

EVADNE;  
OR, THE STATUE.

A Tragedy,

IN THREE ACTS.



*Altered from Rivers and Shirley,*

BY

RICHARD LALOR SHEIL,

AUTHOR OF

*"The Apostate," "Bellamira," "The Huguenot,"  
and (with BANIM) "Damon and Pythias."*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON.

*First Performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
February 10th, 1819.*

## Characters.

KING OF NAPLES	Mr. ABBOTT.
LUDOVICO ( <i>his Favourite</i> )	Mr. MACREADY.
COLONNA	Mr. YOUNG.
VICENTIO	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
SPALATRO	Mr. CONNOR.
OFFICER	Mr. NORRIS.
SERVANT	Mr. HEALEY.
EVADNE ( <i>Sister of Colonna</i> )	Miss O'NEILL.
OLIVIA ( <i>in love with Vicentio</i> )	Mrs. FAUCIT.

SCENE — NAPLES.

## Costumes.

- KING—Short crimson silk velvet shirt, edged with ermine, showing vest of white satin, white silk tights, velvet shoes, purple velvet robe, and cap with small drooping white and tinted feathers, jewelled collar, belt and dagger. *2nd Dress*—Plain neat dress.
- LUDOVICO—Dark velvet short shirt, hanging sleeves; puce satin vest and sleeves, silk tights, scarf, cap and feathers, sword, belt and dagger, dark shoes.
- COLONNA—Black velvet short shirt trimmed with silver, hanging sleeves; vest and sleeves of white satin, white tights, black velvet shoes and hat with white feathers, black and white party-coloured scarf, sword, belt and dagger.
- VICENTIO—Grey silk velvet trimmed with crimson, crimson satin vest and sleeves, red tights and shoes, cap with grey and red feathers, scarf, sword, belt and dagger.
- SPALATRO *and* COURTIERS—Dresses similar in shape to the above, but of various colours.
- OFFICER—Red suit, cuirass and helmet.
- GUARDS—Ditto ditto.
- SERVANTS—Plain suits, with badge on left arm.
- EVADNE—Black velvet dress, open at sides, showing white satin under-dress, net for the hair.
- OLIVIA—Black velvet dress open at sides, crimson under-dress, net for the hair.

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*Time in Representation, One Hour and Fifty Minutes.*

EVADNE;  
OR, THE STATUE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of the King of Naples.*

*The KING, SPALATRO, and COURTIERS, banners, &c.  
and GUARDS discovered.*

KING. (*seated.*) Didst say the Marquis of Colonna prays  
Admission to our presence.

SPAL. Ay, my liege.

He stands in the ante-chamber, with a brow  
As stern as e'er was knitted in the folds  
Of ranc'rous discontent.

KING. I have noted oft (*comes forward.*)  
His absence from the court, the which I deem  
His envy of our true Ludovico.

SPAL. Deem it no little benefit, my liege:  
His deep and murky smile ; his gather'd arms,  
In whose close pride he folds himself; his raw  
And pithy apothegms of scorn have made him  
Our laughter and our hatred : we are all  
Grown weary of this new Diogenes,  
Who rolls his hard and new philosophy  
Against all innocent usage of the court.

KING. We must not bid him hence—he has a sister—

SPAL. The fair Evadne !—

KING. Fairer than the morn. For her sake  
We give him ample scope—bear his bitter gibes.

COLONNA. (*without, L. H.*) I'll hear no more.

Colonna does not often importune  
With his unwelcome presence. Let me pass—  
For once I must be heard.

*Enter two COURTIERS and COLONNA, L. H.*

My liege!—

1ST. COURT. Hold back !

What right hast thou to rush before the sight  
Of sacred royalty ?

COLONNA. The right that all

Good subjects ought to have—to do him service.

My liege—

(COURTIERS *retire* L. H., and SPALATRO *crosses behind*  
*to R. H.*)

KING. You are Welcome—

And would you had brought your lovely sister, too.

COLONNA. My sister, did you say ? My sister, sir ?

She is not fit for courts; she would be called  
(For she has something left of nature still)

A simple creature here :

She is not fit for courts, and I have hope

She never will: but let it pass—I come

To implore a favour of you.

KING. Whatsoe'er

Colonna prays, sure cannot be refused.

COLONNA. The favour that I ask is one, my liege,

That princes often find it hard to grant.

'Tis simply this—that you will hear the truth.

KING. Proceed, and play the monitor, my lord.

COLONNA. I see your courtiers here do stand amazed.

Of them I first would speak : There is not one

Of this wide troop of glittering parasites

That circle you, but in soul

Is your base foe. These smilers here, my liege—

These sweet, melodious flatterers, my liege—

That flourish on the flexibility

Of their soft countenances—are the vermin

That haunt a prince's ear with the false buzz

Of villanous assentation. These are they  
 Who from your mind have flouted every thought  
 Of the great weal of the people. These are they  
 Who from your ears have shut the public cry,  
 And, with the poisoned gales of flattery,  
 Create around you a foul atmosphere  
 Of unresounding denseness, through the which  
 Their loud complaints cannot reverberate,  
 And perish ere they reach you.

KING. Who complains—  
 Who dares complain of us ?

COL. All dare complain  
 Behind you—I before you. Do not think  
 Because you load your people with the weight  
 Of camels, they possess the camel's patience.  
 A deep groan labours in the nation's heart:  
 The very calm and stillness of the day  
 Gives augury of the earthquake. All without  
 Is as the marble, smooth; and all within  
 Is rotten as the carcase it contains.  
 Though ruin knock not at the palace gate,  
 Yet will the palace gate unfold itself  
 To ruin's felt-shod tread.

KING. (*aside.*) Insolent villain!

COL. Your gorgeous banquets, your luxuries, your pomps,  
 Your palaces, and all the sumptuousness  
 Of painted royalty will melt away,  
 As in a theatre the glittering scene  
 Doth vanish with the shifter's magic hand,  
 And the mock pageant perishes. My liege,  
 A single virtuous action hath more worth  
 Than all the pyramids ; and glory writes  
 A more enduring epitaph upon  
 One generous deed, than the sarcophagus  
 In which Sesostris meant to sleep.

SPAL. (*coming forward!*) Forbear !  
 It is a subject's duty to arrest  
 Thy rash and blasphemous speech.

KING. Let him speak on.  
 The monarch who can listen to Colonna,  
 Is not the worthless tyrant he would make me.

(SPALATRO *retires.*)

COL. I deem not you that tyrant; if I did—  
 No! Nature, framing you, did kindly mean,  
 And o'er your heart hath sprinkled many drops  
 Of her best charities. But you are led  
 From virtue and from wisdom far away,  
 By men whose every look's a lie—whose hearts  
 Are a large heap of cankers, and of whom  
 The chief is a rank traitor !

KING. Traitor ! Whom meanest thou ?

COL. Your favourite—your minister, my liege.

That smooth-faced hypocrite, that—

KING. Here he comes !

COL. It is the traitor's self—I am glad of it,  
 That to his face I may confront—

*Enter LUDOVICO, R. H.*

LUD. (*he advances rapidly to the KING.*) My liege,  
 I hasten to your presence to inform you—  
 Colonna here! (*starting.*)

COL. The same—Colonna's here!

And if you wish to learn his theme of speech,  
 Learn that he spoke of treason and of you.

LUD. Did I not stand before the hallowed eye  
 Of majesty, I would teach thee with my sword  
 How to reform thy phrase. But I am now  
 In my king's presence, and, with awe-struck soul,  
 As if within religion's peaceful shrine,  
 Humbly I bend before him. What, my liege,  
 Hath this professor of austerity,  
 And practiser of slander, uttered  
 Against your servant's honour ?

KING. He hath called you—

COL. A traitor! and I warn you to beware  
 Of the false viper nurtured in your heart.  
 He has filled the city with a band of men,  
 By fell allegiance sworn unto himself.  
 There are a thousand ruffians at his word  
 Prepared to cut  throats. The city swarms  
 With murderer's faces, and tho' treason now  
 Moves like a muffled dwarf, 'twill speedily  
 Swell to a blood  bed giant!—If my liege,  
 What have I said doth not unfilm your eye,

'Twere vain to tell you more.  
 I have said, my liege,  
 And tried to interrupt security  
 Upon her purple cushion; he, perhaps,  
 Will find some drowsy syrup to lay down  
 Her opening eye-lids into sleep again,  
 And call back slumber with a lullaby  
 Of sweetest adulation.—Fare you well.

LUD. Hold back!

COL. Not for your summons, my good lord,  
 The courtly air doth not agree with me,  
 And I respire it painfully. My lord,  
 Hear my last words—beware, Ludovico !

LUD. Villain, come back!

COL. I wear a sword, my lord. [*Exit COLONNA, L. H.*]

LUD. He flies before me ; and the sight of him  
 He dares accuse, came like the morning sun  
 On the night-walking enemy of mankind,  
 That shrinks before the day-light—yes, he fled;  
 And I would straight pursue him, and send back,  
 On my sword's point, his falsehoods to his heart—  
 But that I here, before the assembled court,  
 Would vindicate myself—a traitor! Who,  
 In any action of Ludovico,  
 Finds echo to that word ?

KING.                    I cannot think  
 Thou hast repaid me with ingratitude.

LUD. I do not love to make a boisterous boast  
 Of my past services ; what I did  
 Was but my duty. Yet would I inquire  
 If he who has fought your battles—who oft  
 Has back to Naples, from the field of fight,  
 Led your triumphant armies—  
 He whose hand  
 Hath lined the oppressive diadem with down,  
 And ta'en its pressure from the golden round:  
 If he, whose cheek hath, at the midnight lamp,  
 Grown pale with study of his prince's weal,  
 Is like to be a traitor ? Who, my liege,  
 Hath oft transpierced  
 The hydra-headed monster of rebellion,

And stretched it bleeding at your feet ? Who oft  
 Hath from the infuriate people exorcised  
 The talking demon, *liberty*, and choked  
 The voice of clamorous demagogues ? I dare  
 To tell you 'twas Ludovico !

