purpose?

FLORENCIO There were some wounds, and it seemed prudent to take precautions, as the enemy was restless.

EMILIANO What enemy, what wounds? All he wants is to serve you!

FLORENCIO I thought you knew about all this, as you mentioned that he was in my house. How foolish of me! These are young men's doings—you know that youth must sow its wild oats, and that jealousy always comes to a bad end. It never leads to more secure enjoyment, but robs us of life and honor. In short, the Count protects Don Pedro as his relative, and for his sake I and my people serve him. And how may I help you?

EMILIANO I need not trouble you.

FLORENCIO Heaven keep you, then.

EMILIANO And you.

Exit Florencio

Is this what my old age deserves? Foolish Don Pedro, I see you are trying to protect me. Yet to hide from my white hairs is not respectful, but willful. Where shall I find him? Ah, there he comes. What is he doing out here if he has enemies around?

Enter don Pedro

DON PEDRO Oh love, with your empty promises! Like a child, you want back what you once gave. There is no secure age, no state untroubled or unconquered by you. Oh love, you rack up the debts, but you are ruined when it's time to pay them back. You surrender immediately

when disdained, and charge the cowards. Oh love, like the inconstant moon, child of hope and disdain, rarely wise and foolish a thousand times! Who, in his wisdom, shall pay your price? For you unsettle him most where you choose to rest.

EMILIANO I wish I'd found you in a more private place, Pedro, so that, as your father, I could reproach you as your folly deserves. Are you trying to kill me? If you wounded a man, did you have to hide from the law and your misfortune in such an honorable house? Would it take a miracle for you to keep your sword in its sheath? Tell me, why did you come out, and with so many enemies as you have? Could not your own father have hidden you among family or friends? They tell me the wounded man is on the verge of death. And if they arrest you, I'm sure they won't lack for witnesses. Oh, Pedro, you will be the death of me.

DON PEDRO I don't know where to begin. I have wounded someone?

EMILIANO Such gracious silence! Ask Florencio what is going on!

DON PEDRO It's true that I found a young man in Florencio's house, even though it is such a noble one—I can't say more, although I burn with jealousy. He had his hand on his sword and I on mine, but he did not attack me or say a word. So we just hid together.

EMILIANO Neither of you took out your sword? So who is mortally wounded, then? With no blood or an honorable brawl, who has ever heard of men hidden away? You deny everything, you lie—tell me, then: why does the Count help and favor you?

DON PEDRO Because he courts Luciana and thinks that I shall marry Violante. But I know that Violante hates me, and must have a secret lover.

EMILIANO It's that suspicion that drives you mad, Pedro, and has put you in such danger. Go back, go back to Florencio's house, and quietly hide yourself.

DON PEDRO I will do it for the sake of love, to overcome her ungrateful disdain.

EMILIANO Just make sure the law does not find you.

DON PEDRO Me, my lord?

EMILIANO Should they not arrest those who kill?

DON PEDRO Then they should take Violante.

Exit don Pedro

EMILIANO What spite! His manners are nothing like mine! Children! The good ones do not last, and the bad ones drive a father mad.

Enter the Count, Riselo and Servants

RISELO Has Teodoro not written to you at all?

COUNT He must be angry—he must have realized that I adore his Luciana. My cousin will keep him busy, though.

RISELO So he will not be back?

COUNT Not until much later, I imagine.

EMILIANO I would not flatter you at my age, your lordship, but let me kiss your hand, or, better yet, kneel before you.

COUNT Get up, get up, please, I would not be so discourteous.

EMILIANO I am Don Pedro's father, and Florencio has told me how you have honored him, and how much I owe you. May the heavens keep you a thousand years, so that you might favor us all thus!

COUNT You need have no fear for him now that he has found refuge. I, at least—and this is not so that you thank me—have done everything I could for him, for I even claimed in public that Don Pedro was related to me and called him 'cousin.'

