

CHARACTERS

ROSAURA, a noble lady

CLARÍN, a servant

SEGISMUNDO, a prince

CLOTALDO, a jailer

ASTOLFO, a prince

ESTRELLA, a princess

BASILIO, a king

GUARDS, SOLDIERS, MUSICIANS, SERVANTS

LIFE IS A DREAM

I

A loud sound.

Lights on a dry landscape.

Rosaura is dressed as a man, next to her is her servant Clarín.

CLARÍN. Tell me again why we left our country
in search of this adventure?

ROSAURA. Not adventure, revenge!

CLARÍN. Revenge. Now we face madness and misfortune,
roaming through these towering mountains,
with a tempest in our wake
and you dressed as a man.

ROSAURA. Cruel land!

You receive me as a stranger,
and as a stranger you inscribe
my name with blood on your sand.

CLARÍN. Say two strangers, my lady!
It's two of us who left our country;
two who roamed through these arid fields!

ROSAURA. Who could ever believe such strange events?
But if I'm not mistaken, Clarín,
and I'm not being deceived by my eyes,
I believe I see a building.

CLARÍN. I see it too.

Or it may be wishful thinking on our part.
ROSAURA. It's such a small structure
cradled between the rocks
that it seems to be part of the landscape.

CLARÍN. Let's get closer. We've stared long enough.

We can only hope the people
who live in it are hospitable
and welcome us inside.

ROSAURA. The door is open.

CLARÍN. Heavens! What's that I hear?

ROSAURA. I've turned into a melting statue of fire and ice.

CLARÍN. What's that strange sound?
May I be hanged if that's not
the sound of a spirit in torment!

SEGISMUNDO. (*Offstage.*) Oh misery!

ROSAURA. What a sad voice!

I fear new trials and tribulations come our way.

CLARÍN. Fear is already here, my lady.

ROSAURA. Clarín!

CLARÍN. My lady?

ROSAURA. Let's run from this awful place.

CLARÍN. I don't think I have the strength to go anywhere.

ROSAURA. Isn't that a lamp,

that feeble exhalation of light?

It makes this place look more somber.

I can see it's a prison.

The tomb of a living corpse,

chained like an animal

and his only companion is a dim light. (*Lights on Segismundo.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Oh misery!

How can I hasten

the heavens' answers?

What crime have I committed by being born;

if being born is man's greatest crime,

then why do I alone bear the weight of this punishment?

But isn't every living creature born?

Then what freedom do they possess

that's been denied me?

What greater offense have I caused

to deserve a crueler penalty?

The bird is born and given wings

to flee the sheltering trees

and become a flower in the winds.

And I who have more soul,

must have less liberty?

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The beast is born
and nature proves a skillful hand
in creating a strong and mighty form.
But wretched is the beast
since it hunts and it is hunted,

in a crude and endless labyrinth.

And I, with finer instincts

than a beast, have less liberty?

The river is born,

it begins to stream

and offers such sweet music

to every flower and blade of grass

that grants the flow of its course.

And I, with far more life,

must have less liberty.

Tell me, what justice, reason or law

can deny man these simple rights,

these fundamental exemptions

which God grants a stream,

a beast and a bird

Isn't every living creature born?

ROSAURA. His words have left fear and pity in me.

SEGISMUNDO. Who has listened to my voice? Is it Cloraldo?

CLARÍN. Tell him yes.

ROSAURA. It's only a sad echo.

A cry of pain lost within these cold walls

that overheard your melancholy. (*Segismundo grabs Rosaura.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Since you've witnessed my weakness.

I'll destroy you with my strong arms.

CLARÍN. I'm deaf and I haven't heard a word.

ROSAURA. If you were born human,

it is enough that I should kneel before you

for you to spare me.

SEGISMUNDO. Your voice fills me with kindness.

Your presence prevents my actions.

And somehow I feel something

I've never felt before.

Who are you?

I ask because I know so little of the world.

This place has been my cradle and my grave.

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Since the day of my birth
(if you call it birth) I've only known
this rustic desert,
where I live a miserable life,
like a living skeleton,
like an animated corpse.
I've only met one man,
who knows of my despair,
and has taught me all I know
about the earth and sky.
You might call me a human monster,
since I am a man among beasts
and a beast among men;
and yet amidst all this misfortune,
I've studied human laws
instructed by the beasts,
and from birds I've learned to measure
the distance between the gentle stars.
Now you have calmed my anger,
brought wonder to my eyes
and your soft voice
has brought calmness to my ears.
The more I look at you,
the more I like to admire
and contemplate your beauty.
For I feel a thirst in my eyes
that not even death will be able to quench;
because if drinking is death
my eyes will long to drink all the more.
And if seeing is dying
then I'm dying to see.

ROSAURA. I might seem astonished.
But I'm quite moved by your words.
And I don't know what to ask
or how to respond.
I can only say that heaven
must've guided me here,
and I have found comfort,
if comfort can be found
in someone sadder than oneself.

There is a story
of a wise man
who was so poor
that herbs were his
only source of food.
And one day he asked,
"Can there be another soul
who's as poor and miserable as me?"
And when he looked behind him,
he saw another man
who had gathered
the leaves he had discarded
— I lived lamenting
my misfortune,
wondering if others
suffered my cursed fate.
But now I've listened
to your words
and realized my sorrows
amount to nothing
compared to your pain.
So if I can offer consolation,
listen to my headache.
Listen to what
my sorrows have to say ... I am ... (*Clotaldo is heard from
within.*)

CLOTALDO. Guards of this tower!
You cowards!
Have you fallen asleep
and let two people enter this prison?
ROSAURA. Now I'm confused.
SEGISMUNDO. That is Clotaldo, my jailer.
CLOTALDO. Come! Don't allow them to resist!
Arrest them! Or kill them!

CLARIN. Guards of this tower, he's offering a choice.
To capture us would be better. (*Enter Clotaldo with soldiers.*)
CLOTALDO. Cover your faces as a precaution.
No one should see us.
You have trespassed the bounds
and limits of these grounds,

violated the king's orders,
which prohibit anyone
from visiting the prisoner.

SEGISMUNDO. There is no end to my despair.

CLOTALDO. Surrender! Hand me your weapons!

Or these metal vipers
will spit their poisonous bullets
and break the silence of these walls.

SEGISMUNDO. You tyrant!

I swear I shall set myself free
of these chains by taking my life,
before you try to offend and injure them.

I'll tear myself apart
with my own hands and teeth,
before I consent to your cruel ways
and have to mourn their pain.

CLOTALDO. You know well that God's decree

condemned you to death
before you were born.

Guards!

GUARDS. Sir!

CLOTALDO. Lock the doors of this cell!

SEGISMUNDO. Oh, heaven! I don't blame you for denying me
freedom!

For I would piece together mountains
and make a stairway of stone,
and I'd appear before you like a warrior,
shattering the glass that separates heaven
and earth.

CLOTALDO. Perhaps it's to prevent you
that you're bound to your misery.

ROSAURA. I can see that pride offends you.

Then allow me to plead for my life
as I fall at your feet
and express my humility.
For it would be cruel
if neither pride
nor humbleness

found favor in your being.

CLARÍN. And if humility and pride don't impress you,

then I, neither humble nor proud,
but a mixture of both.

implore you to save us and protect us.

CLOTALDO. Attention!

GUARDS. Sir!

CLOTALDO. Take their weapons and blindfold them.

ROSAURA. I place my sword in your hands,
since you are the noblest
and it will refuse to be in the hands
of someone of less nobility.

CLARÍN. Mine is less demanding,

so I'll hand it to one of your guards.

ROSAURA. And if I have to die,

I want to leave it with you. *(She gives him the sword.)*

CLOTALDO. Good God!

Where did you get this sword?

ROSAURA. I brought this sword here to avenge my grief and misery.

CLOTALDO. Who gave it to you?

ROSAURA. A woman.

CLOTALDO. What is her name?

ROSAURA. I am not supposed to reveal her name.

Please, guard it with steem for the sake of the man
who wore it long ago.

CLOTALDO. But what do you know about this sword?

ROSAURA. I can only tell you

that it possesses a secret. A mystery.

The one who gave it to me

told me to travel to this land.

She said, "Display your sword
with skill and grace,

so you can prove to roblenmen
you're one of them."

She told me there would be one man,
who upon seeing my sword,
would provide me with shelter
and become my benefactor.

