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THE  
**CHILD OF NATURE.**

A DRAMA,  
*1810*  
IN FOUR ACTS,

FROM THE FRENCH OF

MADAME THE MARCHIONESS OF SILLERY,

FORMERLY

COUNTESS OF GENLIS,

PERFORMING AT THE

**THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.**

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BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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PATERNOSTER ROW.

1806.

*10.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

**Z**ÉLIE, the French drama, from which the Child of Nature has been taken, was, with great taste, selected from the works of the Marchioness of Sillery (late Countess of Genlis) by a Lady, who presented the Manager of Covent Garden Theatre with a *literal translation*—but however correct or elegant, *a mere translation* must have precluded all prospect of success—the Manager therefore sent the play of *Zélie* to the present translator, who, with much care and attention, prepared it for the English stage—That care has been amply recompensed by the reception the piece has received, and more especially in those scenes, which she has taken the liberty to add from her own invention.

## CHARACTERS.

*Cov. Gard.*  
*Nov. 23*  
*1810*

### MEN.

DUKE MURCIA	-	-	-	-	Mr. Ryder. <i>Chapman</i>
MARQUIS ALMANZA	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren. <i>Egerton</i>
COUNT VALANTIA	-	-	-	-	Mr. Lewis. <i>Jones</i>
SEVILLE	-	-	-	-	Mr. Fearon. <i>Crestwell</i>
GRANADA	-	-	-	-	Mr. Macready. <i>Atkins</i>
PEASANT	-	-	-	-	Mr. Aickin. <i>Truman</i>

### WOMEN.

MARCHIONESS MERIDA	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Mattocks. <i>Humphries</i>
AMANTHIS	-	-	-	-	Miss Brunton. <i>J. Booth</i>

*✓ From the Surrey Theatre - Her first appearance at Cov. Gard.*

*Second Peasant, Female Attendant, and other Domestics.*

SCENE, SPAIN.—*At the Country Seat of the*  
MARQUIS ALMANZA.

THE  
CHILD OF NATURE.

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ACT I.

SCENE I. A SALOON.

*Enter Seville, followed by Count Valantia and Granada.*

*Seville.*

MY Lord, it was very fortunate the accident happened so near this house.—Please to rest yourself in this apartment while I give the necessary orders about mending your carriage—but indeed it is so thoroughly broken, I am afraid it cannot be refitted before to-morrow.

*Count.* No matter—I can pass my time so pleasantly in this delightful mansion, I shall not be impatient to leave it.—Besides, I shall be extremely happy in seeing your Lord the Marquis Almanza—did not you say, you expected him home some time to-day?

*Sev.* Yes, we expect him every hour. Duke Murcia, his uncle, is already arrived; and as your Lordship is not in a hurry about your chaise, I'll go instantly and let the Duke know you are here.

[*Going.*]

*Count.* By no means—Wait till the Marquis arrives, and he will introduce me.

*Sev.* Has your Lordship any further commands?

*Count.* No—only be so kind as to see to the repairing my chaise.

*Sev.* I shall. [*Bows, and exit.*

*Count.* And you would be vastly surprised if you knew the pains we have taken to break it.—Well, here I am in the castle of Almanza, and so far success has crowned my adventure.

*Gran.* And what the design of that adventure can be, I am at a loss to guess! All this stratagem and mystery looks very much like some scheme contrived by love; yet that's not probable, as you are on the point of marriage with a woman of fortune, family, and beauty, and of whom you have professed to be enamoured—and yet, within a few weeks of your union, you quit Madrid and her, come post to this village, and as soon as you arrive in sight of this castle, order your attendants to break your carriage, and then run hither and ask for assistance to mend it—which the domestics kindly grant, and your Lordship rejoices at the progress of your adventure—which, if not directed by love, is something like madness.

*Count.* I have for many years tried thy fidelity, and will now confide in it—Love is the source of all my schemes.

*Gran.* Do you then not love your intended bride, the beautiful Marchioness?

*Count.* The Marchioness Merida is a charming creature! and I loved her passionately! to distraction!—till I found she loved me, and that satiated my desires at once.

*Gran.* Indeed!

*Count.* I do not say I shall not marry the Marchioness—perhaps I may—yes, I may take her fortune—for you know, Granada, I have none of my own.

*Gran.* I have known it for these six years, my Lord, ever since I have been in your service.

*Count.* Yes, I once loved ; I doated upon Merida—but the first time she kindly condescended to declare her passion for *me*, I fell asleep. [Yawns.

*Gran.* But who can be this new object who keeps you awake ?

*Count.* One whose coyness may, I fear, *ever* keep me so. Have not you heard of the young orphan Amanthis, of whom so many wonderful conjectures have been formed ?

*Gran.* The young lady whom the Marquis Almanza has brought up from her infancy, and keeps confined in a part of this castle, and has never suffered any living creature to behold ?

*Count.* The same—but *I* have beheld her—I have written to her—I have spoken to her.

*Gran.* How was that possible ?

*Count.* You know I hate a man should have the fame of possessing a perfect beauty all to himself : and though this girl has never been seen by mortal, except the Marquis, and the old Duenna who is shut up with her, yet, by his solicitude to conceal her, such an idea of her beauty has gone forth : therefore I resolved to find out whether she was that prodigy or not ; and *if* she was, to share the honour of her belonging to me, as well as to him.

*Gran.* And would you, my Lord, for a poor orphan, of whose birth and fortune all the world are ignorant, resign the noble and beautiful Marchioness ?

*Count.* Yes ; for I tell you she loves me, and it is very troublesome to be beloved—and although curiosity and envy were my sole motives for seeking to behold Amanthis, yet after such a sight, in which perfect beauty, and enchanting grace, timid innocence, with matchless sensibility, were all united, never can I forego the pleasing contemplation, or the hope, which has allured me to this enterprise.

*Gran.* But it is by some supposed, that the Mar-



quis, notwithstanding his rank and fortune, means to marry Amanthis. Now as he is your friend, would you (while he supposes himself secure) be the cause of his losing her, for whom he has shown so much anxiety?