EMILIANO Your lordship should know, there would be no shame in that, for his worth is such that he could be a cousin to the king. Pedro is full noble—I have lands which I can live off as a nobleman, and I do not lack for money, which is the greatest nobility I can offer your lordship.

COUNT I must thank you for such goodwill and such a gesture.

EMILIANO I and all that I own are yours.

RISELO Don't offer such things, by God, he may accept!

EMILIANO Well, sir, now that you know what this lad is up to, and nobly favor his stubborn intent, ask Florencio to wed him to Violante, for I fear he may fall out with yet another secret lover. I swear to you that the nobility you grant him as your cousin will not be lost or tarnished, for he could head any famous house in Spain.

COUNT I consider him a man of virtue as well as honor, and so I will speak to Florencio and give you his response.

EMILIANO May you live a thousand years, my lord. How you favor him!

COUNT The results will tell if I have showered love and care on this.

Exit Emiliano

RISELO Your love for Luciana leads you to great things.

COUNT Desire will make me seek what is impossible. The need to discuss Don Pedro's marriage will alleviate my torment, my delusion, my imprisonment by giving me a reason to speak to Luciana. Come, Riselo, for truly I do not see how life can go on otherwise.

[Exeunt Riselo and the Count]

Enter Claridán and Violante

CLARIDÁN I curse my luck with good reason, most beautiful Violante, and for Teodoro's sake, assuming that it's due to him that I get to see you, I regret the many delays you place in our way. Thanks to Luciana's plot, he, well hidden away, calmly enjoys the love he had lost, with no fear of the Count, while I constantly postpone the joy I long for and yet lose.

VIOLANTE What vulgar suspicions! What vain, lowly thoughts! Unless you are just trying to take advantage of the situation, for those who are scorned pretend to make others jealous.

CLARIDÁN Pretend, Violante? Does one who loves pretend jealousy?

Enter don Pedro

DON PEDRO (Must I always find before me that unjust cause of all my jealousy? Isn't this the one who, hidden away, almost put me off my suit in the first place? What to do? This is killing me!)

CLARIDÁN If this goes on, Violante, you'll see the end of me.

DON PEDRO (And I? What shall I see?)

CLARIDÁN What are you waiting for? For Teodoro to ruin all my hopes?

DON PEDRO (What love will not change at the sound of this?)

VIOLANTE What nonsense are you complaining about now?

CLARIDÁN Since when have jealous men made any sense?

DON PEDRO (And yet, look at me!)

CLARIDÁN Violante, with two bothersome suitors you call this nonsense?

DON PEDRO (My pain is real!)

VIOLANTE There is Don Pedro.

CLARIDÁN Oh, heavens!

DON PEDRO (They've seen me now.) Lady, God keep you.

CLARIDÁN Jealousy makes even the greatest coward brave.

VIOLANTE Welcome.

DON PEDRO What were you doing?

CLARIDÁN (I am lost!)

VIOLANTE I was asking Claridán for news of the Count, his master.

CLARIDÁN (If I lose my patience and take it up with this one, nothing good can come of it, even if I am right.) It's late, my lady. What do you command?

VIOLANTE That God keep you.

Exit Claridán

DON PEDRO I do not wish to exasperate you even more, my lady, and so I will not complain about this gallant, this shadow. You have me in such a state that I hardly dare tell you what afflicts me. And so I will be silent, although I am fully justified.

VIOLANTE You have never seemed wiser than at this very moment, Don Pedro.

DON PEDRO Am I such a fool, then?

VIOLANTE Is it not foolish to court one whom you displease, to love one who hates you, to lend to one who does not pay back, to chase one who flees, to come to one who doesn't call, and to play with a sword that can only cut you?

DON PEDRO Don't they say that love is crowned when it perseveres, firm in the face of all obstacles?

VIOLANTE True, but that is when hope exalts it and favors encourage it to conquer impossibles. But if our union is forced, I hereby notify you, we will fall out of love directly. Who will thank you for being as constant as a weed, or steady as the poles over which the heavens move their parts?

