

THE
Q U E E N O F S P A D E S .

A Drama,
IN TWO ACTS.

ADAPTED FROM
" LA DAME DE PIQUE,"
BY
D I O N B O U C I C A U L T .



THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane,
on Saturday, March 29, 1851.*

Characters.

PRINCE MOSKAU.....	MR. W. LACY.
ERIC KLAMBERG	MR. H. T. CRAVEN.
IVAN.....	MR. J. ANDERSON.
KOPECK.....	MR. BARRETT.
LUDWIG.....	MISS J. BLEADEN.
RUGEN.....	MR. BECKETT.
FIRST LORD.....	MR. HARRIS.
SECOND LORD.....	MR. HENRY.
THIRD LORD.....	MR. ABBOTT.
BANKER.....	MR. BISSON.
KATINKA NELIDORF.....	MRS. NISBETT.
OLGA.....	MRS. W. LACY.
PRINCESS BERESINA.....	MRS. BISSON.

Scenery, &c.

The Scenery by Messrs. Jones, Cuthbert, and Assistants. The Machinery by Mr. J. Sloman. The Music by Mr. Henri Laurent. The Costumes by Mr. Palmer and Mrs. Clarke. The Properties and Decorations by Mr. Brogden.

ACT I.

GOTHIC CHAMBER IN THE PALACE

Of the Princess Beresina, at Polosk.

The Courier.—The Princess.—The Incognita.—Fresh arrivals.—The signet ring.—The three cards.—The three, the ten, and Queen of Spades.—The quarrel.—And arrest of the Courier.



The prisoner.—His doom.—Death-warrant.—The Incognita.—The secret divulged.—The signal.—And escape of the prisoner.

ACT II.

A PAVILION IN THE PUBLIC GARDENS

At Carlsbad, in Bohemia.

The last day of the Carnival.—The Incognita.—More plots.—The gaming table.—The three cards.—The renewed quarrel.

T H E Q U E E N O F S P A D E S !

This Drama is the property of Thomas Hailes Lacy.

THE QUEEN OF SPADES.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Gothic Chamber in the Palace of the Princess Beresina, at Polosk, on the confines of Poland. A large chimney occupies the back, R; a gothic window, L. C.; an arched entrance, L.; in flat, long table and wooden chairs.*

Music.—*At rising of curtain, RUGEN, and a crowd of MINERS are discovered, L.; preparing to go to their work, IVAN is seated, R.; OLGA is regarding him.*

RUGEN. *(who has been playing at cards, and is filled with the insolence of good luck, seated, R. C., at table)* What! will no one play another hand! *(a bell sounds)*

OLGA. Hark, Rugen!

RUGEN. The bell that summons us to the Mines. *(rises)* So, farewell daylight for six days. *(shoulders a pick)* Six days in the Salt Mines of Polosk—a man might as well be a herring. Come, fellows. *(they shoulder their mining implements and go off, L.—music ceases)*

OLGA. *(looking after them)* Poor fellows! What a life! they pass six days of the week in the Salt Mines, a thousand feet under ground. On the seventh, they emerge into the light of day, and come here to the Castle to receive their wages for the week; every rouble of which they invariably spend before the day is out in drinking and gaming! The drinking I do not wonder at—six days salting quite accounts for that; but gaming!

IVAN. *(muttering)* The nine of diamonds—I knew it.

OLGA. Ivan! Ivan! What are you doing here, when your comrades are descending to the Mine?

IVAN. *(rising and vacantly)* I knew it—I feel it; that, that nine would lose—and yet—

OLGA. Dear Ivan.

IVAN. Olga!

OLGA. Why are you so changed towards me, Ivan?

IVAN. Because I am a wretch! My love for you has been my ruin, Olga.

OLGA. You were born a slave upon this estate; but when I told my mistress, the Princess Beresina, that we loved each other, did she not give you your freedom?

IVAN. Ay! but your father refused his consent because I was poor; so, to win you, I sold myself as a slave again.

OLGA. A slave ?

IVAN. To the Demon of Gambling—the fiend enticed me on, in hopes of speedy fortune. I played, at first I won—won everything. Then I began to lose.

OLGA. Why did you not stop there ?

IVAN. I couldn't. The phrenzy had fast hold of me, my daily labour I performed mechanically. It was not salt, but silver that glistened there before my eyes. I sleep not, Olga, no. All the kings and queens in the pack people my slumbers. The thirst of gold that withers me is sated then—I live then—for I win; I always win when I am asleep.

OLGA. I wonder then, that you are ever wide awake.

IVAN. I never am—I live in dreams.

Enter LUDWIG running, L.

LUDWIG. Oh, Olga! There is a sledge coming down the mountain road; and by the crimson trappings of the horses, I know it must be an imperial courier. (*Music.—IVAN seats himself and takes out a dirty pack of cards—the crack of a whip is heard, and the bells of a horse—LUDWIG runs to the window*) See, he comes along the avenue, see how he makes the snow fly. Ah! that's the way to drive.

OLGA. Run, you lazy boy, and take the reins.

LUDWIG *runs off, while OLGA places a log of wood upon the fire.* An imperial courier here. What can be his errand ?

ERIC. (*without*) Fresh and strong horses speedily!

Enters from L.

—in the name of the Czar!

OLGA. An officer! Pray, sir—my lord, approach the fire, you must be frozen.

ERIC. Thanks ! Your mountain wind is keen, and spite of my wolf-skin cloak it has chilled me. How far is it from hence to the frontier ?

OLGA. Five leagues, sir. You have come from the capital ?

ERIC. From St. Petersburg, with despatches from the Czar to the Colonel commanding the frontier post at Polosk.

OLGA. I ask pardon, sir, but perhaps you can give us news of our mistress, the Princess Beresina.

ERIC. The favourite of the Empress, whose niece was arrested last week for high treason ?

OLGA. Treason ! Her niece—my foster-sister, Katinka Nelidoff.

ERIC. It seems this young lady by one of the maids of honour to the Empress, found peculiar favour in the eyes of the Czar, Peter. Mademoiselle Nelidoff replied to the imperial advances by what, on any but a crowned head, would be called a box on the ears.

Re-enter LUDWIG, L.

LUD. Sir, the lady sleeps in your sledge so soundly, wrapped in the furs, I know not how to awaken her. *Exit LUDWIG, L.*

OLGA. A lady!

ERIC. I forgot to mention that I had a companion on my

journey. The strangest adventure !—I had accomplished fifty leagues, when my horses fell and became disabled; at this moment a travelling carriage overtook me, and in the Emperor's name I seized the animals which were harnessed to it. The occupant of the vehicle was a lady, travelling thus perfectly unprotected: I could not leave her alone on the high road, in a travelling carriage from which I had taken the horses.

OLGA. You offered her a share of your wolf-skin cloak ?

ERIC. Which she accepted; and in another moment we went flying across the snow at an imperial speed.

OLGA. Under the cloak and the circumstances, the least you could do was to fall in love with your companion.

ERIC. Not I !

OLGA. Ah, she was not so lovely as some one you have seen.

ERIC. Nay, she is most lovely.

OLGA. But her manners belied her looks ?

ERIC. I wished every league doubled, that I might have prolonged the enjoyment of her conversation.

OLGA. What did she lack, then ?

ERIC. Nothing; and but for a certain—a superfluity of shoulder, and a—a hesitation in her gait—

OLGA. She was humpbacked and lame ?

ERIC. Alas !

OLGA. And her destination ?

ERIC. Was this castle;—but you seem surprised.

OLGA. 'Tis she ! It must be our mistress, the Princess Beresina.

ERIC. The Princess Beresina—my travelling companion !

OLGA. Ivan, Ivan—do you hear who has arrived ?

IVAN. (*abstracted over his cards*) The Queen of Spades !

OLGA. The Princess—

IVAN. (*rising—repeats vacantly*) The Princess !

KATINKA, *disguised as the Princess, enters, L. U. E. ; she appears humpbacked and lame, wears spectacles, and walks with a cane.*

ERIC. Can it be possible that my travelling companion, and the celebrated hunchback Princess, is one and the same person ?

KATINKA. (*advancing, C.*) Alas, sir—even so. (*ERIC looks confused, L.*)

OLGA. (*R. C.*) My mistress ! Eh—that—(*looks puzzled*)

KAT. Ah ! whom have we here ? Your name, child ?

OLGA. I—I—Olga, madame—but—

KAT. (*aside*) She will betray me ! My dear and faithful Olga, I did not recognise you. (*kissing her cheek, and thus finding occasion to whisper in her ear*) I am Katinka Nelidoff—hush ! and help me.