She refused to tell me his name. *(Clotaldo moves away from her.)*

CLOTALDO. Heavens help me! What is this I hear?

This is the sword I left with beautiful Violante,
and I promised her that whoever she sends my way

armed with this sword,
will find in me a gentle father's love.
But what kind of fatherly love can I give him,
when he who brings the sword to win my favor,
has placed it in my hands and kneeled before me
to meet his death?
What am I to do,
when his appearance
and all the signs coincide
with the rumors of my heart!
And what am I to do,
since seeing him
my heart has become a caged bird
that beats against my chest,
only to find escape
through tears that burst open
the windows of my eyes!
What am I to do!
Heaven help me!
To take him to the king
is to take him to his death.
But if I hide him from the king,
I disobey the laws of fealty.
But why do I have doubts?
Why do I let self-love and loyalty disarm me?
What I must do is present myself
in front of the king and tell him he's my son
and that he could kill my only son.
Perhaps by proving my loyalty,
the king will show his mercy
and save his life.
But if the king in his unyielding cruelty
deals him death, he will die without
ever knowing I'm his father.
— Come then, strangers!
And don't fear,
for you're not alone in your misfortunes.
For in times of uncertainty,
I don't know if it's better to live or to die. *(They exit. Astolfo
enters from one side of the stage. Estrella and ladies enter from the other*

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side. Music plays.)
ASTOLFO. It is most apt to say
that rays of vanished comets
and a burst of music
greet your presence.
And a symphony of fountains
announces your arrival,
as if they were welcoming
the goddess of spring.
Bullets shoot into the air
as if they were greeting
the goddess of war.
Birds welcome you with gladness
after a bashful night
and greet you, as if
you were goddess of dawn.
The goddess of my soul.
ESTRELLA. It is unwise
for you to flatter me with praise,
since your words
do not match your actions.
And your fine compliments
seem to contradict
everything I see before me.
If your sweet words
are preparing for war,
let me just warn you
that I'm armed for the battle.
For it is base to flatter
with the tongue
and wish evil
with the heart.
ASTOLFO. You are quite misinformed, Estrella.
If you doubt my honest compliments,
I beg you to listen to what I have to say.
When the last king died,
he left Basilio to inherit the throne
and two daughters,
one who was your mother
and the other one mine.

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Two sisters who may both rest in peace.

As for Basilio, our present king, who is old
and each day fading more with age,

he was always more interested
in studying than in women.

He was left a widower

and we both aspire to his throne.

ESTRELLA. Yes, and I am the daughter of the elder sister.

ASTOLFO. And I'm the male child,

of the younger sister,

and I ought to be preferred over you.

ESTRELLA. But you weren't born in this country,

and you're the ruler of another kingdom.

ASTOLFO. I do not intend to make war on you, Estrella,

so you can declare war on me.

We can both express our intentions to our uncle,

when he meets us here today.

— Oh, may the common people,

the only true astrologer ...

may they crown you queen.

The loving queen of my choice.

And may Love, that wise god,

grant you the kingdom of my heart.

ESTRELLA. My breast can hardly contain

such courtly generosity,

since I wish the imperial monarchy were mine

so I can pass it on to you;

and yet my love is displeased

by your infidelity.

by the portrait of a girl

you carry close to your chest. (*Sound of drums.*)

ASTOLFO. I regret the arrival of the king interrupts our conver-

sation ... (*Enter Basilio and his court.*)

ESTRELLA. Your Highness ...

ASTOLFO. Your Excellency ...

ESTRELLA. Your Eminence, I am filled with gladness ...

ASTOLFO. Your Holiness, I bow before you with joy ...

ESTRELLA. My beloved king, allow me ...

ASTOLFO. Allow me to kiss your ring ...

ESTRELLA. Your hand, my loving uncle ...

ASTOLFO. My devoted uncle ...

ESTRELLA. Allow me to look at you ...

ASTOLFO. Allow my arms ...

ESTRELLA. ... And embrace ...

ASTOLFO. To embrace you ...

ESTRELLA. And kneel before you ...

ASTOLFO. And kneel before you, my king.

BASILIO. Niece, nephew, come and embrace me.

Rest assured that you will be treated as equals,

since you are both loyal to my commands,

and you have come here so affectionately.

You already know that through my studies in science

I have obtained great recognition

and have earned my place in the world

as a man of wisdom.

You already know that the science

I esteem and study the most

is the subtle mathematics

by which I can discern

and chart future events of ages to come.

The science of racing against time,

which allows me to foretell the future,

and win men's gratitude

by alerting them to the days that lie ahead of us.

Those circles of snow,

those transparent canopies

illuminated by the sun

and sliced by the moving moon;

those astrological designs

drawn by the stars

are the subjects

and the heart of my studies.

The firmament is my book.

A book made of stars that have been

placed in vellum paper

and in sapphire binding,

in which all that is bound to happen,

whether adverse or beneficent

is written in golden letters.

A book I've learned to read

with the speed of my own spirit,
because events always seem eager
to take their own path.
I just wish that I had been
the victim of heaven's wrath
long before I learned
to read its messages
and interpret its signs.
For when a man is unfortunate,
even his own merit
can turn out to be a sharp knife
that stabs him in the back.
But let the events of my life,
explain all this far better than I,
so you may marvel at them.
With Clorlene, my wife,
I had a son, whose birth exhausted the sky
of ill fated omens.
Even before he faced the light
from the living grave of the womb,
his mother dreamt of a monster
in human form,
who ripped open her belly,
and drenched in her own blood was killing her.
On the day of his birth,
his zodiac sign
was eclipsed by a great battle
between the moon and the sun
in which the world was left blood-soaked.
And the earth became shrouded
in the darkest night
since the death of Christ.
Buildings shook.
The clouds rained stones,
and the rivers gushed with blood.
It was under these dark and fatal signs,
Segismundo was born,
announcing his true nature,
by killing his mother;
and by this maice

saying, "I am a man
and I have begun to pay all kindness with evil."
— When I referred to my books,
I discovered in them,
and in all things,
that Segismundo would be
the cruelest of all men,
the most evil prince,
and the most impious of all monarchs,
who would destroy and divide his kingdom —
a school of treachery
and an academy of vice;
and that he, one day,
carried away by his cruelty,
amidst his crimes and horrors
would try to trample me
(with great anguish I admit it!),
for he's liable to make a carpet
from the grey hairs of my beard.
— Who doesn't fear the coming harm?
What man doesn't believe in the evil,
that has been predicted to him by his own studies?
So it was proclaimed that the prince
had died at birth and, as a precaution
I built a tower, hidden in the mountains,
where light could hardly find its way.
There Segismundo lives to this day,
as a wretched and poor prisoner,
where only Clotaldo has spoken to him
and kept him company.
He has taught him the sciences,
and the Catholic faith,
being the only man
who has witnessed his misery.
There are three things to be considered here.
The first is that I love my country,
and I must do all within my power
to rescue it from the oppression
of a tyrannical king.
The second is that to deprive

my own flesh and blood
of the rights he deserves
by both human and divine law
is against Christian principles,
because no law says that
to restrain another man
from being an insolent tyrant,
I should become that way myself.
The third is the great error
I might have committed in allowing myself
to believe in the predictions of events,
because, even if his character is inclined
towards violence and destruction,
perhaps he'll not be easily swayed,
since even the most evil omen,
the most awful astrological signs
can but influence our free will,
but not force us in any direction.
And so, meditating on all this
I have come up with a solution
that will stun you.
Tomorrow, without letting him know
he is my son and your king,
I shall place my son on the throne,
so that he may take command
and govern you,
and you will swear obedience.
— If he proves to be prudent,
sane and benign, then we'll know
the stars' predictions were inaccurate,
and we'll benefit
in having our rightful king.
If he acts unjustly and cruelly,
then I will have to depose him
and imprison him again.
If the prince should be
as I fear,
my niece shall marry my nephew
and you will have a king and a queen
more worthy of the crown.