DON PEDRO Then I need some lessons in this difficult task of falling out of love with you, since I won't go looking for roses in Thessaly or where the moon weeps.[25]

VIOLANTE Since I cannot believe that you are here again, and I am tired of talking to you, and I want you to leave me alone, listen to your lessons.

DON PEDRO I will write them down in this memory-book. There, ready.

VIOLANTE Fine.

DON PEDRO So.

VIOLANTE Write: The first point is not to think about the person you love.

DON PEDRO That's very good.

VIOLANTE Because if thought slowly comes to embrace her parts, the soul will go mad. The second is not to see her.

DON PEDRO That one's very hard.

VIOLANTE Well, it can't be done if you look upon her. The whole thing depends on not seeing her. For beauty trips up the firmest heart and undoes the strongest one. The third one is easier.

DON PEDRO Pray tell.

VIOLANTE To find another. And if the first lady was wise, this one should at least not be foolish. That's where the lover should turn his longing; if he's noble, he'll pretend well; if he's in it for profit, he'll turn his purse into his pleasure, for that will rule his soul. Most men are passionate

[25] Thessaly was a region in Northern Greece associated in the period with both sorcery and magical plants.

about what they spend on, not about the pleasures they enjoy. That's enough for lessons.

DON PEDRO These three points shall drive me mad; let me repeat them and prepare myself. The first, not to think about her. Allow me to argue against the first point.

VIOLANTE These lessons are enough, without you arguing against them. I'm not a lawyer, I'm a woman.

DON PEDRO Ah, but the master must listen to the pupils. I'm trying not to think, so that forgetting can help me with my love. But when I think of not thinking, it's obvious that I think—I can't not think!

VIOLANTE It's no wonder that you find holes in my arguments, when you're so full of thoughts.

DON PEDRO Now, as for not looking at her: my soul claims I should not be ashamed to do so, for the eyes are the two windows that God gave it to behold the beauty of the world, and convey its qualities to our understanding. And as for loving another woman: love resists, I fear, for it cannot be bribed. So if love just increases when you love another, then the whole lesson is false.

VIOLANTE Well, sir, God help you then, for I find no other cure in my books.

DON PEDRO Your prescriptions are in vain, for when Troy burns all the snow in the Alps will not put out the fire.[26]

Enter Lope

LOPE I must speak to you for a moment when you are alone.

VIOLANTE I am alone.

DON PEDRO Well put; I was just leaving. I am tired of tiring you, the more's my sorrow. Violante is right: there is nothing more lonely than being in the company of fools.

Exit don Pedro

LOPE What does that fool want here?

VIOLANTE He wants to forget and to love.

[26] When the Greeks finally conquered the city of Troy after a ten-year siege, it was sacked and destroyed by fire. The expression "arde Troya" is also used in Spanish for "all hell breaks loose."

LOPE Two such opposites at once?

VIOLANTE He is a fool, and thinks it possible.

LOPE My lady, as soon as you are married to Claridán, such a noble and gallant man, which I know you desire, would you, for only you can, get Inés to stop thinking about marrying Mars? That was never a good idea. Unless it's a ploy to kill me with… She tells me she's marrying him in every letter! And Mars, who's so cruel—why does he please Inés so, when he is the worst of signs?

VIOLANTE I will make her less disdainful. Remember, though, that making you jealous is a sign of affection.

LOPE May the heavens give you joy in your husband, with no quarrels or jealousy! May you never see scarcity, never pawn your silver or your clothes! May you sleep well at night, with no nightmares to haunt you! May you be wrapped in silks and fine clothes, so that you need never envy your neighbor's fine dress in church. May your enemies never relish their revenge, nor your friends betray your trust. May you have sun on your terrace and shade in your garden; may your husband never keep you from going where you like, and may you never lack a coach, which is like a magnet for a woman. May your mother-in-law not last a month, and may you weep as a widow rather than be wept over. May you lie under the finest linens…

VIOLANTE Hide over there, Lope, I think she's coming!