*Count.* You mistake, Granada; the Marquis is no friend of mine—he is, to be sure, very obliging and civil when we meet—but no friendship, that should deter a man of gallantry from making him miserable, subsists between us. He is the friend, indeed, and distant relation of my intended bride the Marchioness, and at her house we have frequently met—but, notwithstanding the apprehensions of the Marquis's family, cause them to suspect Amanthis already is, or may become, his wife—yet many people suppose she is but his mistress—and some believe (and indeed that is the general opinion) she is his daughter.

*Gran.* A young man to be father of a daughter near seventeen.

*Count.* By no means impossible—for I dare say he is five and thirty, or, perhaps, more.

*Gran.* But, my Lord, pray satisfy my curiosity how you found means to see her?

*Count.* By mounting that wall, the prodigious height of which attracted your attention as we passed by, at a distance—that wall surrounds the garden appropriated to Amanthis.

*Gran.* But how was it possible for you to ascend it?

*Count.* Every thing is to be effected by perseverance, and by money.

*Gran.* But in general your Lordship has neither the one nor the other.

*Count.* When I had ascended it, and saw the old Duenna in a distant walk—by ropes fastened on the other side, I let myself down into the garden for a few moments—then paint to yourself the surprise of Amanthis!—except in her childhood, the second man she had ever seen—and I believe she was very glad to see him.—She appeared alarmed, but not

displeased—She spoke too, and with a softness in her voice that gave me hope equal to my wishes.—Somebody is coming—follow me into the park, and hear the scheme I came hither to accomplish—you must assist me, and prove your skill as I have proved mine. [Exeunt.

*Enter Duke Murcia and Seville.*

*Duke.* Seville, you know—every body knows, how fond I am of my nephew—have not I, from his childhood, acted as a father to him?—and will he not be, at my death, sole heir to all my dignities?—Does he not even pretend to reverence and obey me as his only relation, and the head of his family? Then why are the secret motives of this wonderful behaviour, which has surprised all the court, all his friends, and all his acquaintance, why not (though concealed from *them*) revealed to me?

*Sev.* I can, my Lord, give you but little light upon the subject—every thing relative to this young lady, has ever been held by the Marquis a most profound secret from every part of his family.

*Duke.* But what kind of an education can she have received in such confinement?—and you, who stand sentry at the door of her apartments, how can you guard her, without seeing her?

*Sev.* As our poor soldiers guard the public treasures, without ever seeing a pistole.—She resides in that part of the castle in which every window looks upon an extensive garden, enclosed by the wall, remarkable for its prodigious height.—I have only intrusted to me the key of a chamber adjoining to her apartments, where I go daily to receive her orders, and take to her all those things she commands—except one—and that the Marquis has positively prohibited.

*Duke.* And what can that one be? I am all impatience to know.

*Sev.* Books of every kind.

*Duke.* Poor thing! Poor thing! why how, in such solitude, can she pass her time without reading?

*Sev.* She reads a great deal, Sir. The Marquis, while he is in town, sends her books frequently, but they are all of his own hand-writing.

*Duke.* A man write books to a young woman? Why, you simpleton, they are love letters.

*Sev.* No, indeed, my Lord—some are on morality, some on divinity, and some history.

*Duke.* Write history!—my nephew write books!—There are often songs too I warrant, and some little pieces of poetry?

*Sev.* I never conveyed to her any thing like poetry, or love.

*Duke.* And, pray, when you wait upon her, what kind of conversation does she hold on the other side of the wainscot?

*Sev.* I never heard her speak.

*Duke.* Did not you say you received her commands?

*Sev.* In writing—every morning I find a paper on which she, or the Duenna, has written her orders.—Would you like to see what she has ordered for to-day?

*Duke.* Very much—certainly—I am much obliged to you.

*Sev.* [*Takes out a paper.*] This is written by Amanthis herself.

*Duke.* And, pray, how do you know her hand from the Duenna's?

*Sev.* By the number of letters she writes to my Lord, and of which I have the charge.

[*He gives the paper to the Duke.*]

*Duke.* And what can they be but love letters? Seville, your account is a very suspicious one.—  
[*Reads.*] “Bring me some pens, some paper, and some pencils, for drawing;”—and who has taught her to write and to draw?

*Sev.* Your nephew, I have no doubt, Sir; and many other accomplishments besides; for she fre-

quently gives orders for different pieces of music, strings for various instruments, and a thousand other things, which proves she has been the pupil of no mean artist.

*Duke.* I am out of all patience!—[*Reads again.*]  
“Dinner and supper at the usual hours—and coffee at six o’clock.” [Returning the paper]—Why, Sir, your whole time is employed in fetching and carrying.

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.* My Lord is arrived—and now entering the avenue.

*Duke.* He is alone? he has brought no company with him, I suppose?

*Serv.* Yes, Sir; there are two ladies in the carriage.

*Sev.* Ladies! it is a long time since I have seen a lady in this house.

*Duke.* He has brought them to shut up, I suppose—more employment for you, Mr. Seville—[*Looks out.*] Oh, no! I see who it is—a relation—a distant relation—the Marchioness Merida.

*Enter Marquis Almanza, Marchioness Merida,  
and a female Attendant.*

*Duke.* So nephew, you see I have made free in your absence—did you expect to find me here?

*Marq.* No, Sir—but it gives me great pleasure; and I regret I did not come sooner on that account.

*Duke.* My dear Marchioness, by what strange good fortune do I meet you at the castle?

*March.* By my complying with the request of the Marquis.—[*To the Marquis.*] But, my Lord, did not one of your servants acquaint you Count Valantia was here?

*Marq.* [*Smiling.*] Yes; and that, I hope, will sufficiently repay you, for your condescension in making this visit.—[*To Seville.*] Is the Count alone?

*Sev.* Only one attendant.

*Duke.* You see what your Ladyship's attractions are ; he heard you were coming, and so he contrived to be here before you—Came, too, with the pretence of having broke down his carriage!—Ha, ha, ha—Very well, Marchioness.

*March.* [*To Seville.*] And did he really say his carriage was broken?

*Sev.* Yes, Madam ; but I hope your Ladyship will pardon me—I have since learnt that his attendant was seen to take a large axe from a portmanteau, with which he chopped in pieces the wheels, and then called for help.

*March.* Well, this is an instance of romantic gallantry, for which I will forgive him a thousand slights—ha, ha, ha!—it diverts me beyond measure—and he really broke the wheel of his carriage for the purpose?