KING. It was.

LUD. And yet he dares to call me traitor—he whose  
 Breath doth taint whate'er it blows upon.  
 Oh, my liege, my fortunes grow and flourish  
 But in your honoured love; and  
 Your giving audience to this rancorous man,  
 Who envies me the greatness of your smile,  
 Hath done me wrong, and stabs me thro' and thro'.  
 A traitor!—Your Ludovico !

KING. My lord.

LUD. (*kneels.*) Here is my heart. If you have any mercy,  
 Strike thro' that heart, and as the blood flows forth,  
 Drown your suspicions in the purple stream.

KING. Rise, Ludovico, and do not think  
 I have harboured in my breast a single thought  
 That could dishonour thee. No !  
 (*raises and embraces him.*)

We have wronged thee, not by doubt,  
 But by our sufferance of Colonna's daring, and—  
 (*draws LUDOVICO aside.*) But that I hope that yet  
 I may possess me of his sister's charms.

LUD. There you have struck upon the inmost spring  
 Of all Colonna's hate ; for in obedience  
 To your high will, unto her ear  
 I bore your proffered love, which he discovering,  
 Has tried to root me from my prince's heart.

KING. Where thou shalt ever flourish. But  
 Is there hope, my friend ?

LUD. Colonna's lovely sister shall be yours; nay more—  
 But, mark my speech—Colonna's self shall  
 Lead you to her arms.

KING. But dost not fear  
 Her purposed marriage with Vicentio  
 May make some obstacle ?

LUD. Vicentio, too, shall be  
 An instrument to crown you with her charms.

KING. She did prefer Vicentio.

LUD. She shall prefer your majesty.

KING. Tell her we'll shower all honour on her head.

And here, Ludovico, to testify

That we have given ourselves, bear to her heart

This image of her king! (*giving portrait.*)

LUD. I am in all your servant.

KING. Come, my friends, (*crosses to R. H.*)

Let's to some fresh-imagined sport, and while

The languid hours in some device of joy

To help along the lazy flight of time,

And quicken him with pleasure. Ludovico!

Remember!

[*Exeunt KING and COURTIERS, R. H. Banners and Guards, R. H. U. E. ; SPALATRO, and four other CONSPIRATORS remain behind with LUDOVICO.*]

LUD. He is gone,

And my unloosened spirit dares again

To heave within my bosom!—Oh, Colonna,

With an usurious vengeance I'll repay thee,

And cure the talking devil in thy tongue!

(*to SPALATRO.*) We are safe, my friends,

And in the genius of Ludovico,

An enterprise shall triumph.

But Colonna! Oh, by the glorious star

Of my nativity, I do not burn

For empire, with a more infuriate thirst,

Than for revenge!

SPAL. My poniard's at your service.

(*First and Second Conspirators half draw their daggers.*)

LUD. Not for the world, my friends !

I'll turn my vengeance to utility.

Whom think you

Have I marked out assassin of the king ? Who but

Colonna—

SPAL. What! Colonna!

LUD. Colonna!—

SPAL. Impossible!

From his great father he inherited

A sort of passion in his loyalty:

In him it mounts to folly.

LUD. Yet Spalatro,  
I'll make a murderer of him—know you not  
He has a sister ?

SPAL. Yes, the fair Evadne,  
You once did love yourself.

LUD. There thou hast touched me.  
And I am weak enough to love her yet!  
She scorns me for that smooth Vicentio—  
Not only does he thwart me in my love,  
But, well I know his influence in the state  
Would, when the king shall be no more,  
Be cast between me and the throne—he dies !—  
Colonna, too, shall perish, and the crown  
Shall, with Evadne's love, be mine.

*Enter* OFFICER, L. H.

How now ?

OFFICER. My lord, the lady Olivia  
Waits on your highness.

LUD. I desired her presence here,  
And will await her coming. [*Exit* OFFICER, L. H.  
With a straw  
A town may be consumed, and I employ  
This woman's passion for Vicentio  
As I would use a poison'd drop, to kill.  
Leave me, friends.

[SPALATRO *and* COURTIERS *Exeunt* R. H.

(*takes out the King's picture.*) Come, kingly bauble,  
Thou now must be employed.—  
Even in this image, he bears the soft  
And wanton aspect with which he bid me  
To cater for his villanous appetite—  
And with what luxury ?—Evadne's charms !—  
Evadne that I love ? He would supplant me, and for  
that he dies.  
Yes, royal trusting master, I will turn  
Those glittering eyes, where love doth now inhabit,  
To two dark hollow palaces, for death  
To keep his mouldering state in.  
He dares to hope that I will  
Smooth the bed for his lascivious pleasures!

But I will teach his royalty  
The beds I make are lasting ones, and lie  
In the dark chambers of eternity!

*Enter OLIVIA, R.*

Oh, Olivia, welcome!  
At length I have means to make Vicentio thine.  
Straight he returns to Naples—the king doth love  
Evadne,  
Whom the lord Vicentio would wed.  
I will poison his ear that she is flattered by the king's  
passion.  
Look here, this picture of himself which  
His majesty now sends Evadne, you must exchange  
For that of him she loves, it will confirm suspicions  
I shall  
Plant within his breast and truly make him thine.  
*(giving her the King's picture.)*

OLIVIA. My own heart  
Tells me 'tis a bad office,  
But this unhappy passion for Vicentio drives me on,  
And makes my soul your thrall. Thus I have crept,  
Obedient to your counsels, meanly crept  
Into Evadne's soft, and trusting heart,  
And coiled myself around her. Thus, my lord,  
Have I obtained the page of amorous sighs  
That you enjoined me to secure. I own  
'Twas a false deed, but I am gone too far  
To seek retreat, and will obey you still.

LUD. And I will crown your passion with the flowers  
Of Hymen's yellow garland—Trust me, Olivia,  
That once dissevered from Evadne's love,  
He will soon be taught to prize your nobler frame,  
And more enkindled beauty. Well, 'tis known,  
Ere he beheld the sorceress,  
He deemed you fairest of created things,  
And would have proffered love, had not—

OLIVIA. I pray you,  
With gems of flattery do not disturb  
The fount of bitterness within my soul ;—  
For dropped tho' ne'er so nicely, they but stir

The poisoned waters as they fall.—I have said  
I will obey you.

LUD. With this innocent page  
Will I light up a fire within Vicentio,—  
But you must keep it flaming;—I have ta'en  
Apt means to drive him into jealousy,  
By scattering rumours (which have reached his ear)  
Before he comes to Naples,—e'en in Florence  
Have I prepared his soft and yielding mind  
To take the seal that I would fix upon it.  
I do expect him within the fleeting hour,—  
For, to my presence he must come to bear  
His embassy's commission, and be sure  
He leaves me with a poison in his heart  
Evadne's lips shall never suck away.

OLIVIA. Then will I hence, and if 'tis possible,  
Your bidding shall be done.—Vicentio!

*Enter VICENTIO, R. H.*

VICENT. Hail to my lord!

LUD. Welcome, Vicentio!  
I have not clasp'd your hand this many a day!  
Welcome from Florence. In your absence, sir,  
Time seemed to have lost his feathers.

VICENT. It was kind  
To waste a thought upon me—Fair Olivia, (*crosses C.*)  
Florence hath dimmed mine eyes, or I must else  
Have seen a sunbeam sooner.  
How does your lovely friend ?

OLIVIA. What friend, my lord ?

VICENT. I trust nought evil hath befallen Evadne,  
That you should feign to understand me not.  
How does my beautiful and plighted love ?

OLIVIA. How does she, sir ? I pray you, my good lord,  
To ask such tender question of the king. [*Exit, L. H.*]

VICENT. (*aside.*) What meant she by the king ?

LUD. You seem, Vicentio,  
O'ershadowed with reflection—should you  
Not have used some soft, detaining phrase to one  
Who should, at least, be pitied ?

VICENT. I came here

To re-deliver to your hands, my lord,  
The high commission of mine embassy,  
That long delayed my marriage. You, I deem  
My creditor, in having used your sway  
In my recall to Naples.

LUD. In return for such small service,  
I hope that you will not forget Ludovico,  
When in the troop of thronging worshippers,  
At distance you behold his stooping plume  
Bend in humility.

VICENT. What means my lord ?

LUD. Act not this ignorance—your glorious fortune  
Hath filled the common mouth—  
Your image stands already in the mart  
Of pictured ridicule—Come, do not wear  
The look of studied wonderment—you know  
Howe'er I stand upon the highest place  
In the king's favour, that you will full soon  
Supplant the poor Ludovico.

VICENT. I am no Œdipus.

LUD. You would have me speak in simpler phrase;  
Vicentio,

You are to be the favourite of the king.

VICENT. The favourite of the king!

LUD. Certes, Vicentio.

In our Italian courts, the generous husband  
Receives his monarch's recompensing smile,  
That with alchymic power, can turn the mass  
Of dull approbrious shame, to one bright heap  
Of honour and emolument.

I bid you joy, my lord—why, how is this ?  
Do you not yet conceive me ? Know you not  
You are to wed the mistress of the king ?  
Colonna's sister—ay, I have said it, sir,—  
Now, do you understand me ?

VICENT. Villain, thou liest!

LUD. What, are you not to marry her ?

VICENT. Thou liest!

Tho' thou wert ten times what thou art already,  
Not all the laurels heaped upon thy head  
Should save thee from the lightning of my wrath!