LOPE God save you and comfort me!

[Lope hides]

Enter Inés

INÉS (I don't know what my flighty mistress thinks she is up to, for her crazy tricks won't last forever.)

VIOLANTE Inés.

INÉS Mistress Violante?

VIOLANTE What is my sister doing?

INÉS She is over there with her pretend Don Pedro.

VIOLANTE Has Claridán gone?

INÉS He has.

VIOLANTE Has he been gone long? Come over here.

INÉS Just now.

VIOLANTE Inés, Lope has been complaining, jealous and despairing, that you favor Mars. If you want things to go well, put him out of his misery.

INÉS Lope complains about me, and leads you to these unjust accusations? Do I steal his conceits? Do I sell my things for his? Do I chirp with other crickets, or make fun of his swansong? Do I show him up as a fool when he claims to be wise? When did I, in my jealousy, do any harm to his reputation? When did I criticize his pen or speak ill of his prose? Lope has nothing to complain about.

VIOLANTE He's just complaining about Mars, for whom he says you neglect him, in your foolishness.

INÉS Oh, Violante! It's true I try to make him jealous of Mars, but it's all a ploy to win him over. It's the only way to make sure he cares—men want to be treated badly in order to love. But to tell you the truth, I burn for him!

LOPE (Aha! Well, from now on I will know how to treat you!)

VIOLANTE If that's the case, Inés, then I have nothing to ask of you. I will go speak to my sister.

INÉS I am all Lope's, I assure you.

Exit Violante

Lope shows himself

LOPE Is my lord around?

INÉS Is that Lope?

LOPE I think so.

INÉS I'm glad I bumped into you.

LOPE Bumping is for horns, Inés, and even if you think it's fitting, I wish it weren't.[27] Who were you talking to?

INÉS Just now? To Violante.

LOPE And were you waiting for Mars to come round again?

INÉS I've told my lady how it stands with my love, for she assures me that you look to me…

LOPE That was my lady's mistake—she must not know that they've offered me marriage.

INÉS Marriage?

LOPE That's the truth.

INÉS To whom?

LOPE To a woman.

INÉS You are getting married?

LOPE Why not? Is there something wrong with me?

INÉS Not you, me.

LOPE Oh, if only you could see this woman! She's fierce—a midsummer night doesn't hold as much pleasure. She's tender as a peach, with brows blacker than ink can draw. Her mouth is wide as a boat, her lashes like satin. Her eyes, two buttonholes. Her teeth are all the same, like books on a shelf. Her neck and throat are white as the driven snow, so swan like she could glide around. Her hands are like paper, and all of her like fancy dress, and sweet as honey.

INÉS Have you no shame, to tell me that you're getting married?

LOPE Isn't she something?

INÉS I'm going to faint.

LOPE Don't!

INÉS Well, I will fall then.

[27] Another reference to cuckoldry. See n. 5 above.

LOPE For all men who love those who mistreat us, this will be our revenge!

Enter Mars

MARS Any time I'm here I seem to find this good-for-nothing, out to get me somehow!

INÉS Is that Mars?

MARS My planet is in the right house now…

INÉS Shush, you are just in time, for now is the time to show your love.

MARS In what can I be of service?

LOPE Inés, just because Mars is here now, you shouldn't go off with him and leave me here to die—it was all a joke!

MARS Let the servant get out of the way. She's with me now, and I honor her as my mistress.

LOPE I'll take out my sword against this footman for hire!

INÉS There will be no fighting here.

MARS So, you rash man, you're going to challenge one who, in the greatest of battles, had to hide to save himself?[28] This day will be your last!

LOPE My last? Are you sure of that?

INÉS Gentlemen, stop, stop. Don't you see I'm here between you?

LOPE So what shall we do?

INÉS You and Mars should each present your merits, your service, your qualities, and I shall decide whose I will be.