*Sev.* So I am told, Madam ; but I hope—

*March.* No ; I am not at all angry with you—don't be afraid—I sincerely forgive your mentioning it.

*Duke.* You may depend on what she says—I'll answer for the sincerity of her forgiveness.

*Marq.* Seville ; go immediately to the Count Valantia, and conduct him hither. [*Exit Seville.*] In the mean time, Madam, permit me to show you to your apartments.

*March.* No, my Lord ; that's a ceremony I must decline.—I will merely adjust my dress, and be with you in less than an hour. [*Aside.*] Well, indeed, Count, this is flattering ! [*Exit, Attendant following.*]

*Duke.* [*Aside.*] Now we are by ourselves I will—yes, I will open my mind to him—[*Endeavouring to call up a resolution.*] Marquis—nephew—I suppose you know who I am?

*Marq.* Certainly, Sir—did I ever seem to forget?

*Duke.* You know at your father's death I adopted you—I took you home, and obliged you to go through the most laborious exercises, and all the

hardships of the most rigorous education; and for no other reason, than because I loved you.

*Marq.* I know it, Sir.

*Duke.* And in your youth, did I suffer you to squander your money? No—Did I ever suffer you to have any?—No.

*Marq.* No.

*Duke.* Or did I ever comply with any of your foolish wishes?—Is there a single indulgence you can lay to my charge?

*Marq.* No.

*Duke.* Then do you not feel for me that respect, that reverence, that fear, and that love, which is due for all my kindness to you?

*Marq.* Yes, indeed, Sir, I do.

*Duke.* I take your word—I believe you do—yet I shall be much more pleased with some proof.

*Marq.* Demand the proof, Sir.

*Duke.* That's right—I thank you—but the affair on which I want to speak to you, I know you feel *extremely delicate* upon, and therefore I wish to treat it with the utmost delicacy.—Who is that young woman you keep in a separate part of this house? Is she your mistress, or your daughter?—or one whom you mean to marry?—and, by so doing, bring disgrace upon your family—or do you intend—

*Marq.* Dear Sir, keep your promise of delicacy, and I have no objection to reveal to you, what I mean shortly to declare to all the world.

*Duke.* Why then I am under a vast obligation to you for your confidence!

*Marq.* For these few months past I have resolved to change my conduct in regard to the person of whom you speak; and for that purpose did I bring hither the Marchioness Merida, as the most proper person of my family to whom I could introduce Amanthis.

*Duke.* But not as your wife!—not as your wife, I hope?

*Marq.* No—as an unfortunate orphan, whom

friendship and pity caused me to adopt—for thirteen years *I* have been possessed of this precious charge.

*Duke.* But why precious? speak coolly—don't put yourself in a passion—speak of her in the same language as when you speak of other women.

*Marq.* I should, did not I see her unlike all others!

*Duke.* No more raptures—I want to hear who she is.

*Marq.* Among the various friendships of my youth, do you not remember the name of Alberto?

*Duke.* Certainly—was he not obliged to fly his country on account of some unfortunate duel, and has died in exile?

*Marq.* So it is believed.—Conformity of sentiments endeared us to each other in our earliest years; and his misfortunes at a later period increased the friendship which chance had, perhaps, begun.—From an affluent fortune I saw him, by unthought-of casualties, reduced to ruin.—I saw him follow to the grave a much-lov'd wife—beheld him returning from that fatal duel by which his life was forfeited to his country—and viewed him, with a bursting heart, prepare to leave that country for ever.—In this scene of sorrow, I softened, in some sort, his agonizing woes, by taking from his hand all his poor, distracted mind had left to solace in, an infant daughter; swearing to become to her that careful guardian, that tender parent, and that faithful friend—which I have proved.

*Duke.* Very *careful* indeed—but did you promise him to lock her up?

*Marq.* The mode of her education has been an after-thought entirely.—Alberto, with all the virtues for which I esteemed him, was of a jealous suspicious nature; and, in respect to female reputation, rigorously romantic—As Amanthis grew up I saw with dread the charge I had undertaken, and the reported death of my friend increased my apprehensions for my trust—I had vowed to protect, to guard her; to

whom could I transfer the oath? and my rank at court would often take me from her.

*Duke.* And do you think if she had been an ugly woman, you would have been so thoughtful about your oath?

*Marq.* Her danger had been then less—yet I'll not disguise my sentiments—for though too weak to overcome, I have yet virtue to condemn them.—I love Amanthis—doat to distraction—but the difference of our ages, and of our states, [*Proudly*] places an inseparable bar between us.

*Duke.* This is the wisest sentence I have heard you speak for a long time.

*Marq.* And yet, Sir, there is one impediment greater than those I have named—I do not think she loves me—accustomed to see, and know no man but myself, on me she lavishes all her fondness, all her tenderest affection—but that love is the mere effect of gratitude—to make me happy, I must be loved with a passion equal to my own.

*Duke.* And I have no doubt but that among some of our women of quality we may find just such another ardent flame.

*Marq.* To-day I restore Amanthis to that liberty she has never remembered, of course not once regretted—Come, Sir, let me introduce you to her.

*Duke.* With all my heart—I have no objection to see her—I like to see a pretty woman—but then, I command you not to show, by your behaviour, that you love her—no attentions—no professions.

*Marq.* None, Sir—Thank Heaven, I am the entire master of my conduct, though not of my heart. [*Exeunt.*]



## ACT II.

SCENE I. *The Gardens belonging to the Marquis.*

*Enter the Marquis, leading Amanthis.*

*Marquis.*

COME this way, my dear Amanthis—and do not be thus agitated.—I am now talking to you without a witness to our discourse, for the last time.—Wherefore do you weep? what thus affects you?

*Aman.* Why will you take me from my retreat? did not you say I should stay here as long as I was pleased with it?—and as long as I loved you? Ah! I expected to stay here for ever.

*Marq.* Hear me, Amanthis—I have hitherto secluded you from the tumult and dissipation of the world, in order to form your heart and mind; and to give you leisure to attain every useful science and accomplishment—you have surpassed my utmost expectations, and I would now enjoy the pride of what I have completed.—I must show you to the world—we were born for society, and you will be the ornament and delight of that, which you shall make your choice.

*Aman.* I know not whether I shall give delight, but I am sure I shall not be delighted myself.