LUD. If it were my will,  
 The movement of my hand should beckon death  
 To thy presumption. But I have proved too oft  
 I bore a fearless heart, to think you dare  
 To call me coward—and I am too wise  
 To think I can revenge an injury  
 By giving you my life. But I compassionate,  
 Nay, I have learned to esteem thee for a wrath,  
 That speaks thy noble nature.  
 Fare thee well! (*crosses to L. H.*)  
 Thy pulse is now too fevered for the cure  
 I honestly intended—yet, before  
 I part, here take this satisfying proof  
 Of what a woman's made of. (*gives him a letter.*)

VICENT. It is her character  
 Hast thou shed phosphorus on the innocent page,  
 That it has turned to fire ?

LUD. Thou hast thy fate.

VICENT. 'Tis signed, " Evadne."

LUD. Yes, it is—farewell!

VICENT. For Heaven's sake, hear me.—Stay.—Oh, pardon  
 me

For the rash utterance of a frantic man -  
 Speak, in mercy speak!

LUD. I will,  
 In mercy speak, indeed—In mercy to  
 That fervid generosity of heart  
 That I behold within thee.

VICENT. From whom is this ?

LUD. From whom ? Look there!

VICENT. Evadne!

LUD. 'Tis written to the king and to my hand.  
 For he is proud of it, as if it were  
 A banner of high victory, he bore it,  
 To evidence his valour.—It is grown  
 His cup-theme now, and your Evadne's name  
 Is lisp'd with all the insolence on his tongue  
 Of satiated triumph—he exclaims—  
 The poor Vicentio!

VICENT. The poor Vicentio!

LUD. What, shall he murder him?—(*aside.*)—no, no,  
Colonna!

The poor Vicentio!—and he oftentimes  
Cries, that he pities you!

VICENT. He pities me!

LUD. I own that some time I was infidel  
To all the bombast vaunting of the king.  
But—

VICENT. 'Tis Evadne! Look you, my lord—  
Thus as I rend the cursed evidence  
Of that vile woman's falsehood—thus I cast  
My love into the winds, and as I tread  
Upon the poison'd fragments of the snake  
That stings me into madness, thus, Ludovico,  
Thus do I trample on her!

LUD. Have you ne'er heard,  
For 'twas so widely scattered in the voice  
Of common rumour, that the very wind,  
If it blew fair for Florence—

VICENT. I have heard  
Some whispers, which I long had flung away  
With an incredulous hatred from my heart—  
But now, this testimony has conjured  
All other circumstances in one vast heap  
Of damned certainty!—Farewell, my lord—

(*crosses L.H.*)

LUD. Hear me, Vicentio!  
Vengeance is left you still—the deadliest too  
That a false woman can be made to feel:  
Take her example—be not satisfied  
With casting her for ever from your heart,  
But to the place that she has forfeited,  
Exalt a lovelier than—but I perceive  
You are not in a mood to hear me now—  
Some other time, Vicentio—and, meanwhile,  
Despite your first tempestuous suddenness,  
You will think that I but meant your honour well  
In this proceeding.

VICENT. I believe I owe you  
That sort of desperate gratitude, my lord,  
The dying patient owes the barbarous knife,

That delves in throes of mortal agony,  
And tears the rooted cancer from his heart!

[*Exeunt* L. H.]

SCENE II—*A Room in Colonna's Palace.*

*Enter* EVADNE, C. D. *looking at a miniature.*

EVADNE. 'Tis strange he comes not! Thro' the city's  
gates

His panting courser passed before the sun  
Had climbed to his meridian, yet he comes not!—  
Ah, Vicentio,  
To know thee near me, yet behold thee not,  
Is sadder than to think thee far away;  
For I had rather that a thousand leagues  
Of mountain ocean should dissever us,  
Than thine own heart,

*Enter* OLIVIA, R. U. E. *and goes slowly to* L. H.

Sure, Vicentio,  
If thou didst know with what a pining gaze  
I feed mine eyes upon thine image here,  
Thou wouldst not now leave thine Evadne's love  
To this same cold idolatry. Olivia!

OLIVIA. I have stolen unperceived upon your hours  
Of lonely meditation, and surprised  
Your soft soliloquies ;—Nay, do not blush—

EVADNE. You mock me, fair Olivia—I confess  
That musing on my cold Vicentio's absence,  
I quarrelled with the blameless ivory.

OLIVIA. He was compelled as soon as he arrived,  
To wait upon the great Ludovico;  
(*takes Vicentio's picture.*) What a sweetness plays  
On those half-opened lips!—He gazed on you  
When those bright eyes were painted.

EVADNE. You have got  
A heart so free of care, that you can mock  
Your pensive friend with such light merriment  
But hark; I hear a step. (*crosses* L. H.)

OLIVIA. (*aside.*) Now fortune aid me  
In her precipitation.

EVADNE. It is himself:—Well I know  
My lord Vicentio hastens to mine eyes!  
The picture—pr'ythee give it back to me—

OLIVIA. It is in vain  
To struggle with you then—with what a grasp  
You rend it from my hand, as if it were  
Vicentio that I had stolen away.

(*gives her the king's picture, which she has substituted,  
and which EVADNE places in her bosom.*)

I triumph!—(*aside.*) I must leave you,  
Nor interrupt the meeting of your hearts  
By my officious presence. [Exit R.H.]

EVADNE. Swiftly he passes through the colonnade  
Oh! Vicentio,  
Thy coming bears me joy as bright as e'er  
Beat through the heart of woman.

*Enter VICENTIO, L. H.*

Are you then come at last?—do I once more  
Behold my bosom's lord, whose tender sight  
Is necessary for my happiness  
As light for day!

VICENT. (*aside.*) Dissembling woman!

EVADNE. How is this, my lord?—You look altered.

VICENT. But you do not look altered—would you did!

Let me peruse the face where loveliness  
Stays, like the light after the sun is set.  
Sphered in the stillness of those heaven-blue eyes,  
The soul sits beautiful; the high white front,  
Smooth as the brow of Pallas, seems a temple  
Sacred to holy thinking! and those lips  
Wear the sweet smile of sleeping infancy,  
They are so innocent. Oh! Evadne,  
Thou art not altered—would thou wert!

EVADNE. Vicentio!—You are not well, Vicentio.

VICENT. In sooth, I am not. There is in my breast  
A wound that mocks all cure—no salve, nor anodyne,  
Nor medicinal herb, can e'er allay

The festering of that agonizing wound  
You have driven into my heart!

EVADNE. I?

VICENT. Why did you ever tell me that you loved me ?  
Why was I not in mercy spurned away,  
Scorned, like Ludovico ? For unto him  
You dealt in honour, and despised his love;  
But me you soothed and flattered—sighed and  
blushed—  
And smiled and wept, for you can weep; (even now)  
To stab me with a falsehood unknown  
In falsest woman's perfidy ?

EVADNE. Vicentio,

Why am I thus accused ? What have I done ?

VICENT. What!—are you grown already an adept  
In cold dissimulation ? Have you stopped  
All access from your heart into your face ?  
Do you not blush ?

EVADNE. I do, indeed, for you.

VICENT. The king!

EVADNE. The king ?

VICENT. Come, come, confess at once, and wear it high  
Upon your towering forehead—swell your port—  
Away with this unseemly bashfulness—  
Confront the talking of the busy world—  
Tell them you are the mistress of the king,  
Tell them you are Colonna's sister, too;  
But hark you, madam, do not say  
You are Vicentio's wife.

EVADNE. Injurious man!

VICENT. The very winds from the four parts of heaven  
Blew it throughout the city.

EVADNE. And if angels  
Cried, trumpet-tongued, that I was false to you,  
You should not have believed it.  
Who dares to stain a woman's honesty,  
Does her a wrong as deadly as the brand  
He fears upon himself. Go, go, Vicentio;  
You are not what I deemed you! Mistress ? Fie!  
Go, go, Vicentio ! Let me not behold  
The man who has reviled me with a thought

Dishonouring as that one! (*crosses to L. H.*) Oh,  
Vicentio,

Do I deserve this of you? (*weeps.*)

VICENT. If I had wronged her—

EVADNE. I will not stoop

To vindicate myself—dare to suspect me!

My lord, I am to guess that you came here

To speak your soul's revolt, and to demand

Your plighted vows again? If for this

You tarry here, I freely give you back

Your late repented faith. Farewell for ever!

(*going L. H.*)

VICENT. Evadne!

EVADNE. Well, my lord?

VICENT. Evadne, stay!

EVADNE. Vicentio!

(*with a look of reproaching remonstance.*)

VICENT. Let me look in thy face.

Oh, 'tis impossible! I was bemocked

And cheated by that villain! Nothing false

Sure ever looked like thee—and yet, wilt thou

But swear—

EVADNE. What should I swear?

VICENT. That you did not

Betray me to the king.

EVADNE. Never!

VICENT. Nor e'er

Didst write in love to him?

EVADNE. Oh, never, never!

Some villain hath abused thy credulous ear.

I must hence betimes

To chase these blots of sorrow from my face;

For if Colonna should behold me weep—

So tenderly does he love me—that I fear

His hot, tempestuous nature. Why, Vicentio,

Do you still wrong me with a wildered eye

That sheds suspicion?

VICENT. I now remember

Another circumstance Ludovico

Did tell me as I came. (*aside.*) I do not see

My picture on her bosom.

EVADNE. Well?

VICENT. When I departed hence, about your neck  
I hung my pictured likeness.

EVADNE. Vicentio, I have pillowed your dear image on a  
heart  
You should not have distrusted.  
Here it is. (*gives him the king's picture from her bosom.*  
And now, my lord, suspect me if you can.

VICENT. (*starting.*) A horrid phantom, more accursed  
than e'er  
Yet crossed the sleep of frenzy, stares at me!  
Speak ! speak at once !  
Or—let it blast thee, too ! (*shows her the picture.*)

EVADNE. Sure some dark spell—  
Some fearful witchery! I am struck to ashes.  
'Tis not Vicentio!

VICENT. It is the King !