MARS I say I am as noble as a red stallion, generous as a falcon,[29] and swift as a hound. I am like a crowing rooster, and expert as a gambler. There is no more reverent lover north or south of here. And as for my service, let Inés speak to that.

LOPE Are you done?

[28] Mars refers here to the great naval battle of Lepanto (1571), where the Holy League defeated the Ottoman navy, and at which he managed to hide from the action.
[29] Falconry was part of the aristocratic art of the hunt, and the birds were associated with gratitude and generosity.

MARS I believe so.

LOPE Then listen.

MARS Go on.

LOPE In such cases, I am like Mandricard with the lovely Doralice.[30]

MARS Let's see what he comes up with.

LOPE I am extremely handsome. I wear my hat down over my eyes, with these wicked mustachios to hold it up—dark ones, not red. Physiognomy is a tricky business! And mine is so extraordinary that words fail me. I am a healer, too!

MARS You?

LOPE Yes—I am healthy and hale, and when they hail me, I heal them as well. Hello! I sing like a deacon and drink like a sponge. I smell of oranges or summer herbs. I kill to eat, and eat what others kill. I speak of what they speak of, and hold my peace when I must. I had some schooling: I know Latin and deny all Greek, because if it's Greek to me, how will they know?

INÉS This court declares, in light of what has been alleged and proved, that Lope has won.

LOPE I, the winner?

MARS You deserve each other. This verdict is just like you.

INÉS That gives it credit.

MARS For such a woman to belong to such a vile servant.

LOPE He's mortified.

MARS Me, why? I'd rather not play the ram.[31]

Exit Mars

Enter Luciana and Teodoro

[30] In Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), Mandricard, King of Tartary, captures the beautiful Spanish princess Doralice. She eventually chooses him over his rival, Rodomonte, to whom she had been engaged.
[31] Another reference to cuckoldry. See n. 5 and 25 above.

LUCIANA So, Teodoro, are you tired of being so faithful?

TEODORO I'm tired of waiting. Not of being here, with you favoring me, but still, locked up. The Count, eager to take you up on the opportunity you give him, is here all the time. I am jealous of so much conversation. I think perhaps you locked me up just so that you could speak with him. A cruel scheme, which has made a fool of me!

LUCIANA Here are Lope and Inés. You there, out!

LOPE (Is there a quarrel going on here?

INÉS Just a little jealousy.

LOPE Ah, that's it.)

Exit [Lope and Inés]

LUCIANA This is a nice way to pay me back for deceiving my old father and a great lord!

TEODORO I never suggested that—when I was going, you made me open the letter. Preventing me from leaving was your doing, not mine. The Count, who ordinarily would never see you, is here a million times over with this nice trick you invented. He visits you, and I know he even comes to see you at night. Every time you go out in the park or on the avenue he sees you from his coach, and then he showers you with attentions, while claiming to visit me.[32] This is a strange trick—I'm just here to provide cover for you. I'm the Tantalus in this orchard, where I can't get a single bite.[33] Nice work, to lock me up and get the Count in your house!

LUCIANA You were always a little mad, Teodoro, and ungrateful to me. Would I really have come up with this plan in order to see the Count here, Teodoro? Wouldn't you say it was because I adore you and didn't want you taken from me? You men are all the same when you think we go astray! You tire us, you offend us, you are so low.

TEODORO You wipe your eyes? Have I made you cry? It's not that bad. Stop, I can't see your eyes. I am so ashamed.

[32] The original specifies fashionable Madrid locations: the Prado and the Calle Mayor. See also the Introduction, p. 11.

[33] The mythological Tantalus' eternal punishment in Tartarus was constant frustration: any time he tried to eat the fruits that hung above him, they moved out of his reach; any time he tried to drink from the pool in which he stood, the waters receded.

LUCIANA Your ingratitude leaves these eyes for dead. This is the shroud in which to wrap them.

TEODORO I wish I had never mentioned my jealousy or told you what I really thought!