*Marq.* Why not?

*Aman.* Because I shall not see you so often as I have hitherto done.

*Marq.* But you will be amongst those who will prove equally kind and indulgent to you, and who will seek every means to make you happy.

*Aman.* You did not talk thus to me always—nor

do you look with such tenderness upon me as you used to do—while you speak I can see you are not pleased, or not happy; and it gives me a sorrow I hardly know how to bear.

*Marq.* Nay, Amanthis, I am not changed—I shall always be your friend—your father—you are among those objects I love.

*Aman.* And you are the *only* object I love—the only one I ever can love.

*Marq.* Do not promise that—when you have seen the world, some other, more deserving—

*Aman.* Oh! do not go on—I cannot bear you should have such unjust suspicions—do not *you* see the world? and yet I am sure you prefer me to all the universe besides—when I am there; why cannot you then confide in me, as I have done in you?

*Marq.* The circumstance is different; I had seen all, before I beheld you; you have seen none but me.

*Aman.* Why, then, will you show me others?—I had rather like none but you—I cannot be so happy when I have more to love.—Let me still stay here.—Ah—you do not answer—you wish me to like others as well as you—and I obey; I will do any thing with cheerfulness that you command.—But when I am in the world you will not leave me wholly?—I shall sometimes see you?—I hope so!

*Marq.* Leave you, Amanthis?—Ah! you little think how hard it would be to leave you.

*Aman.* Nay, I am convinced you love me—love me dearly—does not all I possess come from you? You have even taught me to think, to speak, and to be happy.—Yet of all your gifts, that, the most dear to my heart, is a sentiment I feel for you, and cannot tell what it is—I have not power to describe either its tenderness or its force—'Tis impossible I should make you comprehend it—for *you* never felt any thing like it.

*Marq.* 'Tis gratitude she means. [*Aside.*] My dear Amanthis, without ceasing to feel, you must

learn to hide those sentiments you speak of; and never express this tender friendship before others; which, though what we ourselves delight in, they might turn to ridicule.

*Aman.* Would they?—they are ignorant then, and never felt what I do, else they would applaud it.

*Marq.* Among the rest, to whom you will be soon introduced, is my uncle, and I regard him as my father.

*Aman.* Oh! that's a tender name—you have so often told me of mine; his love for me, and his distresses, that I revere the name of father, even in a stranger.

*Marq.* I have sometimes mentioned to you the Marchioness Merida—She is now in this house, and as soon as I have introduced you to her, I desire you will consider her as your friend.

*Aman.* My friend? that is the name you bid me call you by—No—I cannot promise to call her friend—one friend is enough for me.

*Marq.* But the Marchioness—

*Aman.* No—Let me call her something else—I shall not feel for her what I do for you—any thing but friend—that must belong to you.

[*Taking his hand.*

*Marq.* You will see here also, a young man called Count Valantia.

*Aman.* A young man!—Oh! I had forgot to tell you—

*Marq.* What?

*Aman.* Of a young man I have seen. [*Delighted.*

*Marq.* How!

*Aman.* But I was so pleased to see you return, he slipped my memory.

*Marq.* What of him? proceed.

*Aman.* A young man! ha, ha, ha—such a strange adventure!

*Marq.* Tell me immediately; when did he see you? what has he said to you?

*Aman.* Not much—he said very little—but he sighed heavily—and sent a letter.

*Marq.* Explain yourself.

*Aman.* It was only about a week ago, as I was sitting by the little bower near to the garden wall, suddenly I heard an unknown voice call me by my name—it seemed to come from the air—I looked up, and beheld a young man upon the wall.—The moment I recovered from the fright, I asked him what he wanted—he said he came “to look at me”—but that appeared so strange, I could not think it true—and then he gazed on me so wildly, I ran away and hid myself—on which he drew a letter from his pocket, and threw it after me—I would not take it up till he was gone—then I caught it, and flew to my apartments, pleased beyond expression.

*Marq.* Wherefore?

*Aman.* That I had escaped him.

*Marq.* [*Aside.*] Who could it be! Ah! I have a suspicion—Where is the letter?

*Aman.* Here—I do not understand it—perhaps you may. [*Gives the letter.*]

*Marq.* [*Reading.*] “Know, beautiful Amanthis, “there is no retreat, however hidden, into which “love cannot penetrate.—The hope of beholding “you has made me brave all dangers.—If you will “but kindly pity a passion, pure as it is ardent, it “shall soon inspire me with the means to release “you from the tyranny of that barbarian, who keeps “you secluded from every joy that’s waiting to at- “tend you in a gay world. Conceal this adventure “from the jealous tyrant, and reflect, that the most “tender lover waits impatiently for the happy mo- “ment to prove himself your deliverer.” [*Returning the letter.*] And what do you think of this letter?

*Aman.* That the poor man is mad—and yet it is a kind of madness I never heard of before. [*Reading part of the letter.*] “There is no retreat into which love “cannot penetrate.”—What does he mean by love? he has left out a word—there is—*love of virtue—love*

of duty—but love all alone by itself, means nothing at all.—Then again, [*Reading.*] “Conceal this adventure from the jealous tyrant”—Who does he mean by tyrant?

*Marq.* He means me.

*Aman.* You? I never should have supposed it—perhaps you know also what he means by a “lover.” He says, “the most tender lover”—read, and tell me what he means by a tender lover.—Ah! you laugh—you are puzzled—you don’t know yourself what a “lover” is.

*Marq.* Indeed I cannot undertake to be his interpreter. But tell me, Amanthis, if by chance you should see this young man again, do you think you should know him?

*Aman.* Yes, I am *sure* I should.

*Marq.* His person then made an impression on your mind?—I suppose it was agreeable?

*Aman.* Very agreeable indeed—and yet there appeared a—a—kind of [*describing passionate ardour*]—a wildness in his looks that frightened me.

*Marq.* But suppose that wildness was removed, how would you like him then?

*Aman.* Oh, very much! *extremely!*—What makes you thoughtful, my Lord?

*Marq.* Come, Amanthis, we have been together a long time; you must now bid farewell to this part of the castle, and go with me to that which is inhabited.

*Aman.* But shall I have the liberty to return sometimes and look at this—my heart aches to leave a place I have been so happy in—Oh, my dear, dear Lord, you know not half I feel.