EVADNE. No, no—it cannot be!  
Give not thy senses credence. Oh,  
I am confounded—maddened—lost!  
'Tis not reality that stares upon me—  
Oh, hide it from my sight!

VICENT. Chance has betrayed thee,  
And saves my periled honour. Here, thou all fraud—  
Thou mass of painted perjury—thou woman!  
I have done with thee, and pray to heaven  
I ne'er may see thee more. But hold !  
Recall that wish again. The time will come  
When I would look on thee ; then, Evadne, then,  
When the world's scorn is on thee, let me see  
Thee, old in youth, and bending 'neath the load  
Of sorrow, not of time—then let me see thee,  
And mayest thou, as I pass, lift up thy head  
But once from the sad earth, and then  
Look down again for ever! [*Exit R.H.*]

*Enter COLONNA, C., in time to see VICENTIO go off.*

EVADNE. (*at first not perceiving that he is gone, and  
recovering from her stupefaction*) I will swear !  
Give it back to me—oh, I am innocent!

*(she rushes up to COLONNA who advances to R. H., mistaking him for a moment for VICENTIO.)*

By heaven, I am innocent!

COL. Who dares to doubt it—

Who knows thee of that noble family  
That cowardice in man, or wantonness  
In woman never tarnished ?

EVADNE. *(aside.)* He is gone !

COL. But how is this, Evadne ? In your face

I read a wildered air in place  
Of that placidity that used to shine  
For ever on thy holy countenance.  
One of love's summer clouds  
Hath floated o'er you, tho' 'twere better far  
That it had left no rain drops. What has happened ?

EVADNE. There's nothing has befallen, only—

COL. What—only ?

EVADNE. Pardon me, I must begone!

COL. Evadne, stay—let me behold you well.

Why do you stand at distance ? Nearer still,  
Evadne—

EVADNE. Well ?

COL. Vicentio—

EVADNE. *(assuming an affected lightness of manner.)*

Why, Colonna,  
Think you that I'm without my sex's art,  
And did not practise all the torturings  
That make a woman's triumph ?

COL. 'Twas not well.

I hoped thee raised above all artifice  
That makes thy sex but infancy matured.  
I was at first inclined to follow him,  
And ask what this might mean.

EVADNE. Then he had told

That I had played the tyrant. Had you seen  
How like my peevish lap-dog he appeared,  
Just beaten with a fan. Ha! ha! Colonna,  
You will find us all alike. Ha! ha! *(aside.)* My heart  
Will break ! *(bursts into tears.)*

COL. Farewell!

EVADNE. What would you do ?

COL. Let all the world  
 Hold me a slave, and hoard upon my head  
 Its gathered infamy—be all who bear  
 Colonna's name scorn-blighted—may disgrace  
 Gnaw off all honour from my family  
 If I permit an injury to thee  
 To 'scape Colonna's vengeance!

EVADNE. Hold, my brother—I will not leave thy sight.

COL. Then follow me.  
 And if thou art abandoned, after all  
 Vicentio's plighted faith, thou shalt behold—  
 By heavens, an emperor should not do thee wrong !  
 Or if he did, though I had a thousand lives,  
 I'd give them all to avenge thee. I'll inquire  
 Into this business; and if I find  
 Thou hast lost a lover, I will give him proof  
 I've my right arm, and thou thy brother still.

[*Exeunt* R. H.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A street in Naples. Olivia's house, R. H.*

*Enter* LUDOVICO and VICENTIO, L. H.

LUD. There is Olivia's house.  
 VICENT. Thou hast resolved me.  
 I thank thee for thy counsel, and at once, (*crosses* R.  
 Speed to its dreadful performance.

*Enter a* SERVANT, R. H. D. F.

'Bides the Lady Olivia in her home ?  
 SERVANT. She does, my lord. [*Exit, R. D. in F.*  
 VICENT. Thou sayest, Ludovico,  
 'Tis necessary for my fame ?

LUD. No less.  
 By marrying Olivia, you disperse  
 The noises that abroad did sully you,  
 Of having given consent to play the cloak  
 To the king's dalliance.

VICENT. Oh, speak of it  
 No more, Ludovico. Farewell, my friend,  
 I will obey your counsels. [*Exit into Olivia's house*]

LUD. Fare you well,  
 My passionate, obsequious instrument  
 Whom now I scorn so much—I scarcely let thee  
 Reach to the dignity of being hated.

*Enter the KING, L. H., disguised.*

KING. My faithful servant—my Ludovico!

LUD. My prince!

KING. Shall she be mine, Ludovico ?

LUD. My liege,  
 I marvel not at the impatient throb  
 Of restless expectation in your heart.  
 And know that not in vain I toil  
 To waft you to her bosom, for Vicentio  
 Renounces her forever, and—but moved  
 By my wise counsels—hath already prayed  
 The fair Olivia's hand.

KING. How didst thou accomplish this ?

LUD. I turned to use  
 The passion of Olivia. While Evadne traced  
 A letter to Vicentio, suddenly  
 The news of his expected coming reached  
 Her, and, in the rush of joy,  
 Unfinished on the table did she leave  
 The page of amorous wishes, which the care  
 Of unperceived Olivia, haply seized,  
 And bore unto my hand.—Vicentio's name  
 Was drowned in hurried vocatives of love,  
 As thus—" My lord—my life—my soul," the which  
 I made advantage of, and did persuade him  
 'Twas written to your highness—and with lights  
 Caught from the very torch of truest love,  
 I fired the furies' brands—

KING. My faithful friend!

LUD. Then with your picture did Olivia work  
 Suspicion into frenzy; when he came  
 From your Evadne's house, I threw myself,  
 As if by fortune, in his path ; I urged  
 His heated passions to my purposes,  
 And bade him ask Olivia's hand, to prove  
 How much he scorned her falsehood. Even now  
 He makes his suit, for there Olivia dwells,  
 And as you came he entered.

KING. But wherein  
 Will this promote the crowning of my love ?

LUD. I said Colonna's self should be the first  
 To lead you to  arms.

KING. Thou didst't, Ludovico,  
 The which performed, I'll give thee half my realm.

LUD. (*aside.*) You shall give all!

KING. Accomplish this, my friend;  
 Thou art as the rich circle of my royalty.  
 Farewell, Ludovico, I shall expect  
 Some speedy tidings from thee—fare thee well!  
 To-night, Ludovico. [*Exit R. H.*]

LUD. To-night you perish!  
 Colonna's dagger shall let out your blood,  
 And lance your wanton and high-swelling veins.  
 Evadne here!

*Enter EVADNE, L. H.*

EVADNE. (*with some agitation.*) My Lord Ludovico—

LUD. The Beautiful Evadne!  
 What would the brightest maid of Italy  
 Of her poor servant ?

EVADNE. Sir, may I entreat  
 Your knowledge where Count Vicentio  
 'Bides at this moment ? I have been informed  
 He 'companies you here.

LUD. If you desired to learn where now he 'bides,  
 I can inform you.

EVADNE. Where, Ludovico?

LUD. Yonder, Evadne, in Olivia's house.

EVADNE. Olivia's house ? What would he there ?

LUD. You know  
 Vicentio and Olivia are to-day—

EVADNE. My lord ?

LUD. Are to be married—

EVADNE. Married?

Vicentio and Olivia to be married ?

LUD. I am sorry that it moves you thus—Evadne ;

Had I been used as that ingrate, be sure

I ne'er had proved like him. I would not thus

Have flung thee like a poppy from my heart—

A drowsy sleep-provoking flower. Evadne,

I had not thus deserted you ! [Exit, R.H.

EVADNE. Vicentio!

Olivia and Vicentio to be married ?

I heard it—yes, I am sure I did—Vicentio !

Olivia to be married!—and Evadne,

Whose heart was made of adoration—

Vicentio in her house ? there—underneath

That woman's roof; behind the door that looks

To shut me out from hope. I will myself—

*(advancing, then checking herself.)*

I dare not do it; but he could not

Use me thus—no, he could not, ha ! *(sees him.)*

*Enter VICENTIO from Olivia's house, R. H. D. F.*

VICENT. Evadne here?

EVADNE. Would I had been born blind,

Not to behold the fatal evidence

Of my abandonment!

VICENT. *(advances R. H.)* Does she come

To bate me with reproaches; or does she dare

To think that she can angle me again

To the vile pool wherein she meant to catch me ?

I'll pass her with the bitterness of scorn,

Nor seem to know her present to my sight. *(crosses L.)*

Now I am at least revenged. *(going.)*

EVADNE. My lord, I pray you—entreat—Vicentio !—

VICENT. Who calls upon Vicentio ? Was it you ?

What would you with him, for I bear the name ?

EVADNE. Sir, I—

VICENT. Go on. *(aside.)* I'll taunt her to the quick.

EVADNE. My lord, I—

VICENT. I pray you speak. I cannot guess  
By such wild broken phrase, what you would have  
Of one who knows you not ?

EVADNE. Not know me ?

VICENT. No!  
Let me look in your face. There is, indeed,  
Some faint resemblance to a countenance  
Once much familiar to Vicentio's eyes—  
But 'tis a shadowy one. She that I speak of  
Was full of virtues, as the milky way,  
Upon a frozen night, is thick with stars.  
She was as pure as an untasted fountain;  
Fresh as an April blossom; kind as love  
And good as infants giving charity!  
Such was Evadne—fare you well!

EVADNE. My lord,  
Is't true what I've heard ?

VICENT. What have you heard ?

EVADNE. Speak! are you to be married? Let me hear  
it -

Thank heav'n I've strength to hear it!

VICENT. I scarce guess  
What interest you find in one that deems  
Himself a stranger to you.

EVADNE. Sir—

VICENT. But if  
You are indeed solicitous to learn  
Aught that imports me, learn that I, to-day,  
Have asked the fair Olivia's hand, in place of one—

EVADNE. You have bedewed with tears.  
So then, Vicentio, fame did not wrong you.  
You are to be married ?