LUCIANA You should say “my jealous nonsense.”

TEODORO Just look at me again. I can’t bear to be out of your graces for so long. Look at me or just kill me.

LUCIANA Oh, that’s rich! I should be the one to kill you?

TEODORO Yes, by letting me die.

LUCIANA If I am to forgive you, it must be on the condition that you…

TEODORO What?

LUCIANA That you take it back.

Enter Lope up in arms

LOPE The Count is out there!

LUCIANA Run, Teodoro!

TEODORO And now who’s right, my lady?

LOPE My lady, he is waiting.

TEODORO Oh, women’s tears, like the crocodile’s! You mend our loves so insincerely!

Exit Teodoro

Enter the Count

COUNT I am at a loss without you, and so I must come see you, even though I know it will displease you.

LUCIANA A nice excuse, by God.

COUNT Equal to your decorum and my proper courtesy.

LUCIANA Does your lordship know I finally heard from Teodoro?

COUNT Was he here? Or did he write to you?

LUCIANA As long as I don't answer him, what does it matter?

COUNT And is that so?

LUCIANA The echo knows.

COUNT So how is he?

LUCIANA He tells me he is well, although you have offended him. He burns with jealousy, because, he says, you talk to me and come to my house secretly, even by night. He complains that from your coach you see me on the avenue and in the park.

COUNT When do I visit you by night?

LUCIANA He is just jealous from afar.

COUNT You enjoy talking to me about him. But don't be so cruel with a man subject to your every whim—it's time to pay me back.

LUCIANA Who could do that, when so obliged? I may love you, but I could never pay you back.

COUNT I will oblige you further, happy as I am to see you.

LUCIANA Hold your hands, my lord! What disrespect is this?

COUNT My love cannot respect your cruelty, so calm and composed.

Enter Florencio

FLORENCIO Set the table—he will dine early.

LUCIANA My father!

FLORENCIO The Count!

COUNT Ah, good Florencio.

FLORENCIO My lord, so many favors?

COUNT I came to speak to you about an important matter.

LUCIANA Well, sir, I will leave you.

COUNT Heaven keep you.

LUCIANA (That should have persuaded Teodoro that I despise the Count and adore him!)

Exit

COUNT Young men—you were a young man once, Florencio—have furies in their soul. Love rules over them and spreads through their blood. To put things plainly, you should know that Don Pedro, through living in your house, has fallen so hard for Violante that love has him on the verge of death. In tears he begged me to tell you, so that you would give her to him in marriage. And I am delighted to do so, because I know my cousin has set his sights so high, that, even though he is a most noble gentleman, he is not worthy of tying her shoes.

FLORENCIO Let me kneel at your feet in gratitude that, from this day forward, my daughters, and I, and all my relatives shall bear, as your slaves, your worthy name.

COUNT Don Pedro will be much favored, and our house honored with Violante.

FLORENCIO Who has ever known such joy?

COUNT The happy wedding shall be this very night, then, Florencio, and I will bring him in my coach. He shall come to my house first, so that I may bring him gallant in his thoughts, his silks, and his gold.

FLORENCIO I shall tell him to go to you, my lord, after nightfall.

COUNT Heaven give you a thousand grandchildren from such a son in-law!

Exit

FLORENCIO And preserve you for an eternity! Who has ever known such happiness? What man was ever so lucky? Oh love, matchmaker of the heavens, you bring your own dowry! Happily you wounded the Count's noble cousin, and happily we hid him in my lucky house. And so I will have grandchildren who are cousins to a count. You there, Lope, Fabricio! Call my lord Don Pedro at once.

Enter Teodoro

TEODORO They always say that one hears one's own name most when called. In what can I be of service—and to what do we owe such happiness in you?

FLORENCIO Count Próspero was here, Don Pedro, and gladly approached me about your marriage… I almost said to me—I am so fond of you that I should be the one to marry you!