[*Puts her hand before her eyes to hide her tears.*]

*Marq.* Beloved Amanthis, be not thus uneasy; I cannot bear to see it—for your happiness is dearer to me than my life.

*Aman.* Say that you love me then—will you repeat it often too? as often, when I am in the world, as you have done here?

*Marq.* Ah, do not doubt it.—You are all to me—I have no other thought, no other wish—object of all my cares, of all my schemes, of all my hopes—and I prefer, to every other blessing, that most delicious one, to see, to hear you speak, and to suppose you esteem me.

*Aman.* [*With rapture.*] I am willing to leave my retirement—all my sadness is gone—do with me what you please; for while you talk thus to me, I cannot be unhappy.

*Marq.* Retire into your apartment for a moment; I'll follow you presently. [*She goes.*]—My agitation is so extreme, nothing can equal it, except my weakness. [*Aside.*]

[*He looks after her; she turns back.*]

*Aman.* You look as if you had something still to say to me.

*Marq.* Ah! could I trust my heart—away; the Marchioness is coming hither by appointment—I hear her, and cannot present you to her yet—I am too much embarrassed.

*Aman.* I hear no one; but if it is your desire, I will leave you. [*Exit Amanthis to the Castle.*]

*Marq.* With what difficulty have I restrained myself from falling at her feet, and unfolding (in a language, of which she is ignorant) the secret transports—which I hope ever to conceal.

*Enter Marchioness Merida.*

*March.* I have seen her; I have just had a peep at her—but I see nothing extraordinary—She wants powder, rouge, and a thousand adornments.

*Marq.* To change one atom, would be to lose a charm.

*March.* That sentence proves the lover.

*Marq.* Take care what you say—reflect on the difference of our ages—that title would make me both ridiculous and guilty.

*March.* By no means—I think a girl of seventeen may very well have an affection for a man of forty.

*Marq.* I am not forty, Madam.

*March.* The lover again—one moment lamenting his age, and when reproached with it, proclaiming himself a youth. The whole matter is, my Lord, you are not too old to be in love, nor she too young to understand it.

*Marq.* You wrong her—she is ignorant.

*March.* So am I—yet I am in love.

*Marq.* She knows not what it is—never heard of love, as you would explain it—but calls, by that name, Gratitude.

*March.* Indeed, my dear Marquis, you have no penetration.

*Marq.* I see Count Valantia coming this way—you will allow at least I have discretion, and that I know when it is politeness to retire.

*March.* If you should like to be witness to a quarrel, stay where you are.

*Marq.* A quarrel! I thought you were on the best terms imaginable!—a'nt you on the point of marriage? and did he not break the wheels of his carriage—

*March.* Yes—but I begin to suspect that was not upon my account.

*Marq.* No?—on whose account then? who has hinted that it was not upon yours? [*Alarmed.*

*March.* Nay, I protest I have not had five minutes conversation with any creature since I came into this house, but I believe my woman has with the Count's attendant; and though she could not prevail on him to divulge his master's secret, yet, from his silence, she could perceive I was not the object of his present journey.

*Marq.* Who then?

*March.* I am at a loss to guess—that is what I want to have explained.

*Marq.* The Count is here. Adieu.—She has confirmed my apprehensions. [*Aside—Exit.*

*Enter Count Valantia.*

*Count.* The Marchioness! Pshaw! [*Aside.*] At length, I find the lucky moment you are alone—but I positively began to despair of it, for you seem to shun me.

*March.* Do you imagine I came to this house on purpose to meet you?

*Count.* Why not as likely, as that I should come, on purpose to meet you?

*March.* Just the same likelihood, I believe.

*Count.* And not accident, but design brought me here. [*Aside.*]

*March.* The story of the broken chaise was, then, an artifice?

*Count.* Only an artifice, to behold the object whom I adore. Can you reproach me for that?

*March.* How came you to know I was coming? the Marquis only invited me about three hours before we set off.

*Count.* My Lord—I forget his name—told me of it—the Marquis had informed him.

*March.* My Lord who?

*Count.* My Lord—[*hesitating*]—you don't know him.

*March.* Do you?

*Count.* My Lord Castile.

*March.* He is in France, I protest.

*Count.* I know that—I did not mean him—I meant his brother.

*March.* He has no brothers.

*Count.* Then it was his sister—or his aunt.—No matter—what signifies who told me, as long as I am here—I *am* here—an't I?—An't I here? and what could bring me here, but *you*?

*March.* I am wholly ignorant of your designs, but I can perceive from your reserve, embarrassment, your very air and voice, that you are practising deceit with me.



*Count.* But, my dear Marchioness, will you be so kind as to acquaint me, what this deceit is?

*March.* You know I can't tell—and it is that which tortures me.—If I did but know in what you used me ill.—Now, do tell me, that I may have the pleasure to forgive you?

*Count.* I wish to heaven I had done something wrong—but I cannot recollect—[*considering*]—or I would confess it, on purpose to oblige you.—I am very sorry for your disappointment—but hereafter, when we have been married a few weeks, I'll take care you shall have something to pardon very often—two or three times a day, perhaps.

*March.* Be gone, Sir—leave the room—your impertinence is no longer supportable—leave me instantly. [Violently.]

*Count.* I obey. [Bows, and is going.]

*March.* If you go—if you dare to leave me in this uncertainty—all ties between us are for ever broken; nor shall you ever come into my presence again.—[*He returns.*] How could you think of leaving me?

*Count.* It was your thought of it.

*March.* I am all confusion at the weakness I have discovered—and wish to be alone—leave me. [Gently.]

*Count.* Do you mean, leave you—or—not leave you?

*March.* Do as you please—I shall go myself.

[Going.]

*Count.* And I'll attend you.

*March.* Ah! Valantia! if you loved me as you once professed! to see me thus, would give you the utmost affliction.

*Count.* You do not know what passes in my heart.

[Affecting concern.]

*March.* Don't I?

*Count.* No—[*Aside.*] I should be very sorry if you did. [Exit handing her off.]

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *Apartments in the Castle.*

*Enter Duke Murcia and Marquis Almanza.*

*Duke.*

I own she is handsome, but then she has no fortune—I confess she is very engaging, but of what family is she?—at best, not of a noble one; and her father even now may not be dead, as is reported, but living a wandering fugitive, and may yet return home to disgrace his daughter.