VICENT. To one within whose heart as pure a fire  
As in the shrine of Vesta long has burned.  
Not the coarse flame of a corrupted heart,  
To every worship dedicate alike—  
A false perfidious seeming.

EVADNE. Spare your accusations. I am come—

VICENT. Doubtless, to vindicate yourself.

EVADNE. Oh, no!  
An angel now would vainly plead my cause

Within Vicentio's heart—therefore, my lord,  
 I have no intent to interrupt the rite  
 That makes that lady yours; but I am come  
 Thus breathless as you see me—would to heav'n  
 I could be tearless too !  
 Hear all the vengeance I intend.—I'll tell you.  
 May you be happy with that happier maid  
 That never could have loved you more than I do,  
 But may deserve you better!—May your days,  
 Like a long stormless summer, glide away,  
 And peace and trust be with you !—  
 And when at last you close your gentle lives,  
 Blameless as they were blessed, may you fall  
 Into the grave as softly as the leaves  
 Of two sweet roses on an autumn eve,  
 Beneath the soft sighs of the western wind;  
 For myself—(*sobbing.*) I will but pray  
 The maker of the lonely beds of peace  
 To open one of his deep hollow ones,  
 Where misery goes to sleep, and let me in ;—  
 If ever you chance to pass beside my grave,  
 I am sure you'll not refuse a little sigh,  
 And if with my friend, (I still will call her so)  
 My friend, Olivia, chide you, pr'ythee tell her  
 Not to be jealous of me in my grave.

VICENT. The picture! In your bosom—near your heart—  
 There on the very swellings of your breast,  
 The very shrine of chastity, you raised  
 A foul and cursed idol!

EVADNE. You did not give me time—no—not a moment  
 To think what villany was wrought, to make me—  
 It is too late, you are Olivia's—  
 You have renounced me—

VICENT. Come, confess—confess—

EVADNE. What should I confess? But that you, that  
 heaven,

That all the world seem to conspire against me;  
 Oh, Vicentio, pr'ythee avoid Colonna's sight!

VICENT. Evadne?—

You do not think to frighten me with his name ?

EVADNE. Vicentio, do not take away from me

All that I've left to love in all the world!  
 Avoid Colonna's sight to day.—I will find  
 Some way to reconcile him to my fate—  
 I'll lay the blame upon my hapless head!—  
 Only to-day, Vicentio.

*Enter COLONNA, R. H. 2 E.*

COL. (R. H.) Ha! My sister!

Where is thy dignity? Where is the pride  
 Meet for Colonna's sister?—hence! My lord—

VICENT. (L. H.) What would you, sir?

COL. Your life:—you are briefly answered.

Look here, sir.—To this lady you preferred  
 Your despicable love! Long did you woo,  
 And when at last by constant adoration,  
 Her sigh revealed that you were heard, you gained  
 Her brother's cold assent. Well then—no more—  
 For I've no patience to repeat by clause  
 The wrong that thou hast done her. It has reached  
 Colonna's ear that you have abandoned her—  
 It rings thro' Naples, my good lord—now, mark me—  
 I am her brother—

VICENT. Well—

EVADNE. (*in centre.*) Forbear! forbear!

I have no injury you should resent  
 In such a fearful fashion. I—my brother—  
 I am sure I never uttered a complaint  
 Heaved with one sigh, nor shed a single tear.  
 Look at me, good Colonna!—now, Colonna  
 Can you discern a sorrow in my face?  
 I do not weep—I do not—look upon me—  
 Why I can smile, Colonna. (*bursts into tears.*)  
 Oh, my brother!—

COL. You weep, Evadne, but I'll mix your tears  
 With a false villain's blood.—If you have left  
 A sense of aught that's noble in you still—

VICENT. My lord, you do mistake, if you have hope  
 Vicentio's name was e'er designed to be  
 The cloak of such vile purpose—

COL. Is't true, my lord, you have abandoned her?

VICENT. Is't true, my lord,

That to the king—

COL. The king?

VICENT. And could you think

That I am to be made an instrument  
For such a foul advancement? do you think  
That I would turn my name into a cloak?

EVADNE. Colonna, my dear brother! Oh, Vicentio!

For heaven's sake, I do implore you here—

COL. Sir, you said something, if I heard aright,  
Touching the king; explain yourself.

VICENT. I will!

I will not wed his mistress!

EVADNE. (*with reproach.*) Oh, Vicentio!

COL. Whom mean you, sir?

VICENT. Look there!

COL. Evadne, ha?

VICENT. Evadne!

COL. (*crosses to centre, and strikes him with his glove.*)

Here's my answer, follow me!

Beyond the city's gates, I shall expect you.

[*Exit L. H.*]

EVADNE. (*clinging to VICENTIO, who has his sword drawn, and kneeling to him.*) You shall not stir!

VICENT. If from his heart I poured

A sea of blood, it would not now content me.

Insolent villain! Dost thou stay me back?

Away, unloose me!

EVADNE. Olivia, hear me—listen to my cry—

It is thy husband's life that now I plead for;

Save, oh, save him!

VICENT. Then must I fling thee from me.—Now I am  
free,

And swift as lightning on the whirlwind's wings,

I rush to my revenge! (*Exit L. H.*)

EVADNE. (*who has fallen upon her knees in her struggle with VICENTIO.*) Oh, my poor heart!

Choke not, thou struggling spirit in my breast.

Hear me, Olivia?—Olivia, hear me!

*Enter OLIVIA from her house.*

OLIVIA. (R. H.) Is't Evadne calls

Like one that with a frantic energy  
In fire cries out for life ?

EVADNE. (L. H.) I cry for life—  
Vicentio's life—Colonna's life—Oh, my friend!  
Colonna, maddened at my miseries,  
And I confess that I am miserable,  
Hath vowed a horrid vengeance, and even now  
He struck Vicentio!

OLIVIA. Heaven!

EVADNE. I pr'ythee, look not  
Misdoubtingly upon me—  
Hast thou not wings to save him ?

OLIVIA. Thou art avenged, Evadne!—to himself  
I dare not own it—but to thee reveal  
The vileness I have practised.

EVADNE. Speak!

OLIVIA. In the wild tremour of thy joy,  
I seized advantage of Vicentio's coming,  
And placed within thine unsuspecting hand—

EVADNE. The portrait of the king—  
That horrid image that appeared to fill  
My bosom with perdition!  
'Twas you—my friend Olivia!

OLIVIA. But I—I myself,  
Will to the king, and bid him send his power  
To interpose between them—thou, Evadne,  
Wilt speak my guilt. [Exit R.H.]

EVADNE. Oh, my Vicentio!  
I fly to save and comfort you! [Exit L. H.]

SCENE II.—*The Bay, and View of Naples.*

*Enter COLONNA and VICENTIO, L. H. 2. E. with their  
swords drawn;—passing across to R. H.*

COL. Yonder, my lord, beside the cypress grove,  
Fast by the church-yard—there's a place, methinks  
Where we may 'scape the eye of observation.

VICENT. I follow, sir—the neighbourhood of the grave

Will suit our purpose well, for you or I  
Must take its measure ere the sun be set.

[*Exeunt* R. H.

*Enter* LUDOVICO, L. 2 E. *as they go off.*

LUD. Ha, there they go !—the furies, with their whips  
Of hissing serpents, lash you to your fate—  
My dull and passionate fools—you fall at last  
Into the pit I have dug for you—the grave.  
You grasp the murdering hilt, while I, in thought,  
Already clench the glorious staff of empire.  
I hate you both ! One of you has denounced me—  
The other, robbed me of a woman's love.  
They have already entered grove  
Of funeral cypress.—Now they are lost  
Amid the crowded trunks—and yet a moment  
And they will be about it!—Now, Vicentio,  
Thy fate is sealed.—Colonna's arm—  
Ha! Who comes here ?  
Evadne!—Yes—my eyes deceive me not—  
'Twas happiest chance that led me to the field—  
She must be interrupted—let me think—  
I have it—

*Enter* EVADNE, L. H. 2 E.

EVADNE. Ha, Ludovico! Oh, speak!

My lord, my lord—my brother, and Vicentio—

LUD. I know it all—and I shall thank the fate  
That made Ludovico the messenger  
Of such blest tidings to Evadne's ear—  
They are secure—

EVADNE. Secure!

My brother and Vicentio secure !

LUD. By providential circumstance, before  
Their purpose was accomplished, both were seized,  
And all their furious passions are as hushed  
As the still waters of yon peaceful bay.

EVADNE. Where, how, and when was this ? What blessed  
hand—

Speak, my lord.

LUD. 'Twas I!

EVADNE. You, Ludovico ?

LUD. The same!

Hearing Olivia's marriage with Vicentio,  
I saw the dreadful issue, and I flew  
With the strong arm of power to intercept them.

EVADNE. On my knees,

And at your feet I thank you. (*kneels.*)

LUD. Beautiful Evadne!

Loveliest beneath the skies, where everything  
Grows lovely as themselves—Nay do not bend  
Your eyes, and hide beneath these fleecy clouds  
Stars beaming as the evening one, nor turn  
That cheek away, that, like a cold rose, seems  
Besprankt with snow !—Nor strive to win from me  
Those hands, which he who formed the lily, formed  
With imitative whiteness—I will presume,  
For your dear sight hath made a madman of me,  
To press my rapture here. (*kisses her hand.*)

EVADNE. My lord—but no, I will not chide

I go to seek my brother.

LUD. And Vicentio!

You would fly me thus,  
To rush at once into my rival's arms—  
Nay, do not start—he well deserves the name—  
I know him by no other.

EVADNE. Sir, I hope

You will not revive a subject that has long  
Between us been forgotten.

LUD. What! forgotten ?