TEODORO The Count is a great gentleman, and does me great favor by making me your son-in-law, for what greater good could he do me?

FLORENCIO No, no, don't say that—this house does not deserve such good fortune.

TEODORO It enriches ours—the Count's, and my own. And when was it all arranged?

FLORENCIO Just now, and for tonight. He will come in his coach, and he wants to bring you.

TEODORO I will await him in your house, because I'm still not fully safe, though I'm trying to make amends.

FLORENCIO I'm going to tell my daughters what is going on—they will be delighted to hear this!

Exit Florencio

Enter Claridán

CLARIDÁN How will you resolve these plots, Teodoro? Now the Count calls for Don Pedro.

TEODORO There's no respecting the Count, or anyone else, Claridán, when it's my wedding day. Did he not try to banish me and plot his way? Well, I found a counterplot. Was that love's error?

CLARIDÁN It was.

TEODORO Well, they are all forgiven.

CLARIDÁN Tonight we lose the Count.

TEODORO Yes, but we gain a rich estate and marry where we will. When a lord is angry, what does he do?

CLARIDÁN He lets people go, immediately, and no amount of pleading makes any difference, even if there was no just cause.

TEODORO Well, a servant should have the same freedom, if a new master calls to him with better terms.

CLARIDÁN But we'll lose our reputation.

TEODORO That's ridiculous. The Count seeks his pleasure, but he is in the wrong. And his corrupt desires are no reason for two servants, whom he knows to be respectable, to lose their just rewards. Let us be safe rather than sorry, and the Count can remember who he is and honor us later.

CLARIDÁN And if service is so poorly paid, we'll seek our fortune, for we cannot expect any luck if we let it pass us by!

[Exit Teodoro and Claridán]

Enter the Count, Riselo and Servants

COUNT Has Don Pedro arrived yet?

RISELO We are waiting for him, and Ricardo has gone to get the coach.

COUNT Did you tell him to come dressed for his wedding?

RISELO He knows of his good fortune.

COUNT I am marrying him off for my sake, to put Violante in my debt, who shall then hand over Luciana.

RISELO Here is Don Pedro now.

Enter Don Pedro, very elegant, as a groom

DON PEDRO Forgive my delay, my lord; I had to wait for the tailor and the shoemaker.

COUNT I forgive you, Don Pedro, simply for how handsome you look.

DON PEDRO Your generous favor promised no less, my lord, and on its wings I catch the sun.

COUNT Making you my cousin has given the entire household a reason to serve you.

DON PEDRO This great favor could not have come from anyone but you.

COUNT Ah, it's time to go now.

RISELO Bring the lights, the lights!

COUNT And, Don Pedro, while we are at it…

DON PEDRO I know what you want, and you need not even mention it to me. Luciana will be yours or I will have no happiness with Violante.

COUNT I am mad about her!

DON PEDRO (By God, once I am married, he shall not darken my door!)

COUNT Here is the coach.

RISELO Lights!

COUNT Let us be off.

[Exit all]

Enter Violante and Luciana in wedding attire, very elegant, with Inés and Lope

VIOLANTE Spread out those pillows there.

INÉS This is quite the night!

LUCIANA I will not settle down until it's all said and done.

VIOLANTE You need not fear—we have decided to tell the Count everything.

LOPE (To think that these scoundrels would rebel against the hand that fed them, Inés, and that these two would favor them!

INÉS Lope, I find you very old fashioned. You know nothing of how women and servants plot.

LOPE Look at them sitting there so composed on their pillows!

INÉS There are two days that women celebrate with great pomp: when they are married, and when they become widows, no matter how much they may love and weep.

LOPE Lower your voice, here come the lord and the groom.

[INÉS] The bridal party, you mean, for there are four of them.)

Enter Florencio, Teodoro y Claridán

TEODORO This is Claridán, the Count's valet, who has discussed all my affairs with him.

FLORENCIO And now he is here to honor you.

CLARIDÁN To serve you as is my duty.