*Marq.* The misfortunes of Amanthis can never make her less dear to me.

*Duke.* But would you ally yourself to such a family,—would you plunge your own into shame and sorrow?

*Marq.* My Lord, I have often promised, and have believed, that to the respect I bear my family, I would sacrifice every selfish consideration; but, on a further trial of my strength, I own to you, it is only from the idea that I am not beloved by Amanthis, I can ever resolve to yield her up; for could I suppose she loved me, all other happiness, all pride, all ambition, all enjoyment, but in her, I would forego with transport.

*Duke.* And as all lovers are apt to believe what they ardently wish—I see what your family has to expect.

*Marq.* You mistake—hope, never was more distant from my heart than at this moment.—All the affection she expresses, although the most tender, and endearing, I can see, is but inspired by gratitude—of love, she knows nothing.

*Duke.* Whose fault is that? were not you her tutor?

*Marq.* Certainly.

*Duke.* And taught her every thing but what you wanted her to learn:—but now if any one else should teach it her, what would you say to that? would you give your consent to their union?

*Marq.* The instant she makes a choice worthy of her, from that instant I stifle my passion for ever.—Do you imagine I would oppose her happiness? No—I was her father, before I was her lover.

*Duke.* That's right—nobly said—and to be her father, is by far the most dignified character—and a much more natural character too, considering your disparity of years. Here she comes—I'll go away. She is very pretty to be sure! but she has caused me so much uneasiness, I don't like to see her. She agitates me as much as she does you—but from a very different sentiment. [*Exit.*

*Enter Amanthis.*

*Aman.* Oh! I have been so frightened!

*Marq.* What's the matter?

*Aman.* The young man—he that I told you of, is in this house.—I am sure it is him—on crossing one of the garden walks, I perceived him very near to me—yet he drew nearer still; till he saw somebody coming, and then he ran away.—But he has frightened me so much, and made my heart feel so strange!—as it never felt before.

*Marq.* Your heart? Why your heart?

*Aman.* [*Laying her hand on it.*] The fright has made it beat quick.

*Marq.* Ah! it is not fright. [*Aside.*

*Aman.* And yet he did not look frightful either. He had a beautiful dress on too—and he looked so—so—I don't know how.—His face is very handsome; his shape, and all his mien, engaging.

*Marq.* I no longer doubt but it is the Count.  
[*Aside.*] Could you tell me, Amanthis, the colour of his dress?

*Aman.* Certainly—blue and silver.

*Marq.* 'Tis he.—[*Aside.*]—My dear Amanthis, you will see this young nobleman very soon again; he is here on a visit—have I never mentioned to you the Count Valantia?

*Aman.* Yes.

*Marq.* He is the man who has thus surprised you.

*Aman.* Is it possible? and with that strange kind of wild behaviour, is he admitted into company?

*Marq.* If you should at any time be alone with him, you may tell him your sentiments on his behaviour—your sentiments exactly such as they are, and such as his behaviour inspires.

*Aman.* And if he should chance to behave well, I'll tell him I like him.

*Marq.* [*Starting.*] I lay no *restrictions* on you—I only warn you that he is a light, inconsiderate, and vain young man—his company dangerous—for his principles are not good.

*Aman.* What a pity!—I'll tell him to grow better.

*Marq.* She is charmed, I find. [*Aside.*]

*Aman.* What did you say?

*Marq.* It is necessary, Amanthis, that, whatever are your thoughts of this young man, you do not reveal them to any of your acquaintance: and, when you meet with him, restrain all fear, all emotion of what kind soever: before company, do not seem even to know him.

*Aman.* I understand—You think, were I to discover I was afraid of him, it would grieve him; and you would not give him pain?

*Marq.* You promise then?

*Aman.* Certainly; for I myself would not give him pain, or vex him, for the world.

*Marq.* [*Aside.*] This conversation kills me.

*Aman.* Here is somebody coming—How cruel!—I can never now be alone with you an instant.

*Marq.* It is the Marchioness—I must leave you.

*Aman.* Nay, that is still worse—Stay, though we are *not* alone.

*Marq.* I cannot.

*Aman.* But if you cannot stay, I can go with you.

*Marq.* Impossible—remain where you are. [*Aside.*]  
I see my fate. [*Exit.*]

*Enter Marchioness.*

*March.* Did the Marquis leave you because he saw me coming?—My dear creature, what is the matter with you? You look unhappy! Speak to me with confidence—trust me with your secret uneasiness.

*Aman.* No, I must not—I must not discover the afflictions I feel, and the secrets of my heart—My Lord has commanded me not.

*March.* But he never meant you should observe secrecy with *me!*—At his desire I came hither to be your friend and confidant.

*Aman.* True—Oh! I am very unhappy!—My state is changed, and all my pleasures turned to sorrow.

*March.* Why? You are surely the first woman who ever lamented the blessings of liberty.

*Aman.* And what is liberty when it takes from me the company of him who is dearer to me than life, or brings him to me with a clouded brow, and a heavy heart?—But this moment he flew away abruptly, and frowned when I asked to follow him, although he knows how much I was frightened some time ago by a young man, who is now in this house.

*March.* Who is that?—My dear, tell me who?  
[*Eagerly.*]

*Aman.* Count—I forget his name.

*March.* [*Aside.*] Have I at last detected him?

*Aman.* Did you never see him?

*March.* Yes, I believe I have.

*Aman.* And a'nt you afraid of him? Does he not look wild and madly? Lays his hand upon his heart, and sighs?  
[*Sighing.*]

*March.* No, my dear; he does not do so with me—he once did—but that time is over.

*Aman.* But when that time was, were you not afraid?

*March.* No; I wish I had been.

*Aman.* But you are not to mention what I have been telling you for fear it should grieve the Count. I promised I would not speak of it to any one. But to you it surely cannot signify; my Lord could not mean I was not to tell you.

*March.* No—I was the properest person on earth to tell it to.

*Aman.* Yes; you would not hurt him, I am sure; for he is agreeable, notwithstanding all his wildness! and if he would but keep at a distance, I should like to look at him, and hear him talk.

*March.* And did you tell the Marquis so?

*Aman.* Yes.

*March.* What did he say?

*Aman.* He bade me tell the Count all I thought of him.