OLGA. Ah ! my dear good mistress—(*kisses her hands*)—welcome to us once again.

KAT. (*aside*) Thank heaven, I had a woman's wit to deal with.

ERIC. Had I known that—it was your highness—who—I should not have dared—

KAT. Tut, tut, young gentleman; you drive well—are well favored—and you are not a fool. Your name ?

ERIC. (*aside*) How her manner has changed. (*aloud*) Eric Klamberg, Serjeant in the Imperial Artillery.

KAT. Serjeant in the—What man is that? (*points to IVAN, R.*)

OLGA. This is Ivan, madame, my intended.

KAT. (*aside to her*) Does he know me?

OLGA. (*the same*) No.

KAT. Young man. (*he advances before her, she examines him with her glasses*) So—very well—he will do! take him away.

OLGA. (*to IVAN*) Come!—hush! not a word.

She pushes him off, L. U. E

KAT. (*turning sharply*) Klamberg, Klamberg? your father was minister of finance?

ERIC. He was.

KAT. Disgraced and degraded from his nobility in his own person, and in those of his descendants, for having turned to his private uses certain revenues of the State.

ERIC. No, madame! the Prince Constantine Moskau, then minister of war, had received a million roubles from the treasury for the pay of the army—this sum he lost at the gambling table, and finding himself unable to replace it, he conceived the vile design of filching from my father's bureau the vouchers he had given for the amount, and then denying its receipt. The plot succeeded but too well, and the Count Klamberg was degraded and exiled to Siberia.

KAT. You charge the Prince Moskau with a dastardly act, sir.

ERIC. (*coldly*) I believe my father's dying words, madame.

KAT. Yet, the Prince subsequently made good the deficiency, and paid your father's debt to the State.

ERIC. His Highness did so insult us, with a mock generosity which only added to my father's infamy—who still maintained an accusation against one, whom the world believed to be his benefactor, not his deadly foe.

Re-enter LUDWIG, L. U. E.

LUDWIG. Your sledge is ready, sir.

KAT. Farewell, sir, thanks for your escort, and if my interest will serve to advance you in the army?

ERIC. Impossible; your Highness knows that by my father's degradation, I am held incapable of holding a commission. Beyond my present grade, I cannot rise.

KAT. I must remain then in your debt.

ERIC. Your Highness  *salutes and follows LUDWIG off, L. U. E.*)

OLGA. Mademoiselle  *(stands forward)*

KAT. Ah! are we alone?

OLGA. Yes.

KAT. (*throws off her cloak which is padded to give her the appearance of being humpbacked, and a ruff*) Are my shoulders a pair Olga?

OLGA. There never were such a pair! 

KAT. Now, to make my legs of a length  *(slips off a high heeled shoe which she has worn over a slipper.)* Ah! (*walks freely*) what a blessing this is. But take care of my misfortunes!

OLGA. Oh, Mademoiselle! if that young officer could have seen you thus.

KAT. Ah, I suffered martyrdom, under the creature's considerate tenderness for my deformities! I tried to make a jest of them; but the wretch would look sensitive and pitiful. I could have boxed him well for his commiseration!

OLGA. He related to me your meeting and your journey.

KAT. Ha!

OLGA. Another league or two, and his misery was a fact accomplished.

KAT. Ah! He would drive at such a headlong speed, in spite of my alarm!—but the true spirit of the jest you have not heard, nor does he suspect the despatches he bears to the frontier, contain the description of Katinka Nelidoff, and an order for her arrest, if she attempt to pass into Poland. Ha, ha, ha!

OLGA. Is it true, mademoiselle, that you really did raise your hand?

KAT. What, you have heard of my high treason! ha, ha, ha! Oh, it's quite historical! His majesty had for some time selected me for the subject of his Cossack jokes; but I never suspected the Polar Bear of impudence prepense, until he ventured to express his devotion by a hug—and ere I had recovered from my fright, I found that I had dealt the royal brute a slap in the face. It was instinct.

OLGA. What did he say?

KAT. What I can't repeat. I ran to the Empress for protection. To save me from the Czar's anger, I was arrested; my good aunt, the Princess Beresina, publicly demanded my condign disgrace and punishment; but privately procured me this disguise, aided me to escape, and is now concealed in her palace of St. Petersburg, while the Court suppose she is on her road to her estates at Polosk.

OLGA. And did you not fear—

KAT. Not I! it just occurred to me what a dashing feat 'twould be to carry the order for my own arrest, and—

OLGA. The person of the princess is unknown to every one here, except my father, who has grown so blind that you may deceive him. But should he demand your signature to papers or accounts—

KAT. My aunt foresaw the difficulty, and placing this ring upon my finger—

OLGA. The ring! the signet!—she has parted with that ring!

KAT. Oh, St. Nicholas, save us!—what is the matter with the ring?

OLGA. Have you not heard the secret which is attached to it?

KAT. A secret!

OLGA. The awful power with which its wearer is endowed.

KAT. No!—

OLGA. Hush! (*looks round*) 'Tis said, that an ancestor of yours, mademoiselle, having lost at play his princely inheritance, made a fearful contract with—

KAT. I know—(*points down*; OLGA *nods*) I don't believe it—but go on—the idea of the demon going about the world like an old Jew, buying up old souls—go on. What did his darkness give for my ancestor's reversion?

OLGA. That ring!

KAT. My ancestor had the best of it.

OLGA. On which was engraved the names of three cards in the pack.

KAT. Impossible ! I should have observed it. (*draws off the ring*)

OLGA. Look inside.

KAT. Ha ! here are some letters almost effaced. (*music*) What! —(*reads*)—The three!—the ten !—the Queen of Spades ! Oh !

OLGA. With these cards, the owner of that ring will surely win, provided he turn the jewel once round, which revolves within its setting.

KAT. (*frightened*) Olga!

OLGA. Try it; does it turn ?

KAT. (*turning the jewel in the ring*) Yes, yes, it turns! (*regarding each other, affrighted*) What a horrible privilege!—throw it into the fire.

OLGA. You forget, it is your signature.

KAT. My signature! (*a distant military music heard*) Ah! what is that ?

LUDWIG. (*without*) Olga! Olga!

OLGA. My brother Ludwig's voice.

IVAN. (*without*) Olga!

OLGA. Ivan !—quick, mademoiselle, your disguise.

KAT. Where are my misfortunes ? Gracious ! what wickedness there is in my family. (*she puts on her cloak, ruff, and shoes*)

Enter IVAN and LUDWIG, suddenly from L.

IVAN. The colonel Prince Carlovitch Moskau and the regiment of Imperial Chasseurs.

OLGA. The Princess Beresina—

KAT. Bid the Prince Carlovitch Moskau welcome to the Castle of Polosk. We will entertain his highness and his officers at dinner, if they will deign to accept our hospitality.

(*OLGA, IVAN, and LUDWIG bow—the PRINCESS makes a comic gesture towards OLGA, and then limps off, R. The music becomes louder—laughter without*)

Enter PRINCE CARLOVITCH and his OFFICERS, L. in flat.

PRINCE. So, gentlemen, let the men dismount and bivouac upon the avenue. Summon here the master of the mines.

OLGA. Here he is, my lord. (*pushes forward IVAN, R.*)

PRINCE. I escort a batch of state prisoners condemned to labour for the remainder of their lives in your subterranean dungeon.

OLGA. (R. C.) Poor wretches !

IVAN. (*aside to her*) I do not like his face, Olga. He reminds me of the knave of clubs.

PRINCE. At sundown I will myself visit the mines, and certify the presence of your other captives. Hold yourself in readiness to conduct me thither. (*murmurs without*) *Exit OLGA, R.*

Enter LUDWIG, L.

LUD. Ivan! Ivan! there is a sledge pursued by a pack of famished wolves coming down the mountain road—the horse flies like the wind! (*distant shouts—a crash—guns heard to fire—KOPEC'S voice heard outside*)

Enter two TROOPERS, helping in KOPEC from L., who is enveloped in furs to the eyes.

PRINCE. What the deuce! you have surely saved a bear instead of a biped.

KOPEC. No—no—(*unrolls himself*) your highness; thanks to the bullets of your men, I am alive. My horse, dead with fright, rolled over at the gate, just as the carbines of your men released me from a gigantic wolf who had selected me for dinner.

PRINCE. (C.) I cannot be mistaken—Kopec!

KOPEC. (L.) Your humble servant.