This I order as your king,
and I ask as you as a father,
and I beg you as your elder —
as a man who trusted the stars.
ASTOLFO. If I may offer my reply,
as the person with most at stake.
On behalf of all I say,
bring us Segismundo.
It is enough that he is your son!
ALL. Give us our prince!
We want him if he's our rightful king!
BASILIO. I'm grateful for these kind words
and I will honor your request.
Tomorrow you shall see him.
ALL. Long live the great king Basilio!
*(Exit all. Before Basilio is about to leave, Clotaldo enters with Rosaura
and Clarin and stops the king.)*
CLOTALDO. May I have a word with you?
BASILIO. Oh, Clotaldo! What can I do for you?
CLOTALDO. Seeing you, my king,
always fills me with gladness,
but today a twist of fate
has robbed me of that joy,
since I bring some troublesome news.
BASILIO. What troubles you, Clotaldo?
CLOTALDO. Sir, a misfortune has occurred.
BASILIO. Go on.
CLOTALDO. This young man, sir,
He entered the tower and has seen the prince.
And he's ...
BASILIO. Do not worry
if he has seen the prince.
I have revealed the secret.
We must have a conversation later.
For you are to witness and preside over
the greatest event in the history of the world.
As for these two captives,
rest assured that I will not punish them
for your carelessness. I forgive them.
Let them go.

(Exit *Basilio*.)
CLOTALDO. Great king, may you live a thousand centuries!

(Blessed be God! Now I don't have to tell him
he's my son.)

(*Aloud*.) Strangers, you are at liberty!

ROSAURA. I kiss your feet a thousand times.

CLARÍN. I would do the same.

But you'll probably agree
that a thousand kisses on your feet
is plenty.

ROSAURA. I'm indebted to you, sir, since you've granted me my life.

I will forever be your faithful servant.

CLOTALDO. No! It was not your life that I gave you.

A noble man who's been dishonored has been erased from life.

And since you have come here to avenge an offense,

I haven't granted you your life,

because you haven't found your place again in the world.

ROSAURA. I confess that I barely exist,

even though you've granted me back

what little seemed to be left of my life.

But I promise you

that I will take revenge,

and my honor will then

be so spotless and clean

that it will seem like an immaculate gift

from you.

CLOTALDO. Then take the sword

you brought with you.

I trust that all it takes

is just a few drops

of your enemy's blood

and the deed is done.

I know so,

for it was once my sword —

I mean,

just for this brief moment

that I've had it in my keeping.

ROSAURA. In your name,

I put on this sword

and swear a second time

to obtain revenge,
no matter how mighty
my enemy may be.

CLOTALDO. Is he very powerful?

ROSAURA. So powerful,

I fear I will lose you

as a friend if I tell you his name.

CLOTALDO. On the contrary,

you'd find more of a friend in me,

because I'd try to protect you and help you.

ROSAURA. Because I wouldn't want you

to think I mistrust you,

I'll let you know

that my enemy is no less

than Astolfo.

CLOTALDO. Astolfo?

I suggest that you go back to your country,

and forget all this foolishness!

ROSAURA. I can't help it,

even though he was my prince

what he did destroyed me.

CLOTALDO. Even if he had slapped you

in the face ...

ROSAURA. (Oh God!) What happened to me was far worse!

CLOTALDO. Tell me then!

Since nothing could be worse

than what I can imagine!

ROSAURA. If I were to tell you, I'm afraid

I would lose your respect.

If I were to tell you, I'm afraid

I would lose your esteem

and affection.

And I don't know why

I can't build up the courage

to tell you ...

These clothes, Clotaldo ...

This disguise ...

I am not who I appear to be!

And let this be a hint ...

Astolfo came to this country

to marry Estrella.
Just imagine how
offended I am.

— I have said enough! (*Exit Rosaura and Clarin.*)
CLOTALDO. Wait! Listen! Come back!

What confusion!
What a labyrinth I find myself in,
without that fine string we leave
behind us to find our way back out.
My family's honor is destroyed.
The enemy is powerful.
I am a vassal.
She's my daughter.
Heavens!
Show me a path!
Although I doubt there's a way out,
when the sky seems to be a dark omen,
and the world one great mystery.

II

A ball in the palace. Enter Basilio and Clotaldo.

BASILIO. Then tell me how things went, Clotaldo.
CLOTALDO. Everything you commanded

has been carried out.
I followed your orders carefully.
I gathered herbs
that possess sedative qualities
and I made a poison,
a drink that deprives man
of his ability to reason
by robbing him temporarily
of his inherent will.
I mixed opium, henbane and valerian,
and as always, these medicinal herbs,
which have the power to transform
a man into a living corpse
demonstrated their magical powers.
I gave Segismundo the potion to drink,
and he fell into a deep sleep.
But not before I reminded him
of the silent wisdom of nature,
and how the sky and the mountains
have been his teachers,
and how they taught him the laws
that govern the beasts and birds.
And in order to elevate his spirit,
knowing what you intend to do, sir,
I let him imagine a mighty eagle,
which prefers the heights of rising fires and comets,
instead of diving down
towards the shallow gusts
of worldly winds.

I praised its bold flight by saying,
"After all, you are the king of the birds,
so you have the right to fly above them all."
This prompted him to think of kingship
and inspired in him great thoughts
of ambition and pride,

since royal blood runs through his veins.
But I could also hear rage in his voice as he said:
"I know that in the republic of birds

there is a natural order,
and some birds swear obedience to others.
But I am not a bird,
and I will never submit to another man's will."

Seeing that this made him furious,
since it's his constant turmoil,

I gave him the potion,
and as soon as he drank it,
he surrendered his strength to a deep sleep.
A cold sweat came over him.

He trembled so much,
that if I hadn't known these were
the effects of the drug,
I would have feared for his life.

Then a few men came to take him away,
and brought him here to the palace,
and laid him on your bed.

There he sleeps until the drug loses its power.

BASILIO. This is all an experiment, Clotaldo.
I wish to prove whether it is possible to change fate,
or whether humans have the capacity
to dominate and rule the stars.

This is why I have brought him to the palace.
We will test his ability by allowing him to rule.

CLOTALDO. May I ask, my lord, why we put him to sleep?
BASILIO. If he learned today that he is my son,

and then tomorrow saw himself once more
reduced to prison and to misery,
this would surely destroy him
and leave him without any consolation.
It would be better to make him believe

that everything he sees is nothing more than a dream,
because in this world, Clotaldo,
everyone who lives is dreaming.

CLOTALDO. I hope you are not mistaken, my lord.
But now it's too late.

I think he has awakened and he's coming our way.
BASILIO. I shouldn't be here. You are his tutor.
You should guide him.

He is probably confused.
Tell him the truth.

CLOTALDO. So you give me permission to tell him?

BASILIO. Yes. Perhaps if he finds out the truth,
he'll recognize his own danger and conquer himself. *(Exit Basilio.)*

Enter Clarín.

CLARÍN. I've come to witness the celebrations.

But it cost me four blows to get in.
Four times the guard at the door smacked me.
Four times he asked me for a permit or a pass.
It is expensive to enter this place.

I told him I didn't need a written order
to witness all the celebrations.

My eyes are my tickets of admission,
they are my paid seats,
my windows, my balconies ...

CLOTALDO. Here's Clarín! The servant of that misfortunate being,
who has brought to this country my disgrace.

(Aloud.) Clarín, what news do you have?

CLARÍN. What news? Sir, you have advised
Rosaura to dress as her own sex.

CLOTALDO. I believe it is the proper thing to do, so as not to
cause a scandal.

CLARÍN. She also changed her name,
and now she seems to be your niece.

CLOTALDO. That's good news, isn't it?

CLARÍN. Not necessarily for me.
I'm left without a job, since she is now
residing in the palace.

and is the maid of honor
of the extraordinary Princess Estrella.

CLOTALDO. We'll find something for you to do.

CLARÍN. It would be better if you help Roseaura in other ways, and help her find the man who's done her wrong.

CLOTALDO. All in due time, Clarín. Time will settle all accounts.

CLARÍN. That's all I think about — time.

And time seems to be at a standstill for me, since I have no employment, and my lady is living in luxury, like a queen, because everyone thinks she's your niece.

Meanwhile, I who traveled with her from afar,

I'm starving to death and no one's paying any attention to me.

And everyone forgets I'm Clarín,

and the name Clarín comes from Clarion,

and Clarion means trumpet.

And should I sound my trumpet, the king,

Astolfo and Estrella will immediately find out what's going on.

For I can be both a loud trumpet and a servant,

and neither is good with secrets ...

CLOTALDO. I understand your concerns.

For the time being you can be my servant.

CLARÍN. But here comes Segismundo. *(Enter Musicians singing, and Servants dressing Segismundo. He is amazed by everything he sees.)*

SEGISMUNDO. Heavens, where am I?

What's happening?

I can't believe my eyes!

I'm amazed by everything I see before me!