I did not think to hear it—said you forgotten ?  
Nay, do not think you leave me ; in return  
For such small service as I have done to-day,  
I beg your audience; tell me what's forgotten ?  
I would hear it from your lips.

EVADNE. I did not mean—

Forgive, and let me go. (*crosses R.*)

LUD. What, what forgotten ?

Your heartlessness to all the maddening power  
Of the tumultuous passions in my heart !  
What, what forgotten ? All the injuries  
You have cast upon my head—the stings of fire

You have driven into my soul—my agonies,  
My tears, my supplications, and the groans  
Of my indignant spirit! I can hold  
My curbed soul no more—it rushes out!  
What, what forgotten?—me—Ludovico?

EVADNE. Ludovico,  
What may this sudden fury mean?  
Did you not say you saved Vicentio?

LUD. I will permit you shortly to embrace him—  
I will not long detain you from his arms—  
But you will find him grown as cold a lover  
As moonlight statues—his fond arms will hang  
In loosened idleness about your form—  
And from those lips where you were wont t'imbibe  
The fiery respiration of the heart,  
You will touch the coldness of the unsunned snow,  
Without its purity.  
If you can wake his heart to love again,  
I'll hold you for a sorceress—no, Evadne,  
You ne'er shall be Vicentio's—but mine!

EVADNE. Yours!

LUD. Mine!—I have said it, and before to-night  
I'll verify the prophesy. Ha! (*seeing COLONNA.*)  
By heavens, it is himself!—  
All is accomplished—and upon my front  
Methinks I clasp the round of royalty!  
Already do I clasp thee in mine arms!—  
Evadne!—There—look there—Colonna comes,  
And on that weapon flaming from afar  
He bears the vengeance of Ludovico. [*Exit L. H.*

*Enter COLONNA, R. H., with his sword bloody.*

COL. Evadne here!

EVADNE. My brother!

COL. Call me so—

For I have proved myself to be thy brother.

Look here!—

EVADNE. There's blood upon it!

COL. And there should be.

EVADNE. Thou hast—

COL. I have revenged thee!

EVADNE. Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio?

COL. I have revenged thee—

For any wrong done to my single self,  
I should, perhaps, repent me of the deed;  
But, for a wrong to thee—Why dost thou look  
Up to the heavens with such a bewildered gaze ?

EVADNE. To curse thee, myself, and all the world !  
Oh, thou hast slain Vicentio !—thou hast slain him  
Who was as dear as life unto my frantic heart,  
Vicentio! My lord! My soul, my joy—my love!—  
Vicentio ! Vicentio !—(*crosses.*)

COL. Thy passionate grief  
Doth touch me more than it beseems mine honour.

EVADNE. Colonna, kill me !

COL. Pr'ythee, Evadne,  
Let me conduct thy grief to secrecy   
I must from hence prepare my speedy flight,  
For now my head is forfeit to the law !

*Enter SPALATRO, with OFFICER and GUARDS R. H.*

SPAL. Behold him here. Sir, I am sorry for  
The duty which mine office hath prescribed !  
You are my prisoner.

COL. Sir, there is need  
Of little words to excuse you—I was talking  
Of speeding me from Naples, as you came,  
But I scarce grieve you interrupt my flight—  
Here is my sword.

SPAL. You are doomed to death!

EVADNE. To death!

SPAL. The king himself,  
Hearing your combat with Vicentio,  
Hath sworn, that who survived, shall by the axe—

COL. You speak before a woman. I was well  
Acquainted with my fate before you spoke it.

EVADNE. Death ! must you die, Colonna ?

Oh, no—no—no ! not die, sir. (*crosses C.*)

COL. My sweet sister!  
I pray you gentlemen, one moment more—  
This lady is my sister, and indeed

My only kin in all the world,  
And I must die for her sake ! My sweet sister.

EVADNE. No  brother—not die, not die !

COL. Evadne, sweet Evadne! Let me hear

(EVADNE *becomes gradually insensible.*)

Thy voice before I go—I pr'ythee speak!  
That even in death I may remember me  
Of its sweet sounds, Evadne—she has fainted!  
Sir, I have a prayer to you.

SPAL. It shall be granted.

COL. My palace is hard by—let some of these  
Good guardians of the law attend me thither.  
Evadne, for thy sake, I am almost loth  
To leave a world, the which, when I am gone  
Thou wilt find, I fear, a solitary one!

[*Exit, bearing EVADNE, and followed by SPALATRO  
and GUARDS, L. H.*]

SCENE III.—*A Prison.*

*Enter LUDOVICO, R. H., meeting SPALATRO, L. H.*

LUD. Where is Colonna ? Not yet arrived ?

SPAL. Guarded he bore  
His sister to his palace, from the which  
He will be soon led here.

LUD. Spalatro, as I passed, a rumour came,  
Colonna's sword had but half done the work,  
And that Vicentio was not stabbed to death—  
If he still lives—but till I am sure of it,  
No need to speak my resolution,  
Thou art his friend.

SPAL. Such I'm indeed accounted,  
But, save yourself, none doth deserve the name.

LUD. Then, hie thee hence, Spalatro, to inform me,  
If yet Vicentio breathes— (SPALATRO *crosses to R. H.*  
and afterwards,  
I'll make some trial of thy love to me.

*Exit SPALATRO, R. H.*

*Enter* COLONNA, OFFICER, *and* GUARDS, L. H.

COL. Conduct me to my dungeon !—I have parted  
From all that bound my bosom to the world—  
Ludovico!

LUD. The same.

COL. Come you, my lord,  
To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge  
That makes a little mind's ignoble joy ?

LUD. Guards, I discharge Colonna from your care;  
He is no more your prisoner—Hence !

[*Exeunt* OFFICER *and* GUARDS, L. H.]

My lord,  
Such is the vengeance of Ludovico!

COL. What is a man doomed to the stroke of death  
To understand by this ?

LUD. That I am his friend  
Who called me traitor!

COL. Such I call you still.

LUD. Well then, I am a traitor, but listen:  
Your father was the tutor of the king,  
And loyalty is your inheritance—  
I am not blind to such exalted virtue,  
And I resolved to win Colonna's heart,  
As hearts like his are won ! Unto the king  
Soon as Vicentio's fate had reached mine ear,  
I hastened and implored your life.

COL. My life!

Well, sir, my life? (*with indifference.*)

LUD. Upon my knees I fell,  
Nor can I speak the joy that in my heart—  
Leaped, when I heard him say, that thou should'st live.

COL. I am loth to owe you gratitude, my lord,  
But, for my sister's sake, whom I would not  
Leave unprotected on the earth, I thank you !

LUD. You have no cause to thank me; for, Colonna,  
He did pronounce your death, e'en as he said  
He gave you life.

COL. I understand you not.

LUD. Your honour's death, Colonna, which I hold  
The fountain of vitality.

COL. Go on!

I scarce did hear what did concern my life,  
But aught that touches honour—

LUD. Oh, Colonna,

I almost dread to tell thee!

COL. Pr'ythee, speak!

You put me on the rack !

LUD. Wilt thou promise me,—

I will not ask thee to be calm, Colonna,—

Wilt promise me, that thou wilt not be mad ?

COL. Whate'er it be, I will contain myself.

You said 'twas something that concern'd mine honour,  
The honour of mine house—he did not dare  
To say my blood should by a foul attaint  
Be in my veins corrupted; from their height  
The mouldering banners of my family,  
Flung to the earth ; the 'scutcheons of my fame  
Tro'd by dishonour's foot, and my great race  
Struck from the list of nobles ?

LUD. No, Colonna,

Struck from the list of men!—He dared to ask  
As a condition for thy life, (my tongue  
Doth falter as I speak it, and my heart  
Can scarcely heave) by Heavens he dared to ask  
That, to his foul and impious clasp, thou shouldst  
Yield up thy sister.

COL. Ha!

LUD. The king doth set a price  
Upon thy life, and 'tis thy sister's honour.

COL. My sister!

LUD. Ay, thy sister, Evadne!

COL. By yon heaven,

Tho' he were born with immortality,  
I will find some way to kill him !  
My sister!

LUD. Do not waste in idle wrath—

COL. My fathers, do you hear it in the tomb ?

Do not your mouldering remnants of the earth  
Feel horrid animation in the grave,  
And strive to burst the ponderous sepulchre,  
And throw it off?—My sister, oh, yon heavens;  
Was this reserved for me ? For me,—the son

Of that great man that tutored him in arms,  
 And loved him as myself ?—I know you wonder  
 That tears are dropping from my flaming eye-lid;  
 But 'tis the streaming of a burning heart,  
 And these are drops of fire—my sister!

LUD. Now—

Do you now call me traitor ? Do you think  
 'Twas such a crime from off my country's heart  
 To fling this incubus of royalty ?—  
 Am I a traitor ? Is't a sin, my lord,  
 To think a dagger were of use in Naples?

COL. Thou shalt not touch a solitary hair  
 Upon the villain's head!—his life is mine;  
 His heart is grown my property, Ludovico,  
 None kills him but myself!—I will, this moment,  
 Amid the assembled court, in face of day,  
 Rush on the monster, and without a sword  
 Tear him to pieces! (*going L. H.*)

LUD. Nay, Colonna,  
 Within his court he might perchance escape you;  
 But, if you do incline to do a deed  
 Antiquity would envy, with the means  
 He hath furnished you himself!—He means, Colonna,  
 In your own house that you should hold to-night  
 A glorious revelry, to celebrate  
 Your sovereign's sacred presence; and so soon  
 As all the guests are parted, you yourself  
 Should lead your sister to him.

COL. That I should  
 Convert the palace of mine ancestors  
 Into a place of brothelry—myself;  
 Tell me no more, I prithee, if thou would'st  
 I should be fit for death!—

LUD. In honour be  
 A Roman, an Italian in revenge.  
 Waste not in idle and tempestuous sound  
 Thy great resolve. The king intends to bear  
 The honour of his presence to your house,—  
 Nay, hold!—I'll tell him you consent—he straight  
 Will fall into the snare, and then, Colonna,  
 Make offering of his blood to thy revenge !