PRINCE. (*to OFFICERS*) Gentlemen—Monsieur Kopec,—the most obliging of bankers—the most conscientious of Jews, the most confiding of creditors—a man whose pocket is as open as his heart. (*the OFFICERS gather round and shake KOPEC by the hand*)

KOPEC. Gentlemen!

PRINCE. But what brings you to Polosk?

KOPEC. I am on my road to Carlsbad in Bohemia, where I have purchased the privilege of opening a faro table during the season.

PRINCE. The rage for gambling is at its height; and when 'tis known that the millionaire, Kopec, supplies the bank, all Europe will fly to woo the fickle goddess at your temple.—At what limit do you fix the stakes.

KOPEC. Ten thousand roubles.

IVAN. (R.) Ten thousand roubles!—and it may be gained on one card!

KOPEC. In a second, my dear.

PRINCE. Who addressed you, fellow?

KOPEC. Let him alone, Prince; it was a good impulse, and I like to encourage the beginners. There's no knowing—he might win a stake somewhere, and then come to me and lose it—there's no knowing: we should always cherish circumstances, that's what I say.

IVAN. Ten thousand roubles! (*communing with his thoughts*)

PRINCE. If I remember right, there is some strange story attached to this castle in which we stand. Was it not purchased by the late Prince Nelidoff with his winnings at a certain game?

KOPEC. Aye, faro. He was said to be in relation with the devil, who had given him three winning cards and a magic ring, by means of which he became possessed of the immense estates which his daughter the Princess Beresina now enjoys.

IVAN. Three winning cards—ah! if I knew them! Ten thousand roubles!

PRINCE. And do you believe this absurd tale, Kopec?

KOPEC. I do—and with some reason. Listen. I was a young man, just beginning usury—and very modest I was.

PRINCE. I remember—you lent on good security, at thirty per cent

KOPEC. I was a ruining myself fast. One night I attended a grand reception at the palace : the tables were, as usual, crowded with gamblers, especially that where the Empress Elizabeth sat—

PRINCE. She was a fearless gamester.

KOPEC. The table groaned with the weight of gold: I gazed until my breath came quick and I clutched my money in my pocket. A sum was wanting to make up a stake ; I threw down the amount—the Empress won—I lost.

IVAN. (*anxiously*, R.) Go on, sir—oh, go on !

KOPEC. I lost not only my money, but my temper; I betted madly—I was young. At the moment when I placed upon the table my very last stake, a lady who sat beside the Empress, raised her eyes and cast upon my quivering face a look of pity; I hesitated, she beckoned me to her side, and whispered in my ear—

IVAN. What?

KOPEC. The names of three cards upon which I might bet fearlessly, but which would serve my turn only once. I wagered boldly—

IVAN. And you won ?—

KOPEC. All I had lost previously, and more.

PRINCE. And this lady ?

KOPEC. Was the Princess Nelidoff.

PRINCE. Ha! this sounds strange indeed—and what three cards did she select ?

KOPEC. (*quietly*) I forget!—but one of them I remember was the Queen of Spades;—which you may observe quartered in chief in the blazon of the Nelidoffs. (*points to the arms over the chimney*)

PRINCE. The Queen of Spades !

IVAN. The Queen of Spades !

KOPEC. This diabolical secret is an heirloom in the family.

PRINCE. The Princess Beresina then possesses it.

KOPEC. They say she wears the magic ring as a signet. Its impression serves her as her signature.

Enter OLGA, R.

OLGA. The Princess Beresina, desires the honor of your noble company in her boudoir.

PRINCE. The Princess!

IVAN. The Queen of Spades!—

KOPEC. Is here?—

OLGA. She arrived this morning, unexpectedly.

KOPEC. Conduct me to her feet. (*to* PRINCE) Hush, not a word of this!—I follow you. KOPEC *follows out* OLGA, R

Enter ERIC, *from* L.

ERIC. The Prince Carlovitch Moskau.

PRINCE. How now ?

ERIC. (*handing a paper*) From St. Petersburg.

PRINCE. (*takes it*) Enough, wait without.

ERIC. No, Prince Moskau, my duty done, I have affairs of my own to despatch with your highness.

PRINCE. And who may you be ?

ERIC. I am Eric Klamberg.

PRINCE. A distinguished young soldier—

ERIC. The death of my father in exile and degradation remains unatoned by your family, and unavenged by mine.

PRINCE. Do I understand, that you, a serjeant of artillery, would challenge me, a colonel and your officer ?

ERIC. The frontier is not an hour's ride, across that barrier Count Eric Klamberg may defy the Prince Carlovitch Moskau.

PRINCE. A charming arrangement!—to which I see but one impediment. Your respected father's debt was paid by my relative, whose legatee I am. Now if you inherit your father's wrongs, you will not repudiate his other obligations: pay me therefore a million roubles, Monsieur Klamberg, and my sword is at your service.

ERIC. A million roubles !

PRINCE. 'Twere a fine convenient thing to wipe off such a debt with a lunge in carte or tierce.

ERIC. Are you then as cowardly a villain as your relative ?

PRINCE. (*laughing at him*) Creditors bear infamous characters, I know.

ERIC. Will nothing then incense you ? (*strikes him with his hat across the face, at the same time drawing his sword—the OFFICERS rise from the fire and attracted by the violence, rush between them*)
Music.

PRINCE. (*coldly*) Ho! without there ! a guard!

Enter a FILE OF CHASSEURS, L. C.

Arrest this man—guilty of striking his superior. (*ERIC is disarmed and made a prisoner*)

Enter KATINKA and KOPEC, R.

ALL. The Princess!

IVAN. Ha !—she—

KAT. What violence is this ?

PRINCE. Pardon it, Princess—'tis but a drunken soldier, who lifted his hand on his superior—a mere matter of discipline. (*to the OFFICERS*) Gentlemen, call a drum-head court martial, and let the prisoner's sentence be pronounced within the hour; and as we must reach Novgorod by midnight, let his execution be fixed for sundown.

KAT. His execution ?

Enter OLGA, R.

OLGA. The dinner of the Princess is served.

PRINCE. Permit me. (*taking her hand—aside as he salutes it*) Ha, the signet!

IVAN. (*in R. corner*) The ring !

PRINCE. (*to the GUARD*) Until the sentence be pronounced conduct the prisoner to the mines.

KOPEC. In the meantime her Highness's dinner waits.

KAT. (*aside*) His execution! By whom—by what earthly means may he be saved?

IVAN. (*vacantly gazing at the PRINCESS*) The Queen of Spades!
*She starts—gives her hand to the PRINCE, and as the SERVANTS
 prepare to light her out R., ERIC stands L. as a prisoner.*

END OF ACT I.

(SCENE II., ACT I., OR)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Interior of a Salt Mine. Galleries cut in the salt, are seen, one above another; they are connected by light timber bridges. A column of salt, R. C. in which a spiral staircase has been cut; open windows or openings allow the interior to be seen. A rope hangs in front of this column. A cell, R. 3 E.*

IVAN is seen descending the staircase, followed by ERIC.

IVAN. Here is your prison, sir, and there your cell.

ERIC. Does your rude discipline extend to me? a condemned criminal; I have but a few hours to live, may I not enjoy them unrestrained?

IVAN. Well, sir, you may take the air in this gallery, from which you will scarcely attempt to escape, it being the lowest in the mine and a thousand feet below the surface. (*OLGA is seen to descend the winding stair*) All I require, is, that when the Prince visits the state prisoners, he may find you in your cell there, number 10.

ERIC goes up and meets OLGA at the back. IVAN stands with his arms folded, gazing vacantly forward.

OLGA. (R.) Hist, sir! (*unheard by IVAN*)

ERIC. (R. C.) Ha!

OLGA. Fear not, I have been sent to aid you.

ERIC. To aid me?

OLGA. And provide for your escape.

ERIC. By whom? (*OLGA whispers*)

IVAN. (*ejaculating to himself*) The Queen of Spades?

ERIC. Her highness!

IVAN. And two other cards!

ERIC. What motive can she have to preserve me?

IVAN. (*to himself*) A ring!

OLGA. A woman's motive; go and guess it, while I corrupt the local authorities here. (*points to IVAN*) *Exit ERIC, R. (advancing)* Ivan!

IVAN. Olga—here!

OLGA. I come from our mistress. I told her she might rely upon you to help us.

IVAN. In what does she require my services ?

OLGA. Your prisoner must escape !

IVAN. Escape!—how?

OLGA. We don't know; but he must! our fortune depends upon it. You must find the means of aiding him, while she diverts the attention of the Prince.