Me in this majestic palace!

Me wearing such fine clothes,

and surrounded by such elegant servants!

Me waking up in such a soft bed,

and so many people helping me to dress!

To say I'm dreaming all this would be a mistake,

since everything is so real.

I know I'm not dreaming.

Am I not Segismundo?

God, tell me the truth!

Why do I find myself here, in this place?

But why should I worry about these things,

when I should let myself be served?

SERVANT 2. He seems confused!

SERVANT 1. Who wouldn't be, considering all that's happened to him?

CLARÍN. Me.

SERVANT 2. Should they sing another song?

SEGISMUNDO. No. I don't want them to sing any more.

SERVANT 2. I wanted to entertain you, since you seem so distressed.

SEGISMUNDO. Music doesn't really help.

CLOTALDO. Your Highness, great lord, give me your hand to kiss.

Allow me to have the honor to be the first to swear obedience

to you as lord.

SEGISMUNDO. Here's Clotaldo.

How is it possible that the man

who mistreated me in prison treats me

now with such respect?

Tell me what is happening to me.

CLOTALDO. I can understand

why you're confused

and full of doubts,

when your life

has suddenly changed.

But I will try to help you understand.

Sir, you ought to know

that you are the prince of this land,

and you will inherit the throne.

You have been kept away from the palace,

because the stars foretold a thousand disasters

if you were crowned.

But trusting that you have the ability

to defeat the predictions,

since fate can be controlled

by your good will and actions,

you have been brought to the palace

while your soul surrendered to sleep.

The king, your father,

will come to visit you soon

and he'll tell you the rest.

SEGISMUNDO. What else do I need to learn,

now that you have told me who I am?

What else do I need to know

to wield my power

and pride from now on?

How could you betray your country?

How could you hide me and deny me

my rightful place in the world?

You traitor!

CLOTALDO. Sir ...

SEGISMUNDO. You lied to the king and were cruel to me.

And so the king, the law, and I condemn you to death.

I want to kill you with my own hands.

SERVANT 2. My lord!

SEGISMUNDO. Nothing can stop me!

And if you try, I'll throw you out the window!

SERVANT 2. Clotaldo, run! Run!

CLOTALDO. You poor fool! You're already showing your pride

without even knowing you're dreaming all this! (*Exit Clotaldo.*)

SERVANT 2. Please, allow me to tell you ...

SEGISMUNDO. Get out of here!

SERVANT 2. He was obeying the king's orders.

SEGISMUNDO. Then he was obeying an injustice!

SERVANT 2. He doesn't have the right to judge the king's orders ...

SEGISMUNDO. I am his prince.

SERVANT 2. Sir, you must understand ...

SEGISMUNDO. Are you his accomplice?

SERVANT 2. No, I ...

SEGISMUNDO. Then you shouldn't say a word!

CLARÍN. The prince is right and everything you said is wrong.

SERVANT 2. And who asked your opinion?

CLARÍN. I did.

SEGISMUNDO. And who are you?

CLARÍN. I'm just a fool, a dog who pokes his nose in the wrong

places.

SEGISMUNDO. Of all the people in this new world, you're the

one I like the best.

CLARÍN. Great lord, pleasing the Segismundos of the world is my

specialty. (*Enter Astolfo.*)

ASTOLFO. Blessed be this joyful day, my prince.

You fill the walls of this palace

with splendor and light,

as if you were the glowing sun

rising over the mountains!

And even though we crown you late in time,

may the laurel wreath you wear

stay fresh and green

for as long as it took to crown you.

SEGISMUNDO. God save you. (*Turns to Clarín.*)

ASTOLFO. You obviously don't know who I am,

so I'll excuse you for not greeting me

with a little more honor and respect.

We are of equal rank.

My name is Astolfo.

I am by birth a duke

and that makes me your cousin.

SEGISMUNDO. I said "God save you."

But maybe God isn't good enough for you,

since you're boasting about who you are.

Next time we meet I'll ask the Devil to save you.

SERVANT 2. (*To Astolfo.*) Your Highness should remember

that Segismundo comes from the mountains,

and he has his own ways of dealing with people.

(*To Segismundo.*) I believe my Lord Astolfo expects ...

SEGISMUNDO. I was quite annoyed by the way

he came in here to make his speech,

and then he put on his hat.

SERVANT 2. He's a nobleman.

SEGISMUNDO. I'm nobler than he is.

SERVANT 2. Still, Your Highness,

there should be more respect between you ...

SEGISMUNDO. And perhaps you should mind your own business!

(*Walks towards Clarín. Enter Estrella.*)

ESTRELLA. May Your Highness be welcomed to the palace!

SEGISMUNDO. Who is this beauty?

Who is this lovely woman?

CLARÍN. It's your cousin. Her name is Estrella like a star.

SEGISMUNDO. She should be called sun, instead of star.

ESTRELLA. Welcome to the throne

that receives you with gratitude

and open arms.

May you live for centuries to come!

SEGISMUNDO. Your presence is enough

to make me feel welcome.

May I ask
what work
do you leave
for the sun to do
when you rise
from your bed
in the morning?
Allow me to kiss your hand. *(He begins to kiss her hand and her arm.)*

My father was cruel
to have kept me
from laying eyes
on your face
and your soft,
warm sensual skin,
since your beauty
could make a dead man
rise from his grave.

ESTRELLA. Perhaps it's better
to be a little more discreet,
Your Highness.

ASTOLFO. Now it's all over for me.

SERVANT 2. Sir, I advice you not to be so forward,
since Astolfo and Estrella ...

SEGISMUNDO. Didn't I tell you to mind your own business!
SERVANT 2. I'm only trying ...

SEGISMUNDO. I'm not interested in what you have to say!
SERVANT 2. But, Sir, I thought I heard you say
that if something seems unjust ...

SEGISMUNDO. And you also heard me say
that I would throw anyone
who annoys me out the window! *(He takes him in his arms and exits.)*

ASTOLFO. Who in the world is this man?

ESTRELLA. Go and help! — Would someone go and help! *(They all exit. Segismundo reenters.)*

SEGISMUNDO. He didn't think I would do it.
He fell from the balcony into the sea. *(Astolfo enters.)*

ASTOLFO. You ought to control your violent actions.
SEGISMUNDO. And you should be careful that you don't end

up like him.
ASTOLFO. There's a great difference
between a man and a beast,
and there's also a great difference
between living in a remote mountain and a palace. *(Exit Astolfo. Enter King Basilio.)*

BASILIO. What just happened here?
SEGISMUNDO. Nothing.

Someone made me very angry
and I threw him out the window.

CLARÍN. Be warned. This is the king.
BASILIO. On your first day you kill a man!

SEGISMUNDO. He told me it couldn't be done, so I proved him
wrong.

BASILIO. You devastate me
with your violence.

I was hoping
you had the ability
to conquer your fate.

But it saddens me to see
that your first deed here
is to commit a murder.

How can I offer
you my arms
and embrace you,
when I know your hands

are stained
with human blood?
Who can see a dagger

covered in blood
and not feel terror?
Seeing your cruel hands,

keeps me from your arms,
because I can't imagine them
wrapped around me

in a loving embrace.

SEGISMUNDO. I don't need your embrace.
I've lived without it
all these years.

Who would want

the embrace of a father
who mistreats his son?
Why would I want a father
who locks me up in a tower,
and treats me like an animal,
like a monster?

How can I value your embrace,
if you have deprived me
of human life?

BASILIO. I wish to God
you had never been born,
so I wouldn't have to hear your voice
and live with such disgrace.

SEGISMUNDO. But you did give me life,
and then you denied me
my place in the world.

BASILIO. You were a poor
and miserable prisoner,
and now you're a prince.

The least you can be is grateful.

SEGISMUNDO. Why should I be grateful,
when everything
you're giving me
is what I'm entitled to have
by right of birth?

I'm not indebted to you.
If anything,
you owe me for all the years
you kept me from the world —
all the years you robbed me
of freedom,
life, and honor.

You're lucky I don't claim
what you stole from me.
You're the one
who ought to be grateful.

BASILIO. You beast!
You insolent, arrogant fool!
The stars have fulfilled
their prophecy.

You're everything
they predicted you to be.

I suggest that you
be humble and kind.
Take heed, tomorrow
you could wake up
and discover that this
were all a dream! *(Exit Basilio.)*

SEGISMUNDO. No. I can't be dreaming all this!