COL. I thank thee for thy warning—'tis well thought on—

I'll make my vengeance certain, and commend  
Thy wisdom in the counselling.

LUD. Then, hie thee hence !

And make fit preparation for the banquet.  
I'll straight return and tell him you're all joy  
In the honour of his coming.

COL. The rigorous muscles of my clenched hand  
Already feel impatience for the blow  
That strikes the crowned monster to the heart!

[*Exeunt*, COLONNA, L. H. ; LUDOVICO, R. H.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A vast hall in Colonna's Palace filled with statues. The moon streams in through the Gothic windows, and appears to fall upon the statues. A chamber door at the back.*

*Enter* LUDOVICO *and the* KING, R. H. U. E.

LUD. This is the way, my liege. Colonna bade me  
Conduct you to your chamber, while he went  
To seek the fair Evadne, and conduct  
Her to your highness' arms.

KING. Ludovico, thou hast proved thyself, to-day,  
The genius of my happier destiny :  
Thee must I thank, for 'twas thy rarer wit  
Did guide me on to heaven.

LUD. (*aside*.) I'll send you there.

KING. When first I heard Vicentio fell beneath  
The hot Colonna's sword, I do confess  
It smote me sore; but now 'tis told abroad  
That he hath passed all peril.

LUD. I am glad  
His death doth not conduct you to your joys.

Vicentio bears a slight unarming wound  
That sheds his blood, but perils not his life:  
But let him pass—let not a thought of him  
Flit round the couch of love.

KING. Good night, my friend;  
And, pr'ythee, bid Colonna swiftly lead her  
To the expecting transports of my heart.

LUD. I will bid him speed her coyness.

KING. Hie thee, Ludovico,  
For every moment seems an age.

[Exit into chamber, R. 3 E.]

LUD. An age!  
For you, nor minute, hour, nor day, nor year,  
Nor age shall shortly be.  
'Tis now the dead of night—That sounds to me  
Like an apt word; for mine doth to me  
Show, like a giant corse,— his mighty world,  
Its wide and highly-vaulted sepulchre,  
And yonder moon a tomb-lamp ! When the king  
Lies dead to boot, all things will then appear  
In a more full proportion. Ha! he comes!  
My dull and unconscious instrument—Colonna!

*Enter COLONNA with a dagger, L. 2 E.*

Welcome, my friend, for such I dare to call you.  
The king's already to his bed retired,  
Where death will be his paramour.

COL. I have heard  
Vicentio was not wounded unto death.  
Would this were sooner known.

LUD. Why, my good lord?

COL. Because the king would not have offered me  
Such an indignity, nor should I now  
Tread in to murder.

LUD. Murder! I had hoped  
You would not on the threshold of the deed  
Stay tottering thus. One would deem  
It was a deed of sin, and not of honour,  
That you had undertaken.

COL. By yon heaven,  
I cannot stab him like a slave that's hired

To be a blood-shedder! I cannot clench  
 This hand—accustomed to a soldier's sword—  
 Around this treacherous hilt, and, with the other,  
 Squeeze the choked spirit from the gasping throat.  
 Then kneel upon his bosom, and press out  
 The last faint sigh of life! Down, damned steel!  
 Fit instrument for cowards! (*throws down the dagger*  
*near R. H.*) I will play

A warrior's part, and arm him for the fight!  
 Give me thy sword, that I may put my defence  
 Into the tyrant's hand, and nobly kill him!  
 Come forth! (*going to R. 3 E.*)

LUD. Hold, madman, hold!—What wouldst thou do?

COL. Bravely encounter him, not take his life  
 Like a mercenary stabber.

LUD. Hast thou thought  
 That he may be the victor, too?

COL. My death  
 Will not be thought inglorious.

LUD. There's some praise  
 In falling by the hand of royalty;  
 But when you are laid within your sepulchre,  
 And rot most honourably,  I fear me  
 A lesser shame will not befall your house  
 For all the graven marbles on your tomb.  
 Your sister—

COL. Ha!

LUD. Your sister will not find,  
 When you are dead, a bulwark in your grave.  
 Where will she find a guardian arm? Thine arm  
 Will be the food of the consuming worm;  
 While in the hot embraces of the king—

COL. I did not think on that.

LUD. But I perhaps mistake you all this while.  
 You had better thought upon the dignity  
 He means your house.

COL. You do not dare—

LUD. I dare to tell you this:—  
 Who can forgive such injury as thine,  
 Hath half consented to it. How is it  
 The glorious resolve hath cooled within thee?

Hath anything befallen that should have blown  
 On the red iron of thy heated wrath,  
 And steeped thee back to meekness ? Was the touch  
 Of his warm amorous hand, wherein he palmed  
 Her struggling fingers, ice upon your rage ?  
 When he did tread upon her yielding foot  
 Beneath the cloth of gold—

COL. If I had seen it,  
 He had not lived an instant.

LUD. When you turned,  
 He flung his arms around, and on her cheek  
 He pressed his ravenous lips. 'Sdeath, sir, consider :  
 You pray the King of Naples to your roof;  
 You hail his coming in a feast that kings  
 Could scarce exceed in glory; it is blown  
 Thro' all the city that he sleeps to-night  
 Within your sister's bed; and, it is said,  
 That you yourself have smoothed the pillow down.

COL. Where is he ? Let me see him who presumes  
 To think the blasphemy.

LUD. Behold him here !  
 I, sir—yes, I—Ludovico, dare think  
 With every man in Naples, if the king  
 Should leave your roof with life, that he has tasted  
 The fruit he came to pluck.

COL. No more—no more !  
 He perishes, Ludovico!

LUD. That's well!  
 I am glad to see you pull into your heart  
*(takes up dagger.*
 Its brave resolve again; and if there be  
 Aught wanting to confirm thee, think, Colonna,  
 Think that you give your country liberty,  
 While you revenge yourself! Go, my Colonna :  
 Yonder's the fated chamber; plunge the steel  
*(gives the dagger.*
 Into his inmost heart, and let the blood  
 Flow largely.

COL. I'll call to thee when it is done.

LUD. Hark thee! he'll cry for life ; and well I know  
 The pleading for existence may have power

Upon thy noble nature; then, Colonna,  
 Drown every shriek with chaste Evadne's name,  
 And stab him as thou criest it! [Exit, 1 E. L.  
 (COLONNA advances towards the chamber door in centre.

COL. I will do it—yes, I will do it!

EVADNE. (*without*, L. H. U. E., *exclaims.*) Hold!

COL. (*starting.*) It was only  
 My thought informed the air with voice around me—  
 Why should I feel as if I walked in guilt,  
 And trod to common murder? He shall die!  
 Come, then, enraging thought, into my breast,  
 And turn it into iron!

EVADNE. (*without*, L. H. U. E.) Hold!

COL. It shot  
 With keen reality into mine ear.  
 A figure, in the shadow of the moon,  
 Moves slowly on my sight.  
 What art thou?

EVADNE advances, L. H. U. E., from behind the Statues

EVADNE. My brother!

COL. How, my sister!

Came you across my purpose?

EVADNE. From my chamber I did behold you  
 In dreadful converse with Ludovico.  
 And, I as soon had seen thee  
 Commune with the great foe of all mankind.  
 What wouldst thou do? Murder?

COL. Murder!

EVADNE. What else, Colonna,  
 Couldst thou have learned from Ludovico?

COL. In yonder chamber lies the king: I go  
 To stab him to the heart.

EVADNE. 'Tis nobly done!

I will not call him king, but guest.  
 Remember, you have called him here—remember,  
 You have pledged him in your father's golden cup;  
 Have broken bread with him. The man, Colonna—

COL. Who dares to set a price upon my life;  
 What thinks't thou 'twas?

EVADNE. I think there's nought too dear  
To buy Colonna's life.

COL. 'Twas a vast price  
He asked me then; you were to pay it, too—  
It was my Evadne's honour.

EVADNE. Ha!

COL. Now, if thou wilt, abide thee here, Evadne,  
Where thou mayest hear his groan. (*going in.*)

EVADNE. Forbear, Colonna!  
Let not this hand be blotted over with blood.

COL. Evadne!

EVADNE. Well?

COL. The king expects me to  
Conduct you to his chamber. Shall I do so ?

EVADNE. I pr'ythee be not angry with me,  
But bid him come to me.

COL. What! bid him come to thee ?

EVADNE. And leave me with him here.  
I implore it of thee.

COL. Yes, I will try her.  
I know not what she means, but, hitherto,  
I deemed her virtuous.

EVADNE. Send him to me.

COL. There's  wild purpose in her solemn eye.  
I not not ~~it~~ tis sin, but I will make  
A terrible experiment. (*aside.*) What, ho!  
My liege, I bear fulfilment of my promise—  
Colonna bears Evadne to your arms!

*Enter the KING from the chamber, R. 3 E.*

KING. Colonna, my best friend, how shall I thank thee ?  
I not only give thee life,  
But place thee near myself; henceforth thou wilt  
bear  
A nobler title in thy family,  
And to thy great posterity we'll send  
My granted dukedom.

COL. Sir, you honour me.

My presence is no longer needed here.  
(*aside.*) A word's consent despatches them !  
(*conceals himself behind the pillars, R. H. U. E.*)

KING. My fair Evadne, lay aside thy sad  
And drooping aspect in this hour of joy.  
Stoop not thy head, that like a pale rose bends  
Upon its yielding stalk.  
I'll place thee high in honour.

EVADNE. (L. H.) Honour, sir ?

KING. (R. H.) Yes; I'll exalt thee into dignity—  
Adorn thy name with titles.  
Come, my Evadne, what a form is here ?  
The imaginers of beauty did of old  
O'er three rich forms of sculptured excellence  
Scatter the graces; but the hand  
Of mightier nature hath in thee combined  
All varied charms together.