IVAN. She is coming here then ?

OLGA. She has expressed the greatest curiosity to see the mines, and will accompany his Highness when he visits the state prisoners.

IVAN. Is she aware, that in conniving at this escape, I risk my own liberty—perhaps my life ?

OLGA. She will protect and repay you. Do not fear, Ivan, ask what you will, she will not refuse you.

IVAN. She loves this prisoner then ?

OLGA. More than she believes.

IVAN. And to save him, she would deny us nothing ?—I agree !

OLGA. Dear Ivan!

IVAN. On one condition!—I ask no other fee,—than the secret of which she is possessed, and the signet ring she wears.

OLGA. The ring!

IVAN. And the names of three cards.

OLGA. Hush !—as you live, dare not to breathe to her such a proposal! Ivan, you are mad !—you know not what you ask!—would you barter your soul with the fiend ?

IVAN. He never made me an offer—but——

OLGA. She will assure us a fortune; enough to make us happy for our lives.

IVAN. That is no longer enough—gold has lost its value in my eyes, but as a thing to win—a thing to lose.

OLGA. You know not how much she will do for us.

IVAN. Much is not enough for the wolfish spirit in me, that has no cry but more—more!

OLGA. You terrify me ! (*the PRINCE, KATINKA, and KOPEC, are seen descending the stairs*) Hush! they are here !—banish such thoughts from your mind, as you love me!—beware how you incense our mistress with such an insulting request.

IVAN. The Prince—where is my prisoner ?

Enter ERIC, R.

Ah, he is here!—to your cell, sir, quick!

Exit ERIC, into the cell, R. 3 E.

Enter the PRINCE, KOPEC, and KATINKA, from winding stairs, R. C.

PRINCE. A palace of diamonds !

KAT. 'Tis quite a subterranean world. I saw beneath us as we descended, a village with its church and streets, cut from the mineral, and by the light of a thousand torches sparkling like a fairy temple.

PRINCE. (*aside*) What motive brings her here? This curiosity is feigned!

KAT. (R. C.) You look somewhat pale, Monsieur Kopec.

KOPEC. (L. C.) Pale! I do not know whether her Highness has been accustomed to swing in a cradle with a thousand feet of danger below, but as we went down—down—down, I thought my last hour was come.

PRINCE. (C.) The direction was significant.

KAT. The descent is fearlessly made a score of times daily.

KOPEC. By poor devils not worth a rouble—what have they to fear? A man of my money is entitled to fear, more than fellows who have not a doit.

KAT. These cells are destined for the prisoners, I presume?

IVAN. (*advancing*, R.) Yes, madam!

KAT. And there is no access to this place but by yonder winding stair?

IVAN. By the basket also, which descends hither when the signal is given.

PRINCE. (*apart*) Ha, so inquisitive!

KAT. And by what means do you convey the signal?

IVAN. By yonder rope, it communicates with a bell at the mouth of the mine, on hearing which they let down the basket, at a second signal they know it is charged, and commence to raise it.

KAT. But if a prisoner knew this, would he not give the signal?

KOPEC. I certainly should, if I had the chance.

IVAN. He must be provided with a pass signed by his Highness; besides, it requires twenty minutes to make the ascent, ere that time his escape would be discovered, and then a third signal from yonder rope would bring the basket down again.

KOPEC. A very capital system. (*aside*) I wish I was up again. (*goes up*)

KAT. (*to IVAN*) Conduct Monsieur Kopec round the mine!

KOPEC. I will not go any further down, it seems like intruding upon the infernal regions. (*goes up*)

KAT. (*aside to OLGA*) Have you succeeded?

OLGA. He consents—but this pass!

KAT. Hush, he observes us! (*OLGA goes up*)

IVAN. (*apart, regarding KATINKA*) There on her finger is the ring—how it gleams!

PRINCE. Announce my visit to the guard!

An OFFICER who has descended the stairs advances with a paper which he hands to the PRINCE.

OFFICER. The sentence of Eric Klamburg!

KAT. (*halfaloud and anxiously*) The sentence!

PRINCE. Ha! (*apart*) So—so—she has betrayed herself! (*aloud*) The execution will take place here an hour before we march! (*apart*) She listens—ah!

Gives directions in gesture; IVAN follows KOPEC who goes out cautiously, R., OLGA follows them; exit OFFICER by stairs.

KAT. Your Highness, did I hear aright? sentence—an execution—here, this evening?

PRINCE. You are agitated Princess.

KAT. No; a—a woman's natural—pity.

PRINCE. 'Tis a matter quite beneath your consideration. Permit me to sign this paper.

KAT. No, Prince; you will not—you cannot. I know the crime of which this young man is guilty—and you know the provocation.

PRINCE. Does your Highness advise his cause?

KAT. No; I plead for your honor, Colonel. The affair of the late Count Klamburg, and his malversation of the state revenues has been reviewed; circumstances have come to the knowledge of the Czar, which tend to exculpate him, and criminate your uncle.

PRINCE. Indeed!

KAT. You know I am in the confidence of the Empress, and I heard his Majesty enquire, if amongst the documents of the late Prince Moskau, no trace of the transaction had been found. Now, I ask you, how will it appear when 'tis known that you resented the natural and honorable impetuosity of this boy, with the deadly rigour of your military law; your comrades may call it discipline, Colonel, but society, my dear Prince, will call it a judicial assassination. (ERIC stands in the doorway of his cell, unobserved by them)

PRINCE. Charming! argued, Princess!—animation becomes you!

KAT. Have you found nothing, no document which justifies this wronged family? if so, you would not withhold it—you would not blot your name.

PRINCE. Nay; it seems to me that the publication would rather blemish my nobility.

KAT. You have found it, then! (ERIC listens eagerly)

PRINCE. Gently, Princess, gently! your love for this young gentleman carries you away.

KAT. Your Highness!

PRINCE. Nay; we magnates are allowed these caprices. Oh! I presume not to insinuate that he is or ever will be cognizant of the interest you take in his welfare.

KAT. I will not discuss that subject with you—it matters not.

PRINCE. Pardon me, it matters much. How if I regarded him as a favoured rival.

KAT. A rival! I do not understand you.

PRINCE. No? I will explain then. His most implacable foe, madam, is yourself; you cannot but have observed and comprehended the sentiments my respect for your Highness forbade me to express more openly than my tacit admiration would convey. Do I make myself clear, Princess?

KAT. So clear, Prince, that I can see through them and you. Spare me the phrase: you mean that you are in love with me—I understand you perfectly! Your affairs are as crooked as my back, and your credit limps; you offer your hand to my estates, and your heart to my banker's account.

PRINCE. You have the most charming wit—positively! with such a companion through life—

KAT. I see no impediment, Prince.

ERIC. (*aside*) She accepts !

PRINCE. (*calmly*) You transport me.

KAT. But one.

PRINCE. Ah!

KAT. The husband of Princess Beresina must bear a name without fault or reproach

PRINCE. What do you require ?

KAT. Destroy that sentence,—release your prisoner, Ericenberg,—produce the papers which will clear his father's fame, and restore the rank and title he has forfeited.

PRINCE. And then ?

KAT. And then, come to me for your reward.

PRINCE. (*taking her hand*) Princess!

KAT. You consent ?

PRINCE. (*kisses her hand*) I refuse ! You have the most charming manner of deceiving a man, I ever beheld.

KAT. You suppose—

PRINCE. That you have the most bewitching eyes, that tell me most articulately that they will get the better of me—if they can.

KAT. You would have a decided answer to your offer. Give me until this evening to reply.

PRINCE. (*apart*) What new scheme does she meditate ?

Enter KOPEC, R., followed by IVAN.

KOPEC. Oh, madam ! Oh, colonel ! I have found you ; thank you for this charming excursion ; beautiful ! admirable ! I want to return to the world.

KAT. What has alarmed you ?

KOPEC. Nothing ; but I cannot breathe here ; and I hear that there happens, sometimes, an explosion of gas, some beautiful natural phenomenon, by which everyone in the way is blown to a thousand atoms !

KAT. Oh, very frequently.

KOPEC. Yes ; I think I should like to go.

PRINCE. (*aside*) Ah, I see her object ! if this sentence be not carried out at the time specified therein, it will be void. So, so ; she will watch me closely : ah ! could I find a means to dispatch it to my aid-de-camp without her knowledge.

KOPEC. My dear Prince, be kind enough to give me a pass ; for it appears without your signature I cannot get up again.