No. I'm not asleep.
I can see and touch,

I know who I was and who I am now.
There's no turning back, Father.

Even though you regret it,
I know I am the prince
and I will inherit your throne.

CLARIN. What pleases you the most of all the things
you've seen here in the world?

SEGISMUNDO. I think women are more beautiful than men,
They seem to be a little heaven on earth. *(Enter Rosaura dressed
as a lady.)*

SEGISMUNDO. Especially the one I see before me.

ROSAURA. The prince is here. I'll go. *(She rushes out.)*

SEGISMUNDO. Stop woman! Stop! Don't go! *(She turns to him.)*
Who are you? It feels as if I've seen you before.

ROSAURA. I am an unhappy woman, waiting on Estrella.

SEGISMUNDO. Why do you have to serve Estrella,
when she seems to be but a faint star,
one that depends on your light?

How is that possible,
if in the realm of fragrances
the rose presides over other flowers,
and in the academy of stones
the splendor of the diamond
is most desired?

And if you look at the empire
of moving stars,
you'll find that Venus
is the favorite in the sky.
Why must you serve

a woman of lesser beauty,
when you are like Venus,
like a diamond, like a rose? (*Enter Clotaldo.*)

ROSAURA. I'm honored
by your compliments.

But let my silence
be my response,
since I lack the words
or reasoning to form a reply,
and sometimes
the most eloquent answer
is quiet, silent. (*Starts to leave.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Wait! Don't go!

Why do you wish to leave me in darkness?

ROSAURA. Your Highness,

I request your permission to go.

SEGISMUNDO. To leave in such haste
is not asking for permission
but taking it.

ROSAURA. Your Highness,
if you won't grant my request,
then I will be forced to take it.
SEGISMUNDO. Then this will force me
to behave violently
instead of courteously,
since resistance is like a poison
to my patience.

ROSAURA. Even if this poison
kills your patience
and fills you with rage,
I won't allow it to threaten me
and force me to give in.

SEGISMUNDO. What seems impossible
is always tempting.

You're making me lose

my fear of your beauty. (*He moves close to her.*)

ROSAURA. They were right
to predict your cruelty
and your destruction
of this kingdom.

What else can you expect
from a man born
among wild beasts,
who has nothing human
about him,

except his name?

SEGISMUNDO. I was courteous to you,
so I could win
your affection,
so you wouldn't
insult me like this.
But maybe it's better
to be a monster.

(*To Clarin.*) You there! Get out!

Leave us alone!

Lock the door,

and don't let anyone enter! (*Exit Clarin.*)

ROSAURA. You'll only find a dead woman!

SEGISMUNDO. Didn't you say I was a monster!

CLOTALDO. Sir! Wait!

SEGISMUNDO. You feeble, crazy old man!

How did you get in here?

CLOTALDO. Sir, listen to me!

Take hold of yourself!

My lord, listen to what I have to say!

You must be more peaceful
if you want to be king.

Today you may find yourself
master of us all,
but tomorrow
it may turn out to be a dream.

SEGISMUNDO. One way of finding out if this is life
or an illusion is by killing you! (*As he is about to pull out his
dagger, Clotaldo restrains him and falls to his knees.*)

CLOTALDO. This is how I hope to save my life!

SEGISMUNDO. Let go!

CLOTALDO. I won't let go!

Not until someone comes

to restrain your anger and rage.

ROSAURA. Oh God!

SEGISMUNDO. Let go, I say! Let go, or I'll kill you! *(They struggle.)*

ROSaura. Someone, help!

Segismundo is killing Clotaldo! *(Rosaura exits. Astolfo enters just as Clotaldo falls on the floor. He stands between him and Segismundo.)*

ASTOLFO. Put your sword away!

SEGISMUNDO. Not until it is stained with his blood!

ASTOLFO. Is this how you want to stain your sword,

with the cold blood of an old man?

SEGISMUNDO. He's a cruel old man!

ASTOLFO. Put your sword away and spare him his life!

SEGISMUNDO. In exchange for yours,

since you've insulted my pride. *(Astolfo draws his sword.)*

ASTOLFO. This is self-defense. *(They fight.)*

CLOTALDO. *(To Astolfo.)* Don't anger him! *(Enter Basilio and Estrella.)*

BASILIO. What's happened here?

ASTOLFO. Nothing, my lord!

SEGISMUNDO. A lot has happened here.

I tried to kill this old man.

BASILIO. You have no respect for an old man?

CLOTALDO. My Lord, it doesn't matter. It's only me.

SEGISMUNDO. At your age you may also find yourself pleading for mercy at my feet,

since I haven't forgotten the cruel way

you raised me. *(Exit Segismundo.)*

BASILIO. Before that happens

you'll fall sleep again.

And when you awaken

you'll believe that everything

that has been happening to you

was a dream. *(Exit Basilio and Clotaldo. Estrella and Astolfo remain.)*

ASTOLFO. Predictions never fail.

The stars were accurate

when they predicted

Segismundo's crimes and cruelty.

But in my case,

the stars haven't been that precise,

since fate promised me

good fortune, triumphs
and the beauty of your eyes,
which compete

with the glory of the sky. *(Rosaura enters unnoticed.)*

ESTRELLA. Perhaps the stars

have in store for you,

the mysterious eyes of the lady

whose portrait you carry

around your neck.

I suggest you save

your fine compliments for her.

In affairs of the heart,

my dear cousin,

flatteries and vows

meant for other women

are nothing but empty words to me.

ASTOLFO. I promise to remove the portrait.

And I swear that you,

only you,

will occupy my heart.

For where there is a star

there is no room

for shadows,

and when that star

is as bright

as the sun

there is no place

for darkness. *(Exit Astolfo.)*

ROSaura. Oh God!

After seeing this

I have nothing left to fear.

Since my misfortunes

have now reached their limit!

— My lady!

ESTRELLA. Oh, Andrea!

ROSaura. May I be of any service, my lady?

ESTRELLA. I'm so pleased

that it is you

who followed me here.

For you are the only one

to whom I'd entrust a secret.
ROSAURA. My lady, you honor me.
You have my undivided attention.

ESTRELLA. In the short time
I've known you,
you have shown me

your affection
and gained my trust.
Now I'll tell you a secret,

something that troubles me greatly.

ROSAURA. As you wish, my lady.

ESTRELLA. My cousin Astolfo
is to marry me,
but an obstacle
stands in the way.

He carries
the portrait of a lady.

I have spoken

to him about it

and he wishes

to prove his love to me.

Now he's gone to get it

and I am afraid

that he will bring it here

and hand it to me.

So I want to ask you

to receive it on my behalf.

I'll say no more.

You must know

about matters of the heart. (*Estrella exits.*)

ROSAURA. How I wish I didn't know!

For who could have the ability
to counsel one's heart

at a moment like this?

Can there be anyone in the world

attacked with more misfortunes

and destroyed with more sorrows?

What can I do when there's no consolation

or relief to be found?

They say misfortunes are cowards

because they never travel on their own.
I'm convinced they're brave,
since they possess the intelligence
and capacity to mass into troops
that charge forward with such great force.

Oh, what will I do in such confusion? (*Enter Astolfo with the portrait.*)

ASTOLFO. My lady, here's the portrait ...

ROSAURA. Why do you seem so surprised, Your Highness?

Why do you seem astonished?

ASTOLFO. I'm surprised to see you here, Rosaura.

ROSAURA. Rosaura? Your Highness,

you mistake me for some other lady.

I am Andrea, a humble servant

who doesn't mean to cause you any confusion.

ASTOLFO. I know you are Rosaura.

ROSAURA. I don't understand you, Your Highness.

ASTOLFO. Enough of this pretense, Rosaura!

ROSAURA. What do you mean, Your Highness?

ASTOLFO. The soul never lies, Rosaura.

You might present yourself as Andrea,

but my heart tells me you're Rosaura.

ROSAURA. Estrella ordered me to wait for you here.

She ordered me to tell you on her behalf

to hand over the portrait to me.

ASTOLFO. You don't fool me, Rosaura.

ROSAURA. I'm only here waiting for you to give me the portrait!

ASTOLFO. Since you wish to continue this deception, Andrea,

tell the princess that since I esteem her so,

I'm sending her the original portrait in flesh and blood,

and you only have to show her your face.

ROSAURA. Then I'll be showing her the face

of a woman you have destroyed.

Give me that portrait!

ASTOLFO. What if I don't give it to you?