*March.* And will you?

*Aman.* No.

*March.* Why not?

*Aman.* For fear, poor man, it should make him uneasy.

*March.* Oh, it won't, my dear—never fear that; it will not make him uneasy—tell him you *hate* him.

*Aman.* But I don't.

*March.* Don't you?

*Aman.* No—do you?

*March.* Yes. And I would have you tell him you despise him.

*Aman.* No; I'll say I pity him—Won't that do as well?

*March.* The worst of all; that will make him outrageous.

*Aman.* Will it?—*You* then have told him so?

*March.* He is coming this way.

*Aman.* Ah, let me fly.

[*Going.*

*March.* Stay—did not the Marquis command—

*Aman.* True—and I'll *stay* and tell him what I think of him.

*March.* And what *is* that?

*Aman.*—That he makes me tremble.

*March.* You must not tell him so.

*Aman.* But he'll see it.

*Enter Count Valantia.*

*Count.* The Marchioness here! unfortunate! [*Aside, then bowing to her.*] I this moment parted from my Lord the Marquis at the top of the lawn, and he charged me with a commission—which was, when I saw your Ladyship, to tell you he wished to speak with you.

*Aman.* Let me go with you.

*Count.* It is some private conversation, which the Marquis, I believe, requires.

*March.* I have private conversation too for him—*Amanthis*, wait till I return.

*Aman.* [*Aside to the Marchioness.*] He does not look so wildly as he did. I am not *much* afraid.

*March.* Indeed! then I shall soon be back.

[*Exit Marchioness.*]

*Count.* [*Looking after her—then falling on his knees to Amanthis.*] Behold me——

*Aman.* I durst not look at you. [*Frightened.*]

*Count.* Is it terror you express? how is it possible that my tender passion can awake in that soft bosom an alarm? Do you fear me?

*Aman.* Yes; but go and behave thus to the Marchioness; she does not fear you.

*Count.* Oh! do not torture me with a rebuke like that—'Tis you alone can make me happy—and if you refuse, you drive me to despair.

*Aman.* No—I wish to give you hope.

*Count.* Do you bid me hope?

*Aman.* Yes.

*Count.* And you'll be kind?

*Aman.* To be sure I will.

*Count.* What will you do to prove it?

*Aman.* Send for a priest to comfort you.

*Count.* A priest—will you then make me blest?

*Aman.* If I can—for I assure you I like you very well—and, did you not behave so strangely, I should like you better; for you are very handsome—therefore be not uneasy, and think you are not admired; for I can see that would afflict you more than any thing.

*Count.* You admire me then? transporting happiness!

*Aman.* Oh! now you are going to fright me again. [*Aside.*] I must steal away!

*Count.* You tremble and look pale—may I interpret these sweet emotions in my favour?

*Aman.* Yes, if you please.

*Count.* You then will make me happy?

*Aman.* I will do all I can.

*Count.* Poor Marchioness! I protest I begin to feel pity for her sufferings on this occasion. [*Aside.*] Then know, angelic creature! you shall find in me, all that truth, that constancy, that everlasting flame—

*Aman.* Oh, terrible!—don't be in such a passion, pray.

*Count.* These moments are precious!—Vow never again to shun me; never more to look unkindly; and I swear the most perfect love—

*Aman.* Here—smell of this bottle—it will do you good—it will relieve your head.

[*Holding out a smelling bottle.*]

*Count.* What the devil does she mean? [*Aside.*] But will you keep this happy interview a profound secret?

*Aman.* Yes, indeed I will, to every creature, except the Marquis Almanza, and the Marchioness his cousin.

*Count.* To them above the rest.

*Aman.* Oh, no—I tell them every thing.

*Count.* Indeed!



*Aman.* Yes—and the Marquis was amazed how you found means to climb the high garden wall.

*Count.* I am in a pretty situation then! [*Aside.*] And what did he say when you told him?

*Aman.* I forget—but he said, when I saw you again, I might tell you just what I pleased.

*Count.* She is his daughter then, and he approves my passion. [*Aside.*] What you have acquainted me with makes me the happiest of men.

*Enter Marchioness.*

*Aman.* I am glad you are returned. [*Running to the Marchioness, then turning to the Count.*]—Bless me, how calm he is grown all at once—you would not suppose he was the same person.

*Count.* Madam—[*confused.*]

*Aman.* He does not look on you, as he does on me—nor kneel—nor plead.

*Count.* Oh, the deuce take you. [*Aside.*]

*March.* What, in confusion, Count?

*Aman.* But I'll leave you alone with him, and then, perhaps, he will. [*Going.*]

*Count.* No—for mercy sake, don't leave us alone. [*Aside to Amantbis.*]

*Aman.* Poor man! he is afraid of you—but pray be kind to him—and I dare say you will. [*Exit.*]

*Count.* Yes—and a devilish deal too kind. [*Aside.*]

*March.* You find at last your falsehood is detected.

*Count.* I purposely exposed it, that you might have the pleasure of forgiving me.

*March.* Which I will never do.

*Count.* Then I have been at a great deal of trouble for nothing.

*March.* So you will find; for the person you love, loves another.

*Count.* And so does the person you love—and yet I don't reproach you with that.

*March.* Vain man—you do not know who I love.

*Count.* Nor do you know who I love—but I believe you guess.

*March.* Leave me.

*Count.* You'll call me back—but now positively if you do, I won't return. [*Going.*]

*March.* To my heart you never shall.

*Count.* [*Turning back.*] Did you call? 'tis all in vain—I won't come back.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Gardens belonging to the Castle.*

*Enter the Duke and Marquis meeting.*

*Duke.*

NEPHEW, I was going in search of you, for I have something of importance to communicate; and yet I am half afraid to tell it you.

*Marq.* Dear Sir, wherefore?

*Duke.* Because I know your weakness.

*Marq.* Then I guess the subject—but what have you to tell me of Amanthis?—I am prepared for the worst.

*Duke.* I am glad to hear it, for this is very bad indeed—and yet, no more than I expected. Have you heard that Count Valantia is in love with her?

*Marq.* I have—she herself told me so.

*Duke.* But did she tell you that she was in love with him?

*Marq.* No.

*Duke.* I thought she would not tell you that.

*Marq.* But I had every reason, from her behaviour, to imagine he was not indifferent to her.