PRINCE. True ; my troopers are on guard at the mouth of the mine,—stay, I will write you an order (*aside*) on the back of the sentence, which I also sign,—thus,—so ! (*writes*) and here is the pass, Monsieur Kopec ; (*gives him a paper*) give that paper to the aid-de-camp on duty. (*KOPEC takes the paper and runs up to the stairs*) Pardon me, madam, my duty calls me from you for a moment.

KAT. Stay, Prince ; one word ;—will you pledge your honor that you will not sign the sentence until I answer your proposal ?

PRINCE. I may safely do so, madam.

Bows and exits at back, L. C., followed by IVAN, whom he beckons off.

Enter OLGA, R.

KAT. Hush! where is Monsieur Kopec? Gone?

OLGA. I saw him ascend the pillar yonder.

KAT. After him, quick! compel him to return; away! (OLGA rapidly ascends the stairs; ERIC advances, R.) Ah! you are here, sir?

ERIC. Yonder is my cell.

KAT. There! then you—you heard—?

ERIC. All!

KAT. (*aside*) And I denied not that I loved him.

ERIC. My gratitude—

KAT. (*aside*) What a long word!

ERIC. That you should entertain such a proposal; and for the sake of my worthless life.

KAT. It was my whim; I said to myself, "I'll save that young man!" I am of an obstinate disposition, and I never deny myself anything.

ERIC. You are deceived, madam; this man is unrelenting and implacable—he is resolved—

OLGA is seen drawing after her KOPEC, and descending the stairs.

KAT. And so am I!—I have judged your crime, and my sentence is that you shall live.

OLGA. (*advancing*) Here he is, madam!

KOPEC. What is the matter?

KAT. Monsieur Kopec! they tell me that you love to recount the circumstance of an obligation conferred on you, many years ago, by the Princess Nelidoff—

KOPEC. Your august mother; she saved me from ruin—three cards—I shall never forget it!

KAT. That is not to the purpose; will you requite it?

KOPEC. With half my fortune; what sum do you require?

KAT. Not a rouble! that paper—that pass, signed just now by his Highness.

KOPEC. My pass!—what for?

KAT. I will not deceive you: 'tis to aid this prisoner to escape!

KOPEC. Ah! the young desperado!

KAT. You run no risk, being an Austrian they cannot punish you for connivance.

KOPEC. But will they let me up?

KAT. I will assure you that.

KOPEC. There it is!

KAT. (*snatching it*) I trust there is no description by which you may be detected—no. (*reads*) "Permit the bearer to pass free and unmolested. —Moskau." But what is here? (*opens the paper*) Ah! the sentence!—and signed!—the traitor! he had deceived me. Hold! cannot we tear off that signature without defacing the pass? Yes! (*tears the paper*) So. (*gives ERIC the portion on which the pass is written*)

OLGA. The signal!—quick!

Enter IVAN, from the back.

Ha ! Ivan, where is the Prince ? (OLGA runs to the rope and pulls it a distant bell is heard)

IVAN. In the gallery above.

KAT. Conduct this young man to the basket, he is provided with a pass signed by the Prince.

IVAN. Impossible ! I have just left his Highness, and—

OLGA. Hold your tongue, and do as you are bid.

KAT. Does he consent ?

OLGA. Yes, madam !

IVAN. Stay ! on one condition.

KAT. Granted ! (*the basket is seen to descend*) How shall we know when he has reached the mouth of the mine ?

IVAN. You will hear the winding of a horn—it is a signal.

ERIC. (*seizing KATINKA'S hand*) How can I shew my gratitude ?

KAT. By saving your life ; begone!—farewell !

KOPEC. But where am I to go ? If the Prince sees me—

KAT. True—conceal yourself ! (*looks round*) Ah, in here ! (*points to ERIC'S cell, R.*)

KOPEC. (*reads*) " Number Ten !" I shall feel like a convict !

OLGA. (*at the back, looking off*) He is ready, madam. (*she pulls the rope—a distant bell is heard; the basket, in which ERIC is standing, is seen to ascend and disappear*)

OLGA. He is gone !

Ascends the stairs as KOPEC disappears into the cell; IVAN advances from back; KATINKA anxiously watching the basket.

IVAN. We are alone—now for it ! (*takes a draught at the stone bottle of spirits he wears*) Courage !

KAT. Each moment seems an age.

IVAN. I would—I—I would ask—(*aside*) What tremor seizes on my heart, she is in my power !

KAT. Should they perceive him from the upper galleries.

IVAN. (*drinking*) Take courage from this, Ivan, courage ! (*drinks*) Now, now, now ! it must be if I die for it ! (*aloud*) Hear me.

KAT. (C.) Ah ! (*turns*)

IVAN. We are alone—alone, and I come to demand my recompense.

KAT. (*retreating*) You forget, man, to whom you speak !

IVAN. I know—I know my fate is in your hands, for I am your slave, you can make me die beneath the horrid knout for this; but my life is too hateful to me to care how I am rid of it.

KAT. (*aside*) He is mad ! how his eyes glare on me !

IVAN. You are possessed of a secret spell—three cards—a ring. I know all—hark ! This secret must be mine—mine, at any price !

KAT. That secret, no—no—never—deliver up—enchain a human soul in such a vice—be an accomplice of the demon who has twice ruined the fortunes of my race—never !

IVAN. (L. C.) Give it me ! (*draws a knife*) or—

KAT. Ah, Ivan, Ivan ! would you harm me ?

IVAN. (*casting away the knife*) No—no, forgive me ! (*kneels*) But

the secret. (*starts up*) will have it! Ah, your lover, my prisoner, he has yet escaped! I have but to give the signal! (*runs to the rope*)

KAT. No, no! I implore—(*wringing her hands*) What would you have me do?

IVAN. The secret!

KAT. I will—I—I will confess it!

IVAN. Ah! (*runs forward*)

KAT. Do you know that to use this terrible power is to incur perdition?

IVAN. (*breathlessly*) You do possess it then?

The PRINCE descends the staircase and stops listening at the open window, at back, R. C.

KAT. (*in a faint voice*) Listen! the owner of this ring is sure to win, if, after turning the jewel once round in its setting, he wagers on these cards: the three—

IVAN. The Three.

PRINCE. (*at back*) The Three.

KAT. The Ten—

IVAN. The Ten.

PRINCE. (*at back*) The Ten.

KAT. And the Queen of Spades.

IVAN. And the Queen of Spades.

PRINCE. (*at back*) And the Queen of Spades.

IVAN. I shall not forget.

PRINCE. Nor I.

IVAN. And now for the talisman.

KAT. There. (*gives him the ring*)

IVAN. Mine! Mine! Ha, ha, ha!

Enter the PRINCE and a FILE OF TROOPERS with their guns, and OLGA from R.

KAT. Ah, they come—his absence will be discovered! and the signal—the signal comes not.

PRINCE. Halt! (*turning*) Ah, Princess!

KAT. (*with a feigned air*) Ah, Colonel, you deceived me after all—you pledged your honor not to sign the sentence.

PRINCE. I could do so—I had signed it at that time. (*two TROOPERS enter the cell, R.*)

KAT. And you are fixed in its execution?

PRINCE. As immutably as you are in the rejection of my offer—eh?

KAT. Precisely.

PRINCE. Bring forth the prisoner.

Re-enter the TROOPERS with KOPEC, R.

Kopec!

KAT. (R. C.) The signal—I hear it not.

KOPEC. (R.) At your service, Prince.

PRINCE. (L. C.) Where is the prisoner? dost hear, dolt? (to

IVAN) your prisoner, slave! speak ! (OLGA picks up IVAN'S knife, and runs up the staircase)

KOPEC. The young man has gone up half an hour ago, in the basket.

PRINCE. Ah! but the signal horn has not been heard; I may bring down the quarry yet. (*runs to the signal rope. OLGA is seen to stretch her arm from the window above and cut the rope; as he pulls it, it falls in his hand*) Ha! treachery! secure that slave.

IVAN. Me ! (*the TROOPERS seize IVAN*)

PRINCE. Your prisoner, dog! (*a distant horn is heard*)

KAT. He is saved! (*falls on her knees. R. C. KOPEC, R. PRINCE C. IVAN seized by the GUARDS, L. Tableau.*)

END OF ACT OR SCENE II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Carlsbad in Bohemia. A Pavilion in the Public Gardens, the interior of which is concealed by curtains.*

KOPEC is discovered directing SERVANTS.