ROSAURA. Then I'll take it,

because I'm not leaving

until you give it to me!

Let go of it! You traitor!

You betrayed me! (*She tries to take it from him.*)

ASTOLFO. Listen to me ...
ROSAURA. I'd much rather die

than see it in that woman's hands.
ASTOLFO. You're mad!

ROSAURA. And you have deceived me!
ASTOLFO. That's enough, my Rosaural!

ROSAURA. I'm not your Rosaural!
You liar! You villain! *(Enter Estrella.)*

ESTRELLA. Andreea, Astolfo, what is this?
ROSAURA. If you wish to know, I will tell you, my lady.

ASTOLFO. What do you intend to tell her?
ROSAURA. You ordered me to wait here for Astolfo

and ask him for a portrait that you wanted.
As I waited for him,

I remembered
I had one of my own

on this sleeve,
so I amused myself

looking at my little portrait.
When Astolfo came into this room,

it fell from my hand
onto the floor

and Astolfo picked it up.
But then he declined to return

what belongs to me.
I became angry and impatient

and tried to take it away from him.
That's my picture he holds in his hand.

I don't know what he intends to do with it,
but I wish he would return it to me.

ESTRELLA. Astolfo, give me that portrait! *(She takes it from him.)*
ASTOLFO. My lady ...

ANDREA. Is it not my portrait?
ESTRELLA. I can see how much it resembles you.

ROSAURA. Well, since this is my picture,
tell him to give you the other one you requested.

ESTRELLA. Here's your portrait. Leave us alone.
ROSAURA. I have my portrait back.

I don't care to know what happens next. *(Rosaura exits.)*
ESTRELLA. Even though I don't intend to see you

or speak to you ever again,
I wish to have the portrait I asked you for,
since I so foolishly asked for it,

and I don't want to leave it in your power.
ASTOLFO. Beautiful Estrella,

I wish to serve you and obey you,
but I can't give you the portrait you ask for,

and that's simply because ...
ESTRELLA. You are a low and crude man!

I don't want any portrait from you,
since it will remind me

of how foolish I was in asking you for it. *(Estrella exits.)*
ASTOLFO. No, stop, let me explain!

Damn you, Rosaural!
Why did you come to this country to ruin me,

and ruin yourself? *(Exit Astolfo. Segimundo is seen as the beginning, bound with chains. Enter Clotaldo, Clarín and two servants.)*

SERVANT. I've just restrained him with the chains as he was before.
CLOTALDO. His pride ends where it began.

We'll leave him here.
CLARÍN. *(To Segimundo.)* Don't wake up!

You don't want to see your change of fate.
You don't want to see how your world

has turned upside down,
and your glory was as brief

as a shadow of life, a flame of death.
CLOTALDO. Any man who can never stop talking

needs to have time and space
so he can rant

and speak at length.
Arrest this man and lock him in a room!

CLARÍN. Why me?
CLOTALDO. Because it is necessary to silence

any man who knows so many secrets.
CLARÍN. Now wait a minute!

I didn't try to kill my father,
or throw anyone out the window.

Why am I being locked up?
CLOTALDO. Take him with you! *(The servants take Clarín away. Enter King Basilio.)*

BASILIO. Clotaldo!
CLOTALDO. Your Majesty!

You have come all the way out here!
BASILIO. I couldn't contain my grief and curiosity.
I wanted to see what's happening here.

CLOTALDO. There he is.

He's back to his old state of misery.
BASILIO. My poor unfortunate prince, born in an evil hour!
You can awaken him now.

The narcotic you gave him has probably lost its strength.

CLOTALDO. He is restless, my lord, and he is speaking in his sleep.
He threatens to kill me and says awful things.

BASILIO. Such as?

CLOTALDO. That he will make you his slave.

BASILIO. Wake him up! (*Clotaldo tries to wake him up.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Where am I? Where am I?

BASILIO. It's better if he doesn't see me. (*Basilio withdraws.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Can this be me?

Am I in chains again?

Am I once more in prison?

Am I back in my grave?

Yes. God, help me!

All the things I dreamt!

CLOTALDO. Now it's my duty to deceive him.

It's time to wake up!

SEGISMUNDO. Yes. It's time to wake up.

CLOTALDO. You must've slept from the time

I was telling you about the flying eagle until now.

Have you slept all day?

SEGISMUNDO. Yes, and I'm probably still asleep.

What I saw all around me was a dream,

and what I see now before me

must be part of another dream.

I must still be asleep

since everything seems as clear

and vivid as it was in my dream.

But everything can be a dream.

CLOTALDO. Tell me what you dreamt about.

SEGISMUNDO. I can't describe it as a dream.

I can only tell you

what I saw with my own eyes.

Perhaps it was all a lie,

but I woke up in a bed

made out of petals.

It was so soft

it could've been woven

by the flowers of spring.

A thousand noblemen

bowed down to me,

called me their prince,

and offered me fine clothing

and jewels.

You were there,

and when you noticed

my state of confusion

you told me of my good fortune.

I might appear to be in chains now, Clotaldo,

but there I was a prince.

CLOTALDO. You must have given me a reward for the good news.

SEGISMUNDO. No. I called you a traitor and tried to kill you.

CLOTALDO. You were so cruel to me?

SEGISMUNDO. I was the lord of all,

and I wanted to take revenge

for what was done to me.

I felt love for one woman.

Now everything is gone,

and I still feel that love within me. (*Exit the King.*)

CLOTALDO. (*Notices the King was moved by what Segismundo said*

and left.) You dreamt of empires

because we had a conversation

about eagles,

but even in dreams

you should honor someone like me

who raised you with such pains.

Even in dreams good deeds are never lost. (*Clotaldo exits.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Then let me restrain my fury,

my ambition and my rage.

Yes, I'll do that,

since life's so strange

and living seems like dreaming.

The king dreams
he's king and lives
and rules under this falsehood;
and all the acclamations he receives
are nothing but words
that will later fade
and turn to ashes
scattered in the winds.
And to think there are men
who want to rule
knowing that one day
they must awaken
from the sleep of death.
The rich man dreams
of gold coins and silver
but with that dream
comes the burden
and the worries
of guarding his fortune.
The poor man dreams his sufferings,
for the poor man has nothing
but his misery and poverty.
We live and dream our reality
until we awaken from our sleep.
The man who tries to get ahead in life is dreaming.
The man who works and strives is dreaming.
The man who hurts, offends and wounds is dreaming.
In this world all men dream who they are,
but no one understands this.
I dream that I am imprisoned in this cell.
Yet I dreamt once before
that I lived a better life.
And what is life? A frenzy.
What is life? An illusion,
a shadow, a fiction ...
And our greatest good is but little,
for all of life is a dream
and dreams are only dreams.

III

Clarín in a cell.

CLARÍN. I am locked up
in this cursed tower
because I know too much.
Does this mean
I will be killed
for all I don't know?
They certainly kill a man
by starving him to death!
This is quite clear,
as my name is Clarín.
You might say I feel pity for myself.
And you might as well say it again,
since silence doesn't fill my belly.
And neither will the rats and spiders,
who accompany me in this cell.
At night in my dreams I hear trumpets.
I see a procession of crosses
and people whipping themselves.
Some of them fall and then rise.
Others faint from seeing the blood.
I just faint from hunger,
knowing that tomorrow
will also lack a plate of food;
knowing that if silence
can be called sacred,
I've idolized it as a saint.
That's why I deserve this punishment,
Because I've kept things to myself.
And silence for a servant
is a kind of sacrilege. (*There is a sound of drums and shouting.*)
SOLDIER 1. (*Offstage.*) This is the place.

This is where he is. Kick in the door.

Let's go inside.

CLARÍN. Oh lord! No doubt they're looking for me.

No doubt they know I'm here.

I wonder what they want from me? (*The soldiers enter.*)

SOLDIER 1. Come on! The prince is here.

CLARÍN. No he isn't!

SOLDIER 1. My lord!

SOLDIER 2. My prince!

CLARÍN. Do they seem drunk?

SOLDIER 1. You are our prince.

We don't accept a foreigner in your place.

We don't accept anyone else

except our very own noble prince.

Let us kneel down at your feet!

SOLDIERS. Long live our great prince!

CLARÍN. This can't be real! Blessed be God!

Is this the custom in this kingdom?

They take someone everyday,

make him prince, and later lock him up again?

Everyday they seem to do this.

I'd better play the part.

SOLDIERS. Lend us your feet!