EVADNE. You were speaking of sculpture, sir.  
Here, my lord, (*pointing to the statues.*)  
Is matter for your transports !

KING. Fair Evadne,  
Do you not mean to mock me ?

EVADNE. Nay, it is my wish  
That you should look upon those reverend forms,  
That keep the likeness of mine ancestry.  
Behold! (*going to a statue, R. H. S. E.*)  
The glorious founder of my family!  
It is the great Rodolpho ! Charlemagne  
Did fix that sun upon his shield, to be  
His glory's blazoned emblem.  
With what austere and dignified regard  
He lifts the type of purity, and seems  
Indignantly to ask, if aught that springs  
From blood of his, shall dare to sully it  
With a vapour of the morning!

KING. It is well;  
His frown has been attempered in the lapse  
Of generations to thy lovely smile.

EVADNE. Another of mine ancestors, my liege—  
(*pointing to a statue, L. U. E.*) Guelfo, the murderer!

KING. The murderer!  
I knew not that your family was stained  
With the reproach of blood.

EVADNE. We are not wont

To blush, tho' we may sorrow for his sin—  
 If sin indeed it be. His castle walls  
 Were circled by the siege of Saracens :  
 He had an only daughter whom he prized  
 More than you do your diadem; but when  
 He saw the fury of the infidels  
 Burst through his shattered gates, and on his child  
 Dishonour's hand was lifted, with one blow  
 He struck her to the heart, and, with the other,  
 He stretched himself beside her.

KING. Fair Evadne,  
 I must no more indulge you, else I fear  
 You would scorn me for my patience ; prithee, love,  
 No more of this wild phantasy!

EVADNE. My liege,  
 But one remains, and when you have looked upon it,  
 And thus complied with my request, you will find me  
 Submissive to your own. Look here, my lord;  
 Know you this statue ? (*pointing to a statue, L. 2 E.*)

KING. It is your father!

EVADNE. (*breaking into exultation.*) Ay! 'tis indeed my  
 father—'tis my good,  
 Exalted, generous, and god-like father!  
 Whose memory, though he had left his child  
 A naked, houseless roamer through the world,  
 Were an inheritance a princess might  
 Be proud of for her dower! Who was my father ?  
 (*with a proud and conscious interrogatory.*)

KING. One, whom I confess  
 Of high and many virtues.

EVADNE. Is that all ?  
 I will help your memory, and tell you, first,  
 That the late King of Naples looked among  
 The noblest in his realm for that good man,  
 To whom he might entrust your opening youth,  
 And found him worthiest. His whole life  
 Was given to your uses, and his death—  
 Ha! do you start, my lord ? On Milan's plain  
 He fought beside you, and when he beheld  
 A sword thrust at your bosom, rushed between—  
 it pierc'd him !

He fell down at your feet!—He perished to preserve  
you!

Breathless image, (*rushes to the statue.*)

Altho' no heart doth beat within that breast,  
No blood is in those veins, let me enclasp thee!  
Now, sir, I am ready.

Come take me from this neck of senseless stone ;  
Come and unloose me from my father's arms ;  
Come, if you dare, and in his daughter's shame  
Reward him for the last drops of the blood  
Shed for his prince's life!

KING. Thou hast wrought  
A miracle upon thy prince's heart,  
And lifted up a vestal lamp to show  
My soul its own deformity—my guilt!

EVADNE. (*disengaging herself from the statue.*) Ha!  
have you a soul ? have you yet left

One relic of a man ?  
Heart! do not burst in ecstasy too soon;  
My brother ! my Colonna ! hear me—hear!  
In all the wildering triumph of my soul  
I call upon thee!

(*turning, she perceives COLONNA advancing from  
among the statues, R. U. E.*)

There he is—my brother!

COL. (*in centre.*) Let me behold thee!

Let me compress thee here ! Oh, my dear sister!  
A thousand times mine own ! I glory in thee;  
More than in all the heroes of my name!  
I overheard your converse, and methought  
It was a blessed spirit that had ta'en  
Thy heavenly form to show the wondering world  
How beautiful was virtue!—Sir—(*to the KING.*)

EVADNE. (L. H.) Colonna—there is your king !

COL. Thou hast made him so again ;

Thy virtue hath re-crowned him; and I kneel  
His faithful subject here !

KING. (R. H.) Arise, Colonna!

You take the attitude that more befits  
The man who would have wronged you, but whose  
heart

Was by a seraph call'd again to heaven!  
 Forgive me !

COL. Yes, with all my soul I do!  
 And I will give you proof how suddenly  
 You are grown my prince again. Do not enquire  
 What I intend, but let me lead you here  
 Behind these statues.

*(places the king behind the statues R. U. E.*  
 Retire, my best Evadne! [*Exit EVADNE L. U. E.*  
 Ho, Ludovico!  
 What! ho there!—Here he comes!

*Enter LUDOVICO, L. 1 E.*

Ludovico,  
 I have done the deed!

LUD. He is dead ?

COL. Thro' his heart,  
 E'en as thou badest me, did I drive the steel;  
 And, as he cried for life, Evadne's name  
 Drowned his last shriek !

LUD. So!

COL. Why do you  
 Stand thus rapt ? Why does your bosom heave  
 In such wild tumult ? Why is it you place  
 Your hand upon your brow? What hath possessed  
 you?

LUD. *(with a strong laugh of irony.)* Fool!

COL. How is this ?

LUD. So, thou hast slain the king ?

COL. I did but follow your advice, my lord.

LUD. Therefore, I call ye—fool! From the king's head  
 Thou hast ta'en the crown, to place it on mine own!  
 Therefore I touched my brow, for I did think  
 That palpably, I felt the diadem  
 Wreathing its golden round about my brow.  
 But, by yon heaven, scarce do I feel more joy  
 In climbing up to empire, than I do  
 In knowing thee my dupe!

COL. I know, my lord,  
 You bade me kill the king.

LUD. And since thou hast slain him,

Know more:—'twas I that first within his heart  
 Lighted impurity; 'twas I, Colonna—  
 Hear it—'twas I that did persuade the king  
 To ask thy sister's honour as the price  
 Of thine accorded life !

COL. You?

LUD. Wouldst hear more ?  
 To-morrow sees me king ! I have already  
 Prepared three thousand of my followers  
 To call me to the throne; and, when I am there,  
 I'll try thee for the murdering of the king,  
 And then—What ho, there ! guards!—then, my good  
 lord,  
 When the good trenchant axe hath struck away  
 That dull and passionate head of thine—What, ho!—

*Enter OFFICER and EIGHT GUARDS, L.*

I'll take the fair Evadne to mine arms,  
 And thus— On yonder traitor seize !—  
 With sacrilegious hand he has ta'en away  
 The consecrated life of majesty,  
 And—

*The KING comes forward in centre from R. U. E.*

What do I behold ? Is not my sense  
 Mocked with this horrid vision  
 That hath started up  
 To make an idiot of me ? Is it not  
 The vapour of the senses that has framed  
 The only spectacle that ever yet  
 Appalled Ludovico ?

KING. Behold thy king !

LUD. He lives! I am betrayed—but let me not  
 Play traitor to myself:—befriend me still  
 Thou guarding genius of Ludovico!  
 My liege, my royal master, do I see you  
 Safe from the plots of yon accursed traitor ?  
 And, throwing thus myself around your knees,  
 Do I clasp reality ?

KING.                                   Traitor, arise!  
 Nor dare pollute my garments with a touch!  
 I know thee for a villain !—Seize him, guards!

LUD. (*drawing his sword.*) By this right arm, they dare  
 not—this right arm  
 That to the battle oft hath led them on ;  
 Whose power to kill they know, but would not feel!  
 I am betrayed—but who will dare to leap  
 Into the pit wherein the lion's caught,  
 And hug with him for death ?—not one of this  
 Vile herd of trembling wretches !  
 (*to the KING.*) Thou art meet alone to encounter me ;  
 And thus in the wild bravery of despair,  
 I rush into thy life !  
 (*COLONNA intercepts and stabs him. LUDOVICO falls, L.*  
*Colonna, thou hast conquered!—Oh, that I could,*  
*Like an expiring dragon, spit upon you!*  
*That I could—thus I fling the drops of life*  
*In showers of poison on you—May it fall,*  
*Like Centaur blood, and fester you to madness!*  
*Oh, that I could— (he grasps his sword, and in an*  
*effort to rise, dies.)*

*Enter EVADNE, L. H., and crosses to COLONNA.*

EVADNE.                               Oh, my brother !

KING. Thou hast a second time preserv'd thy prince!  
 Fair Evadne, we will repair our injuries to thee,  
 And wait in all the pomp of royalty  
 Upon the sacred day that gives thy hand  
 To thy beloved Vicentio!

*VICENTIO enters, L. 1 E.*

VICENT. Where is she—my Evadne ? Oh, I have heard all!  
 Olivia hath confessed how she hath wronged thee.  
 At thy feet I throw myself, and sue for pardon.

EVADNE. Evadne grants it with a throbbing heart.

COL. So does Colonna with a welcome hand.

VICENT. My liege—

KING. Thy liege ! who blushing for the past,  
 Thus joins thy hand to one who, for the future,

Will ever throw around thee the halo of true happiness.

COL. And the nuptials

Shall at the pedestal be solemnized  
Of our great father !

EVADNE. And ever, as in this blest moment, may  
His guardian spirit, with celestial love,  
Spread its bright wings to shelter us from ill;  
With nature's tenderest feelings looking down  
Benignant on the fortunes of his child.

Disposition of the characters when the curtain falls:

OFFICER.	GUARDS.	LUDOVICO.	
COLONNA.	EVADNE.	VICENT.	KING.
R.			L.