FLORENCIO Sit down, I beg of you, until he who shall join your hands arrives.

LUCIANA Here, my lord Claridán.

CLARIDÁN I should not take your husband's place.

LOPE The Count and Emiliano with Don Pedro!

VIOLANTE (This is the end!

TEODORO I'm dead!

CLARIDÁN I'm trembling all over.)

Enter the Count and Don Pedro, dressed for his wedding day, with Emiliano, Riselo, Mars, and servants

COUNT Here, Florencio, I bring my cousin Don Pedro.

DON PEDRO My lord, I come to serve you and to be Violante's slave.

EMILIANO Florencio, we are family now, and commingle our blood.

FLORENCIO Don Pedro and your cousin? Here's the man to whom I have given my daughter, and it's not that Don Pedro, Emiliano's son, but this gentleman here.

COUNT How is this? Step aside! Another Don Pedro?

LOPE This is a good year for Don Pedros.

COUNT Isn't this Teodoro, my secretary?

TEODORO Yes, sir, I am Teodoro.

FLORENCIO Is there some deceit afoot, then?

TEODORO Sir, when you sent me to the Marquess, I came in my distress to say my goodbyes in this house, where for more than six years I have served Luciana. She, suspecting a great wrong, opened the letter, and reading of your cruelty and this offense done to me, without consulting me came up with this trick that has taken you in. Florencio has taken me for Don Pedro, while you thought I was the Don Pedro that you had sent. He is the one you would have married to Violante, and he took his cues from your own plotting. I am married already. Should you take offense at this solution, I'd prefer to die with honor on the blade of your sword, than in such prolonged banishment. Six months away!

COUNT By God, you vile creature, that will be your end!

VIOLANTE My lord, such a great prince, an example to the whole world, to attempt such a low deed? You, to draw your sword on your own servant?

COUNT If he is so vile, he is not worthy of my nobility.

FLORENCIO That is not Don Pedro? Kill him!

DON PEDRO My lord, what is done is done. His crime was to love—it would not be just to punish him for a fault that is your own. He has married Luciana. If you're upset on my account, here is Violante for me.

CLARIDÁN She is not, my good sir: Violante is my wife.

DON PEDRO That is not much to say, and not well said, either. Shall I kill him, then?

CLARIDÁN Don't kill anyone.

COUNT See how I stand, betrayed by the two of you! This day shall be your last.

LUCIANA Violante pleaded with you for Teodoro, and has forced me to plead for Claridán.

COUNT Such liberties!

FLORENCIO What am I waiting for, to look to my honor?

EMILIANO Easy, Florencio, my friend. Do not provoke the Count. Your daughters have married most respectable gentlemen, servants of a great lord. It could be much worse, listen here.

LOPE The two are deciding what to do with these cockerels.

INÉS How many braces, then?

LOPE Two.

FLORENCIO Yes, this is better, and more honorable. My lord Count, this is my affair, and it seems to me that it will harm me more not to resolve it now. So I ask that you accept that your honorable servants join my family.

COUNT If that's what you want, I will hold my peace.

FLORENCIO You should be their godfather, and forgive them.

COUNT I forgive them for your sake, and take them both in my arms. And, as I am who I am, I give each of these ladies a dowry of twelve thousand ducats.[34]

LOPE And for me—I am marrying Inés—is there nothing for me?

COUNT I'll give you two hundred.

LOPE Ducats or blows? Two hundred is not a good number.[35]

COUNT Let Mars decide.

[MARS] I say he should get two hundred figs.

LOPE Figs? I'll marry without a dowry!

DON PEDRO The joke is on me, then.

TEODORO And so ends our play, of what the world has come to because of women and servants.

End of play

[34] This is an enormously generous dowry, especially as Teodoro makes the point earlier that Florencio is himself wealthy.
[35] Two hundred lashes would be a serious punishment, and potentially incapacitating. Amid the transgressions of the ending, Lope's joke has a nervous edge to it.