CLARÍN. I will not! For what good is a footless prince?

SOLDIER 2. We all told your father that you're the only prince

we'll recognize.

CLARÍN. Were you disrespectful to my father? You scoundrel!

SOLDIER 1. It was only out of loyalty!

CLARÍN. If it was loyalty, I forgive you.

SOLDIER 2. Come and restore your kingdom. Long live

Segismundo.

SOLDIERS. Long live Segismundo!

CLARÍN. Did you say Segismundo? That seems to be the name

they call all their false princes. (*Enter Segismundo.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Who is calling my name?

CLARÍN. That's the end of my being a prince.

SOLDIER 1. Who is Segismundo?

SEGISMUNDO. I am.

SOLDIER 2. Then how dare you call yourself Segismundo. You

insolent fool!

CLARÍN. I never called myself Segismundo.

You were the stubborn fools who Segismund me.

SOLDIER 2. Great Prince Segismundo,

your father, King Basilio,

fearful of a prophecy,

which said he would find himself

defenseless kneeling at your feet,

wants to deprive you of your throne

and give it to Duke Astolfo.

This is what he's announced to his court.

But since the people have learned

they have a natural successor,

they refuse to have a foreigner

come and rule them.

So with good intentions,

we've come to find you.

We've come to free you from this place,

where you're being unjustly kept as prisoner.

Come then, we bring weapons,

and outside awaits an army

that will declare war,

and fight to secure your place

as our sovereign leader.

SEGISMUNDO. Am I to dream again

of great heights

and power that

will diminish time?

Am I to witness

another landscape of shadows

that will soon vanish in the wind?

Or should I risk being deceived

by my own humble intuition,

which we've learned

to guard and protect?

I won't allow it! I won't!

I won't be misled by fate!

I know that this life is a dream.

I know you're trying

to deceive my dead senses.

So go away figments

of my imagination!
 Voice without a body!
 Body without a voice!
 I don't want false notions,
 or imaginary power!
 I will not have illusions that dissolve
 at the slightest breath of dawn.
 Just like that young almond tree
 which unadvised,
 rushes to bloom before its time
 and finds its flowers wilted
 before it's spring.
 I know you well!
 I know you!
 I know you do the same
 to all who fall asleep.
 No use pretending.
 I know that life is a dream.

SOLDIER 2. If you think we're fooling you,
 look outside and see what was once a desolate mountain
 is now filled with soldiers waiting to obey you.

SEGISMUNDO. I saw all that once before,
 just as clearly and distinctly as I see it now.
 And it was a dream.

SOLDIER 2. Dreams always seem to foretell what is to come.
 And that was the meaning of your dream.

SEGISMUNDO. You're right.
 And in case what was foretold is accurate,
 and life seems brief as a dream,
 let us dream again ... let us dream.
 But let us close our eyes, and be attentive,
 knowing that we must awaken
 when the dream is full of pleasure;
 and we'll be able to laugh,
 and be less deceived,
 if we're warned against this harm.
 So, taking all precaution
 and knowing that power
 is merely borrowed
 and must be returned to its owner,

let us dare and risk everything.
 Soldiers, I thank you for your loyalty.
 You'll find in me a leader
 who will free you from foreign rule.
 Prepare for battle! I'll prove my courage!
 I'll declare war against my father and defeat him!
 Soon I'll see him kneeling at my feet.

SOLEIERS. Long live Segismundo! (*Enter Clotaldo.*)

CLOTALDO. Heavens! What's all this commotion!
 SEGISMUNDO. Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO. Sir.

CLARIN. I bet he'll throw him off the mountain. (*Clarín exits.*)

CLOTALDO. I kneel before you. I know I shall die.

SEGISMUNDO. Get up! Get up from the ground!
 I need you as my guide.
 I need to trust you, as one trusts a guiding star.
 For I know that I owe my upbringing
 to your great loyalty.
 Embrace me.

CLOTALDO. What are you saying?
 SEGISMUNDO. That I am dreaming and I want to do good.
 For even in dreams good deeds are never lost.

CLOTALDO. Well, Sir, if doing good is what you desire,
 then don't be offended if I also do the same.
 This means I cannot counsel you,
 if you wish to make war on your father
 my king.

Here I am at your feet. Kill me.

SEGISMUNDO. (*Pause. Contains himself.*) Clotaldo, I respect
 your decision.
 Now go and serve your king.
 We shall meet on the battlefield.

CLOTALDO. I'm grateful to you a thousand times. (*Clotaldo exits.*)

SEGISMUNDO. Don't let me open my eyes if I sleep.
 And if this is reality don't let me close my eyes.
 Dream or reality,
 to do good it's what matters.
 Now let us go and fight! (*They exit. Enter King Basilio and Astolfo.*)

BASILIO. Who can stop the fury of a horse
 galloping back to the wild?

Who can stop a crag from
breaking off in the mountains?
Who can hold back a river
that flows proudly towards the sea?
It's easier to restrain these things
than the proud wrath of a nation.
The shouts of a divided country attest to this truth.
The voices echo through the mountains,
some shouting "Astolfo," others "Segismundo."
The main hall of this palace,
has been reduced to a scene of horror —
a vulgar theatre, where an unknown fate stages a tragedy.

ASTOLFO. Sir, we must postpone all the celebration.
We must put an end to all the applause
and all the festive pleasures
which your generous hand promised me.
For if this country which I hope to rule
is resisting the obedience it owes me
it's because I must first earn it.
Give me a strong proud horse, I will take my men,
and descend on my rival like lightning and thunder. *(Exit*

Astolfo.)
BASILIO. There's no use fighting what is meant to be,
because in trying to avoid the risk one meets it.
Cruel law! Awful truth! Terrible horror!

A man trying to escape danger runs into it!
I myself have destroyed my country! *(Enter Estrella.)*
ESTRELLA. Great king, unless you try to prevent
the commotion that has started amongst rivals,
and is spreading through the streets,
you will soon find your kingdom
drowned in a red wave of blood.
The tragedy of sadness
and misfortune is all around us.
So great is the ruin of your empire,
so severe the rage for blood,
that my eyes and ears are filled with terror.
Each stone turns into a grave,
each flower into a tomb,
each soldier into a living skeleton.

Even the sun prefers to be blind
and the wind to be breathless,
than to witness such a sight. *(Enter Clotaldo.)*
CLOTALDO. Thank God, I reach your feet alive.
The people like a blind,
reckless monster
have broken into the tower
and set him free.
And being honored
and treated like a king
a second time,
he promises
that he will make
heaven's prediction
come true.

BASILIO. Give me a horse,
that I might defeat an ungrateful son.
If the wisdom of science has failed me,
then I must resort to my sword
and defend my throne. *(Basilio exits. Enter Rosaura and detains*

Clotaldo.)
ROSAURA. I know that all is war.
But you must listen to me.
Astolfo has discovered who I am.

And it's obvious he's chosen to trample my honor,
because he continues to meet Estrella in the garden at night.
I know courage shouts from your chest
to join this war, but you must help me.
You must recover my honor and I can only rely on you.
I have the key. I will show you how you can enter the garden
at night and avenge me by his death.

CLOTALDO. It's true that from the moment I met you,
I was inclined to do for you
all that was within my power.
I tried to find the means to recover your lost honor,
even if it meant killing Astolfo.
An absurd notion, indeed!
Astolfo proved his good will
when he intervened in my defense
and endangered his own life.

So how do you expect that my grateful soul
can cause the death of a man who saved my life?
How am I supposed to divide my affection for you
and my gratitude towards him?

I no longer know the meaning of my existence,
since I am torn between what I have given
and what was given to me.

ROSAURA. I don't have to remind you
that the man who gives
will always excel the man who receives.
I'm asking you to give me back my honor,
since giving is nobler than receiving.

CLOTALDO. I will not kill Astolfo and add more blood and
suffering to a country that has fallen into the hands of
misfortune! If you wish to take refuge from your shame,
there are other ways.

ROSAURA. What do you suggest,
that I enter a convent
and devote myself to God?

If you were my father
I might put up with the insult.
But since you're not, I refuse.

CLOTALDO. Then, what do you intend to do?
ROSAURA. Kill Astolfo!

CLOTALDO. Are you armed with such courage,
even if you've never known your father?

ROSAURA. Yes.
CLOTALDO. What compels you to do this?

ROSAURA. My self-respect.
CLOTALDO. You must see Astolfo ...