KOPEC. Place the candelabra in the terrace of flowers. What an expense! When I solicited the privilege of opening a faro bank at Carlsbad, here, I never calculated the cost. Bless me ! Those curtains now, they don't look like a thousand roubles, but there's every fraction of it in them: then the supper—the champagne—the music—all to excite, to animate my visitors to risk their gold; and they do risk it: I have nearly doubled my capital in a month—but the expense is fearful! Ah! faro is a pretty game—a beautiful game!

Enter OLGA, R.

OLGA. Ah, Monsieur Kopec!

KOPEC. The Princess's waiting maid. Is her Highness at Carlsbad ?

OLGA. I precede her.

KOPEC. What a woman she is!—what courage ! I shall never forget the adventure in the salt mines, six weeks ago—but do you know the result?

OLGA. The Prince instantly forwarded the particulars to St. Petersburg; whereon the Czar ordered her arrest.

KOPEC. From which she has escaped, of course ? What a woman for escapes ! And what became of your protégée, the young man in the basket ?

OLGA. Eric—he escaped into Austria.

Enter IVAN, L. 2 E., in the dress of a servant.

OLGA. Ivan!

IVAN. Olga!

KOPEC. Ah! I forgot to tell you I had taken into my service this refugee. I am sorry I cannot make a croupier of him; but he wants apathy—the fellow will take an interest in the game; he is not thoroughly broken in to ruin. See to the refreshments, Ivan—I must provide the bank. *Exit, R. U. E.*

OLGA. My dear Ivan, how came you here? I thought you were in Siberia at least.

IVAN. When the guard seized me, I was conveyed to a cell and searched, for they said I had been bribed—bribed by the Princess; they found her ring upon my hand, it proved my guilt, and they tore it from me.

OLGA. But how did you escape?

IVAN. I did not escape. One night, they entered my dungeon, blindfolded me, and carried me to the mouth of the mine; I was placed in a sledge and driven for an hour, then I was thrust out, while a voice whispered in my ear—"Begone, and as you value your life, never set your foot on Russian ground." I plucked off the bandage—I was on the high-road beyond the frontier; at my feet was a purse containing 500 roubles.

OLGA. Where is it?

IVAN. Gone!

OLGA. Spent?

IVAN. Lost! I walked on until I arrived here at Carlsbad. I soon found my way to these gardens. You see that pavilion—do you know its object?

OLGA. No.

IVAN. 'Tis filled each night with nobles, ladies, all the rich and great of Europe. The perfume of flowers loads the air with an intoxicating fragrance—music captivates the senses—wine flows from fountains of crystal ice to give courage to those who are faint of impulse. But in the midst there is a table, Olga, covered with a green cloth, over which piles of gold and notes perpetually roll and pass; a pack of cards are laid out there; you bet on which you like, up to ten thousand roubles; then the banker takes another pack, he deals out, and in a voice that makes your soul quiver, he calls the winning and the losing cards—the Ten—the Queen of Spades!

OLGA. You wagered on them?

IVAN. Ay—all—all!

OLGA. They won?

IVAN. No, they lost, don't I tell you! I had lost my ring! My talisman had been torn from me, but still those fatal numbers pursued me; I lost all! and finding myself unable to make my fortune at play, I begged to be retained as a servant.

OLGA. To gain a livelihood?

IVAN. Yes, and to see them play. Oh, that is still my happiness, I can be there every night; I can watch the game—follow the turns of fortune. I gloat upon that feast of gold with extacy, with terrible pleasure, I see those who win!

OLGA. And those who lose!

IVAN. (*gazing on vacancy*) I don't see them.

OLGA. My poor Ivan, your brain is turned.

IVAN. To-night being the last day of the carnival, there will be a masked ball in the pavilion, the wealth of an empire will pass from hand to hand. (*clutches his hands*)

OLGA. (*apart*) His reason is gone, he has but one thought, one hope, one feeling. (*aloud*) Come, Ivan, and help me to prepare for the reception of the Princess.

IVAN. She is coming here? I dare not face her.

OLGA. She will be here at six—what is the hour now?

IVAN. Ten, Ten o' Spades! No, I mean ten o'clock.

OLGA. Hush!

Enter the PRINCE and KOPEC, R. 2 E.

IVAN. Ah, 'tis he!

OLGA. The Prince!

PRINCE. (R. C.) But what you tell me is impossible, Kopec; the Princess Beresina at Carlsbad!

KOPEC. (R.) Here is her waiting maid, who acts as courier to her Highness. By St. Nicholas, this Princess Beresina must be a sorceress.

IVAN. (L. *apart*) He has not found that out.

PRINCE. When she outwitted me at Polosk, six weeks ago, I despatched a courier with the intelligence of her conduct to St. Petersburg, the fellow accomplished the distance in seventy hours, but on presenting my letter to the Czar, what was his terror, when he beheld seated behind the Empress, the Princess Beresina in person.

OLGA. Yes; her Highness accomplished the journey in seventy minutes on a broomstick.

PRINCE. Yesterday I had news from the Capital, she was said to be in disgrace.

OLGA. I left her at Pilsen six hours ago, she will be here to-night.

PRINCE. The Commandant of that town has orders to arrest her.

Enter an OFFICER, R. 2 E., who presents a paper to PRINCE.

OFFICER. From Pilsen.

Exit, R. 2 E.

PRINCE. Ha! (*reads*) She is arrested.

IVAN. The Queen of Spades in prison—ha, ha! She will invoke the four knaves and the deuce, mount her stick, and slide through the keyhole, followed by all the court cards in procession.

PRINCE. So the Princess Beresina is caught and caged safely at last: the Governor of Pilsen here assures me of her safe custody.

Enter SERVANT, R. 2 E.

SERVANT. The Princess Beresina.

Enter KATINKA, R. 2 E.

ALL. The Princess!

IVAN. The devil! I said so.

Runs

off, L.

KAT. Ah, Colonel! this is an unexpected pleasure.

PRINCE. It is, indeed, madam. You came from Pilsen?

KAT. (C.) Direct.

KOPEC. (*aside*) I hope she does not mean to play at faro—she would ruin me.

PRINCE. Did your Highness find no obstacle at Pilsen?

KAT. Oh, yes; they put me in prison, the fools!—locked me up.

KOPEC. And what did your Highness do?

KAT. Do? (*waves her stick*) Commanded that the doors should be opened, and I walked out.

PRINCE. The Commandant apologized, of course?

KAT. Poor man, he was half dead with fright, but I was in haste, and cut him short, for I had to meet here a friend of yours, Colonel, Cornet Eric Klamberg.

PRINCE. Here!—in Carlsbad!—impossible! To my knowledge he is in the Austrian service, and quartered in Lombardy.

Enter ERIC behind, R. U. E. ; she sees him.

KAT. Nay; he is wherever I wish him to be—as thus: (*strikes her stick on the ground*) Eric Klamberg!

ERIC. (*advancing R.*) Here, madam.

ALL. Eric! (*a pause of astonishment--OLGA laughs apart; KOPEC examines the ground, and then looks up in the air*)

KAT. You look surprised, Prince!

PRINCE. (*apart*) Is this witchcraft or design?—that shall be proved. (*aloud*) Nay, Princess, I never contested your charms, or doubted your spells. Fair enchantress, I take my leave. (*crossing, bows*)

KAT. Olga, prepare my toilette for this masked ball.

OLGA. Yes, madame.

Exit R.

KOPEC. Does your Highness mean to play at faro?

KAT. Not I.

KOPEC. Accept my grateful thanks!

Exit KOPEC and the PRINCE, L. 2 E.

KAT. (*turning sharply upon ERIC*) Now, sir.

ERIC. (R.) I received your letter, madam, and, within the hour, I started from Lombardy.

KAT. (C.) You are exact, sir—to the very hour of rendezvous—ahem!—to business.

ERIC. Madame—

KAT. I saved your life: that was nothing; but it gives me an interest in your welfare. What prospects have you? what hopes?

ERIC. An honourable career and an early death.

KAT. Tut! an early fiddlestick! What say you to a rich marriage and a young wife?

ERIC. A young wife?

KAT. I have a niece, Katinka Nelidoff by name: she is young—as for her looks—she takes after me.

ERIC. Your Highness forgets: dishonored in my family—proclaimed a felon by law in my own person,—how could I dream of an alliance with the noblest house in Russia?

KAT. That is her affair.

ERIC. Pardon me: I must refuse.

KAT. (*apart*) He refuses me !

ERIC. There is an obstacle.

KAT. Ah, an obstacle ! you mean a woman ! you love another.

ERIC. I do.

KAT. You do! you do! who? what is she?

ERIC. I dare not name her.