ROSAURA. As someone who has trampled all over my being.
CLOTALDO. ... As your king and husband to Estrella.

ROSAURA. That will never happen! God, I swear!
CLOTALDO. This is madness!

ROSAURA. I know this.
CLOTALDO. Then overcome it!

ROSAURA. I can't.
CLOTALDO. Then you'll lose ...

ROSAURA. I know.
CLOTALDO. ... Life and honor.

ROSAURA. I know this too.

CLOTALDO. What do you intend...?
ROSAURA. My death.

CLOTALDO. You're mistaking despair ...
ROSAURA. No. It's honor.

CLOTALDO. It's madness.
ROSAURA. It is valor.

CLOTALDO. It's frenzy.
ROSAURA. It's anger. Rage.

CLOTALDO. Hatred you can't put an end to?
ROSAURA. No.

CLOTALDO. Who can help you?
ROSAURA. Myself.

CLOTALDO. Is there no other solution?
ROSAURA. No.

CLOTALDO. Think well. There has to be some other way ...
ROSAURA. Some other way to ruin myself. *(Rosaura exits.)*

CLOTALDO. Then we're both ruined. It's all ruined. *(Clotaldo
exits. Segismundo enters with Clarín.)*

SEGISMUNDO. If the ancient Romans could only see me
leading an army that could conquer the sky.

But let us conquer something
less grand than the firmament.

The higher the heights, the greater the fall.
The more I'll lose once the dream is shattered. *(A trumpet sounds.)*

CLARÍN. A swift horse comes our way.
A horse made of earth, wind, sea and fire.

For its body is the earth.
The wind and sea are its mouth.

And the soul is the fire in its chest.
I marvel at seeing who rides this monster,

that doesn't just run but flies into your presence
and is an elegant woman.

SEGISMUNDO. Her light blinds me.
CLARÍN. Good lord! It's Rosaura! *(Clarín exits.)*

SEGISMUNDO. Fate brings her back to me. *(Rosaura enters
wearing riding clothes. She has a sword and a dagger.)*

ROSAURA. Noble prince, who rises
from his dark night
like the sun,

and in the arms of dawn
restores light upon hills,
trees and roses.

May you protect
the unhappy woman
who kneels before you.
I trust you will help me
because you are noble
and I am a woman
who needs your help.

Three times .
you have seen me.

Three times
I have appeared before you
in different guise and form.

The first time
you mistook me for a man,
you were a prisoner in chains,
and my pain seemed
like nothing compared
to your misery.

The second time,
you saw me as a woman
and I was like a phantom,
an illusion, in your dream of majesty.
The third time is today,
and I must seem like a monster
of both sexes,

since I carry a weapon
and appear before you in a dress.
I was born of a noble mother,
who must've been beautiful
but also unfortunate.

My father swore to marry her.
But he never kept his word
and still until this day
my mother holds
on to that promise.
I tell you all of this, my lord,
because I have inherited

my mother's fate,
and I suffer the same misfortune.

The man who betrayed my faith
and stained my honor is Astolfo.
His name alone fills my heart
with rage and anger,

because the name of our enemy
always burns and stings our tongue.
Astolfo was my faithless lover
who one day forgot all our glories,
and traveled to this country
to marry Estrella.

So sad and devastated was I,
that I became mad —
a dead woman
who became mute,
since there are sorrows
that can never form
into words.

It was my mother
who broke the walls
of my silent rage,
and all my grief
gushed out of my breast
like aimless troops.
It was my mother
who bade me

to follow Astolfo here,
and gave me this sword,
so I could claim
his debt to my honor.

It was my mother
who told me to dress as a man
and conceal my identity.
Now I kneel before you
as a woman,
and as a woman

I ask you to help me restore
my name and reputation.
As a man I stand before you

and take this sword in my hand
to help you battle for your crown.
As a woman I knock gently
at the doors of your heart.
As a man I am armed with courage
to fight by your side.
Three times I have appeared before you,
as a man, as a woman,
and now as a humble soul.
SEGISMUNDO. If it's true I'm dreaming
then I shouldn't be remembering.
There's not enough room
in dreams for memories.
But how could this woman
say she saw me
and mention
such vivid details
of my dream?
Then it was reality.
It wasn't a dream.
Such confusion!
How can I say
my life is a dream?
Are glories and
dreams similar?
Is fiction reality?
Is reality a lie?
Is there so little
difference between them?
What is seeing and tasting?
Is it a lie or truth?
— Rosaura is in my power.
I adore her beauty.
She's here by my side.
Let love break every rule,
even her trust in me.
This is a dream.
It has to be a dream.
Then let me dream
of joy and pleasure,

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before they turn into sorrows.
— No ... No ...
I mustn't be driven by desire
and temptation.
Pleasure is a lovely flame
that doesn't last forever.
I must look to eternity.
Rosaura has been dishonored.
As a prince I should restore
her name and honor.
— Sound to arms!
Prepare for battle!
ROSAURA. Sir! You offer no reply for my plight!
Doesn't my pain and anguish
deserve a single word from you?
How can you turn your back on me, my lord?
SEGISMUNDO. Rosaura, in order for me to be kind,
I must be cruel to you now.
ROSAURA. I don't understand ...
SEGISMUNDO. I'd much rather answer with my actions than
with words.
ROSAURA. My lord, what is that supposed to mean?
SEGISMUNDO. It's better like this ...
ROSAURA. Sir, after what I've gone through,
you leave me in such darkness.
My lord, how can you turn your back on me?
SEGISMUNDO. I can't look at your face now.
I cannot look at your beauty,
if you want me to think of your honor.
Prepare for battle! (*Exit Segismundo and the soldiers. Enter
Clarín.*)
CLARÍN. My lady, can I have a word with you?
ROSAURA. Oh, Clarín! Where have you been?
CLARÍN. Locked in a tower.
Playing cards, consulting the future ...
I wanted to know if I was going to die.
ROSAURA. Why?
CLARÍN. Because I know the truth about you ... In fact
Clotaldo ... (*Drums.*)
What is that noise?

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ROSATURA. What can it be?
CLARÍN. It's an armed squadron

marching out of the palace
to fight the army of Segismundo.

ROSATURA. Then why am I standing here
like a coward?

I should be at his side
when there's so much cruelty
and violence all around us. *(Rosaura exits.)*

VOICES. *(Offstage.)* Long live our king!

OTHER VOICES. *(Offstage.)* To our freedom!

CLARÍN. Long live both our liberty
and the king!

Let them both be part of life
and let's be happy!

As long as I don't get caught
in the middle of this war.

I'll just step off to the side
and watch the whole game from here.

This is a well-hidden and secure place.
And since death can never find me here,

here's to you death! *(Clarín does a gesture to ward off evil. He hides. The sound of war. Enter Basilio, Clotaldo and Astolfo, escaping the battle.)*

BASILIO. Is there a more unfortunate king or mistreated father?

CLOTALDO. Your army has lost direction and order.

ASTOLFO. My lord, we're losing this war.

CLOTALDO. My lord, you must escape. Save your life!

BASILIO. The losers are the cowards who escape battle.

The winners are the fighters who combat their enemies
till the end. Let us fight the inhuman cruelty of a
tyrannical son! *(Shots are fired. Clarín is wounded.)*

BASILIO. Heavens!

ASTOLFO. Who is this poor soldier covered in blood?

CLARÍN. I am an unlucky man

who was trying to escape death

and instead ran into it.

We always run into the thing

we're escaping from.

Go back...!

Go back to the battlefield!

If you're trying to escape death,
there is more safety amidst the

bullets than on this secluded mountain.
No corner or hidden place is safe

from the force of destiny. *(He falls and dies.)*

BASILIO. "No corner or hidden place
is safe from the force of destiny."

Oh God, how well the words of this corpse

describe our ignorance and error.

How eloquent is the trail

of blood that flows

from the open mouth

of his wound,

and teaches us

that all our efforts

are wasted when

we try to resist

a higher power.

I tried to save

my country from danger,

and I handed it over

to evil and destruction.

CLOTALDO. It's true that we can't escape death,

no matter where we hide.

But a good Christian

should never say

there's no protection

against the force of evil.

A prudent man

can conquer fate, my lord.

You should escape danger

and misfortune while you can.

ASTOLFO. My lord, take his advice.

I have hidden a horse

behind a large rock.

He's as fast as the wind.

Take it and escape this place.

BASILIO. If it's God's will that I die,
then I want to meet death here