KAT. Ah! look me in the face—look Eric—now repeat those words—speak! (*she gazes on him—he is silent, apart*) As I live, the fellow loves the Princess Beresina! hunchback, limp, and all.

ERIC. I see you have divined my secret.

KAT. (*apart*) I have caught a lover for my old aunt.

ERIC. Be not offended with its avowal then.

KAT. No, no.

ERIC. I love you.

KAT. You don't! you cannot! you shall not! I am ugly—deformed—everything that is horrid ! and—I insist, sir, on your doing nothing so absurd.

ERIC. Your image has pursued me like a genial spirit.

KAT. Did my genial image limp thus? (*limps across to R.*)

ERIC. Oh, madame! you mock me.

KAT. No. Were I divested of this burthen, which nature has placed on my back, confess it, you would prefer me?

ERIC. No, no!

KAT. I shall not feel offended—quite the contrary. If now, by the diabolical power they ascribe to me, I could exchange forms with—with—ah, with my niece, Katinka Nelidoff,—ha?

ERIC. No!

KAT. You would like me the better.

ERIC. No!

KAT. You would, I tell you.

ERIC. I love the Princess Beresina.

KAT. (*apart*) Ah, here's a situation! he's in love with my old aunt; he has set his heart upon a hump, he will have a hump! Oh, what can I do? stay—(*aloud*)—Would you give me a proof of your sincerity, if I asked it?

ERIC. A proof?

KAT. A very simple one—and somewhat vulgar.

ERIC. Name it.

KAT. Marry me!

ERIC. Ah! (*seizes her hand*) A proof—of my—sincerity? I am a beggar and an outcast—shall I bind your lot to a life like mine, dishonored and disgraced? You desire a proof of my love, madame—I refuse your hand.

KAT. (*apart*) Oh, I can bear this no longer! I may as well tell him at once; I cannot carry this disguise through life: if he marries me, he *must* find it out, some time or other: but when he knows all, he may transfer his affections to my old aunt—men are so strange ! when he knows that I am afflicted with an equality of shoulders and a *pair* of legs—(*aloud*) Eric, I have a—a confession to make to you.

ERIC—To me?

KAT. A calamity. Prepare yourself for the worst.

ERIC. A calamity?

KAT. I am an impostor. Nature has not been so bountiful to me as my figure would make you believe.

ERIC. Princess!

KAT. I have deceived you,—I have deceived everybody. I am no other than—ah!

Enter the PRINCE, L. 2 E.

PRINCE. The Archduke of Bohemia (C.) desires the honor of your highness's presence at the palace.

KAT. The Archduke! (*apart*) He knows my aunt: I shall be detected.

PRINCE. (*apart to her*) I know the object of this summons. I would impart it to you privately. Monsieur Klamberg, her highness gives you leave.

ERIC. (*goes L.*) If you will accompany me, I have to conclude a conversation abruptly terminated by your highness some six weeks ago.

PRINCE. After the lady's service, sir, I am at yours. (*ERIC bows and exits, L. 2 E.*) So, Princess; the Archduke, most anxious to propitiate Russia, and having heard of your evasion, has recommended you to my especial care. You have the reputation of being an enchantress; if so, you have now an excellent opportunity to display your powers—you are my prisoner!

KAT. Indeed, Prince! We have changed characters then; when last we spoke you proclaimed yourself *my* captive.

PRINCE. I have an alliance to propose.

KAT. Offensive—it must be, Prince; what do you propose?

PRINCE. In searching amongst my late uncle's documents, I found a paper—

KAT. (*eagerly*) The vouchers! which will exculpate Eric's father.

PRINCE. And reverse the attainder which deprives the young Count Klamberg of his rank and fortune.

KAT. Ah, Prince, this is just, generous—you will restore them to him?

PRINCE. No!

KAT. To me?

PRINCE. You must excuse me.

KAT. To whom then?

PRINCE. To the *Princess* Moskau—*my wife*; will you undertake the trust? (*offers the papers*)

KAT. Your wife!

PRINCE. There is a contract which I have had the precaution to prepare. (*hands it to her*) Favour me, by perusing it. (*the PRINCESS takes it and reads—PRINCE aside*) I have discovered the secret of her liberation from Pilsen; a courier arrived from St. Petersburg with news of the sudden death of the Czar—the Empress Catherine has ascended the throne. The Princess Beresina will be all powerful. (*looking at KATINKA*) She little suspects that I am in her power.

KAT. (*who has read the paper*) A contract of marriage between the Prince Carlovitch Moskau and the Princess Beresina Nelidoff.

PRINCE. Something of that sort.

KAT. And you imagine that I will sign this—never! (*about to tear it*)

PRINCE. As you please. (*about to tear his paper*)

KAT. Hold! what would you do?

PRINCE. Consign young Klamberg to eternal infamy.

KAT. (*hesitating*) And if I—if I sign this paper?

PRINCE. I will exchange your signature for this. Ah, Princess, you played upon me once; you cannot hope to get the better of me on a second occasion.

KAT. (*smiling*) I admit it, and surrender. (*goes to table, L., and signs the contract*)

PRINCE. (R.) She consents!

KAT. (L.) There, Prince. (*offers the paper*) Stay! (*withholds it*) I have heard that matrimony should always commence with mutual confidence.

PRINCE. Ah, true. (*they exchange papers at the same time—reads*) "Beresina, Princess Nelidoff."

KAT. You are satisfied?

PRINCE. Quite! The Archduke awaits you, Princess; permit me. *Hands her over to L. 2 E.—she curtsies and limps off.*

Cunningly combined and finely executed; I am reinstated—ha, ha! The ball has commenced in the Pavilion. I hope my friend Kopec is duly provided, for I intend to break his bank. The three—the ten—the Queen of Spades—ha! ha!—these are the three cards which he refused to tell us; how will he look when he hears me pronounce the fatal trio, and recognizes this ring upon my hand?

Enter ERIC, L. 2 E. down L.

Ah, my ex-prisoner! You come to require satisfaction, I presume?

ERIC. Revenge!

PRINCE. Most happy to see you, as I doubt not you are provided with the means of cancelling the obligation still subsisting.

ERIC. From the beneficence of some unknown hand I have lately received certain sums which I have reserved for the purchase of this bitter debt—here are two hundred thousand roubles.

PRINCE. Retain it, I beg, and when from this unknown benefactor you make up the total my sword is at your service. Pray excuse me, I have now more urgent affairs to settle, being on the point of marriage.

ERIC. Marriage?

PRINCE. The Princess Beresina has been charitable enough to bestow her hand on my unworthy self.

ERIC. The Princess? Impossible!

PRINCE. You recognize her hand. (*shows him the contract*)

ERIC. It is indeed her signature!

PRINCE. And here, this ring!

ERIC. The same I saw upon her hand.

PRINCE. It is her pledge to me!

The music here increases and the curtains enclosing the pavilion are raised, discovering a superbly decorated room; along table covered with a green cloth occupies the centre; MASKERS, and DANCERS, DOMINOES, and LADIES in court dresses. The table is surrounded with LADIES and NOBLES who are gambling; the BANKER and two CROUPIERS making the game; confused sounds of mirth, conversation, and the call of the BANKER as he deals.

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen. Ladies, make your game!

1ST NOBLE. A thousand roubles.

1ST LADY. Five hundred on the king of hearts.

2ND. NOBLE Two thousand on the ace of diamonds.

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen.

Enter IVAN, R. 2 E.

IVAN. Gold, gold, gold! Ah! there is my world: see how they wait with glazed eyes—suspended breath! Oh, had I a stake—had I—*(feels in his pockets)* no, not a rouble.

BANKER. The game's made, gentlemen.

Enter KOPEC, from back.

KOPEC. The bank wins—the luck is all my way: this night will be my fortune.

BANKER. Ha! *(dealing)* The four of diamonds wins.

NOBLES & LADIES. 'Tis mine!—I knew it!—here!

IVAN. I knew 'twould win — I meant to have backed the card—misery, misery!

BANKER. The seven of hearts loses.

KOPEC. Ha, ha!

NOBLES & LADIES. Fatality! What luck!

KOPEC. (R. C.) Come, Prince, will you not try your luck?

PRINCE. (R.) Fear not—I only wait till the bank is worth the breaking. *(crossing, L. C.)*

KOPEC. Ah, ha! he plays a beautiful game!—a beautiful game!

PRINCE. *(throwing his note book on the table)* Your limit is, I think, ten thousand roubles? I place that amount on each of the three cards I now select.

KOPEC. (R.) What a stake! *(general movement)*

IVAN. (L.) Thirty thousand roubles!

PRINCE. The three, the ten, the Queen of Spades.

KOPEC. Ah!

IVAN. Ah! my three cards!

KOPEC. The magic cards, he knows them; I am ruined!

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen! Ladies, make your game!

KOPEC. Stop, stop! let me in there! *(runs up and takes the place of the BANKER)*

Enter SERVANT, with tray of ices.

IVAN. The three, the ten, the Queen of Spades! How came he by these cards?—he knows my secret. *(hands the PRINCE a salver of ices and wine, as he takes a glass, IVAN recognizes the ring on*

his finger—he drops the salver) Ah ! my ring—he has my ring!
He will win! win my money—mine!

BANKER. Make your game ! (NOBLES *bet*)

KOPEC. The game's made.

IVAN. I am robbed—robbed—

ALL. Silence!

KOPEC. (*deals*) The nine of clubs wins.

WINNERS. Here—here—to us. (*the croupier pays*)

KOPEC. (*dealing*) The—the—the—ace of hearts loses. Rake it up, ha ! rake it up.

PLAYERS. (*at back*) Perdition !

KOPEC. The—four of clubs wins.

WINNERS. Pay here—here. (*croupier pays*)

KOPEC. The knave of diamonds loses. Ah, the three of spades !

PRINCE & OMNES. Wins ! (KOPEC *sits down and wipes his forehead*)

IVAN. I know it. (*crosses to L.*) My ring—my ring !

PRINCE. (L., *to IVAN*) Hush, fool! there. (*gives IVAN a handful of gold*)

IVAN. Ah, gold ! thanks—ha ! I can play! I can play !

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen!

ERIC. Hold ! Since by no other means I can purchase the right to brand you a coward and a villain, here! I will try my fortune! (*throws down his pocket book*) Two hundred thousand roubles.

KOPEC. It is beyond the limit.

PRINCE. I answer to it—it rests between myself and the Count Klamberg. I back the ten and the Queen of Spades to win.

IVAN. And so do I.

ERIC. And I bet that they will lose. (*casts down his stake*)

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen !

IVAN. The game is made—and so am I.

KOPEC. (*dealing*) The ace of diamonds wins—the ten of spades loses.

IVAN. Loses!

PRINCE. Perdition! (*throws his stake to ERIC*)

KOPEC. Ah, ha, ha ! (*takes up money*)

IVAN. (*to PRINCE*) You never turned the ring. (*stamping in despair*)

PRINCE. Ah, true ! But thus ! (*turns the stone in the ring*) So Here be silent! (*gives IVAN a handful of notes*)

Enter OLGA, R.

OLGA. (R.) Count Eric !

ERIC. (*crosses to L. C.*) Once more fortune ! Oh, once more!

IVAN. (*about to stake*) Now, now, upon the Queen of Spades !

OLGA. Hold ! (*seizes his arm*) Ivan, hear me—as you love me, resist the deceiver that possesses you. Ivan, dear Ivan, once conquered and thrust forth, he will return no more. (*leading him to corner, L.*)

IVAN. (*irresolute*) Olga, Olga! No.

BANKER. Make your game, gentlemen.

IVAN. I must—I must.

OLGA. Choose then, between your curse and my love,—choose!

IVAN. But once; this shall be the last.

OLGA. No: (*clings to him*) For my sake, for mine. Give me the notes,—will you refuse me? (*she takes them from him*)

BANKER. The game's made.

IVAN. Ah! I am ruined!

KOPEC. (*deals*) The Queen of Spades loses.

IVAN. Ah!

PRINCE. (*gazing on the ring*) Loses, paltering lying fiend!

ERIC. Now, Prince Moskau, (*seizes the notes*) there lies your debt, take it—you are paid. (*flings them at his feet*) Are you prepared? (*draws his sword*)

PRINCE. (R.) Ay, by the fiend! (*draws his sword*)

A masked female figure dressed as the Queen of Spades appears from the back—it is KATINKA.

KAT. (C.) Hold!

ALL. The Queen of Spades! (*they recoil as she advances*)

KAT. Ay, the Queen of Spades. (*offers her hand to the PRINCE*)

PRINCE. What would you with me?

KAT. (*snatches her ring from him*) My ring.

PRINCE. The Princess Beresina!

ERIC. (L. C.) Ha!

KAT. How can that be? Nay, observe, do my shoulders tally, do I limp?

PRINCE. No—it cannot be. Who are you, then?

KAT. The Queen of Spades, who by her magic power, adopted the form of the Princess Beresina, to requite your treachery, and to restore to Eric Klamberg these papers, justifying his injured and unjustly degraded family. (*gives the paper to ERIC*)

PRINCE. But this promise of marriage?

KAT. What promise?

PRINCE. This the formal promise, signed by the Princess Beresina Nelidoff, to wed the Prince Carlovitch Moskau.

Enter the PRINCESS BERESINA, (a little hunchbacked woman) from R.U.E.

PRINCESS. (*advancing, C.*) Eh, eh, eh?—what, what, what? I sign a promise, and to marry you?

PRINCE. You—Ah! here's the devil in person at last.

PRINCESS. I am the Princess Beresina in person, you rude man—but where's my runaway niece—where's Katinka?

KAT. (L. C, *unmasking*) Here, aunt.

PRINCE. Katinka Nelidoff!

KOPEC. (L.) What a mysterious family!

ERIC. Katinka Nelidoff! whose hand I so wilfully refused.

KAT. Who could blame you? Think of a matrimonial alliance with His Darkness below!

PRINCESS. End this folly, Katinka; this foolish story is but the invention of romance.

IVAN. Romance! Then there is no value in the ring?

OLGA. None!

KAT. The late Empress Elizabeth had, like many here, a

mania for play, but could not bear to lose. The Princess Nelidoff advised her Majesty to bet on three certain cards, and hinted to the courtiers, that 'twould be as well those cards should always win their stakes.

KOPEC. And so when she advised me to back them——

KAT. She was sure you would not lose.

KOPEC. Oh if one only knew the secret of court favour !

KAT. The Princess brings news of the death of the Czar Peter, and the accession of the Empress Catherine, whose first act of justice was to restore the Count Klamberg to his rank. The Prince Carlovitch Moskau is commanded home, that he may be sent into Siberia.

KOPEC. That is a pity, when he plays such a beautiful losing game!

IVAN. (*to* OLGA) By your help I resisted the evil spirit which possessed me—complete the task you have commenced.

OLGA. Ah! well—there take me—You don't deserve me, but we women are the most forgiving things !

OLGA. Now all has ended happily.

IVAN.

Not yet:

Good gracious ! we're not married—you forget!

KAT. Patrons and friends, with you remains the power,

To fill the measure of this happy hour.

The cards are with you now, you understand ;

Deal them, then, kindly—give  a hand.

Should your decision in our favor ~~prove~~,

The Queen of Spades will win her Game of Love.

Costumes

PRINCE.—Green frock coat embroidered with gold, aignillettes, sword, three-cornered hat, powdered hair; white pantaloons and boots; moustache.

KOPEC.—Square cut silk embroidered coat, long white satin waistcoat, black satin breeches, white stockings, shoes and buckles; white stock; powdered hair and bag; three-cornered hat and cane.

ERIC.—*First dress*: Plain green frock, tight pantaloons and boots, three-cornered hat, and powdered hair tied with black ribbon; sword. *Second dress*: Puce velvet frock trimmed with fur, loose trousers in high boots; sword, and three-cornered hat; moustache.

IVAN.—Plain brown shirt, full trousers in high boots; dark hair, moustache and beard; fur cap.

OFFICERS.—Green frock coats embroidered with gold; three-cornered hats; hair powdered; tights and boots.

SOLDIER  Green square cut coats, long white gaiters, three-cornered hats; hair in queue.

BANKERS.—Plain coats, breeches, white silk stockings; powder.

GENTLEMEN.—Embroidered suits, canes, snuff boxes, &c.

SERVANTS.—Handsome liveries; powder.

KATINKA.—*First dress*: Embroidered silk open dress; powdered wig; green spectacles; cane; high-heeled shoes; fur cloak and hood. *Second dress*: Fancy dress made to represent the Queen of Spades as in a pack of cards.

PRINCESS.—Fac-simile of Katinka's first dress.

OLGA.—Square yellow merino frock, green petticoat and sleeves, green stockings, yellow boots, high chemisette, Russian circular head dress, hair in two large plaits.

LADIES.—Handsome embroidered dresses, hair powdered; fans.