*Duke.* And I am certain he is not.

*Marq.* But who has told you so?

*Duke.* Himself.

*Marq.* The weakest authority you can have.

*Duke.* But she confirmed it.

*Marq.* Did she? Alas! then my hopes are indeed at an end—for till this moment I find I have involuntarily hoped, 'spite of all reason—But why make the discovery to you?

*Duke.* I made it myself—with my own eyes. You know, I suppose, of the first meeting which the Count and she had this morning?

*Marq.* Have they had another since ?

*Duke.* Two more—I was present at the last, and am only this moment come from it.

*Marq.* Do not then conceal from me one single circumstance ; but depend upon my firmness, and my courage.

*Duke.* You wish to hear every circumstance ; and so you shall. As I was looking out of my window into the garden—I never listen, but I sometimes hear what people say, when they don't suspect I am near—Out of my window I saw and heard a quarrel, and an eternal separation take place between the Count and our relation the Marchioness.

*Marq.* She then has become acquainted with his attachment to Amanthis?—All is confirmed indeed.

*Duke.* And, as soon as he had dismissed her in disgrace, I took a walk in the garden, and from a close arbour I beheld your ward steal past, and the Count close at her elbow—there I overheard—for I detest a listener—I overheard the Count beg for compassion, and remind Amanthis of a promise she had given to make him happy : on which she started and wept ; and he fell upon his knees, and would have wept too, if he could ; but as he found he could not, he did something equally worthy of a lover ; and drawing his sword, pointed it at his heart. On this she screamed more violently than if the weapon had been aimed at her own ; and seizing hold of it, fell motionless into his arms.

*Marq.* Oh, Heavens !

*Duke.* As soon as we had recovered her from her swoon, the Count informed me of his love, and that she had given him every hope she would become his wife, but had merely refused to name the time ; which had enraged and driven him to such extremes.

*Marq.* And what said Amanthis ?

*Duke.* She looked at him tenderly, sighed heavily, and shed a shower of tears. On which he turned to her and cried, “ If you no longer love me, my life “ is odious to me, and I will instantly put an end to

“ it—Pronounce, shall I live or die ? ”—She in a transport cried, “ Live, live by all means. ”—“ And so I will, ” cried he—and put up his sword. Then I, supposing all things happily settled, wished them joy, and came away.

*Marq.* Thus at once do I see snatched from me the care, the project, the desire, the hope, and the felicity of near my whole past life : in one object all were placed, and all are vanished with her. Is this the recompence for what I have done ?—at least I will reproach her—with what ? that I have not inspired her with a passion I was not *born* to inspire.—Vain man, submit with patience to thy destiny.

*Duke.* You are right ; every man that’s in love must have patience—But do you intend to see her again ? How do you mean to conduct yourself on this occasion ?

*Marq.* Banish all suspicion of my conduct—to me her welfare was intrusted ; I alone have a right to dispose of her ; a right no one shall dare to rob me of—but she loves ; that is sufficient to determine me.—As her father, as her friend, I disapprove her choice, and will tell her so ; but if she persists, I yield ; nor shall she ever know, I have a less tender regard for her than heretofore.

*Duke.* But you will no longer consider her as a person for whom you are to provide ; you will not take any further care.—

*Marq.* Count Valantia is poor ; if he marries her, I give them the half of my fortune on their marriage, the rest at my death.

*Duke.* What, to a man and woman who have caused you more uneasiness than any two people in the world ? Why surely you are mad. For my part, I am not against your giving something ; and I will give something myself—but it shall not be much.

*Marq.* To what use should I retain my fortune, when, from this day, I renounce all society, all connections—

*Duke.* And won't you ever marry?—Nay, let me beg you to console yourself, and listen to reason.

*Marq.* Reason?—Mine is lost for ever. [Exit.

*Duke.* Why I am petrified!—I came running hither full of joy, and even made a *little more of the story* in order to excite his rage and resentment. I did excite them; but, in the midst of his anger, he resolves to sacrifice his whole fortune to the object of his reproach. Yet I still hope, when he sees the lovers together, hears their mutual professions of affection, and finds himself totally neglected, he will change his mind—and, perhaps, make up to the poor Marchioness.—I do think, for their family's sake, (as nobody else will have either of them), the two cousins ought to marry one another.

*Enter Amanthis.*

*Aman.* They told me the Marquis Almanza was here.

*Duke.* He is, I believe, with his cousin the Marchioness; and if so, let them remain together—don't you interrupt them.

*Aman.* Impossible I should!—I can never interrupt my Lord. [Going.

*Duke.* But stop, Amanthis, and tell me, what have you done with Count Valantia?

*Aman.* Alas, poor man, do not name him to me: I think I never shall recover the fright he gave me in your presence—Is it not wrong that his friends are not informed of this strange disorder in his mind, and desired to keep a guard to watch him?

*Duke.* A guard! It is the Marquis, I believe, who wants a guard—and now you have put me in mind of it, I don't know but I may procure him one.

*Aman.* What do you mean?—is the Marquis ill? [alarmed]

*Duke.* Yes; in the same way the Count is.

*Aman.* Oh, let me fly to him. [Going.

*Duke.* What, you are not afraid of *him*?

*Aman.* No—I will be *his* guard.

*Duke.* And do you pretend not to know what is the matter with your two lovers? do you pretend not to know—that love? Love is their disorder.

*Aman.* “Love, love”—Ay, that’s the word the Count continually repeats—and is that the name of his disorder?

*Duke.* Yes.

*Aman.* And of the Marquis’s too?

*Duke.* Yes.

*Aman.* And from whence does it proceed?

*Duke.* From you.

*Aman.* From me?—impossible—I am very well.

*Duke.* Are you ignorant, or do you only pretend to be so?

*Aman.* I am, indeed, ignorant of what you mean.

*Duke.* Then I’ll instruct you—Shame of the Marquis, to teach you most of the arts, and yet leave it to his old uncle to teach you the art of love.

*Aman.* Well, what is it? I am impatient to know.

*Duke.* And ’tis so long ago since I felt it, I must recollect a little before I can tell you.—Amongst the passions, is one more troublesome than all the rest, and yet more pleasing than any of them.—It sometimes burns you with heat—and sometimes freezes you with cold—it creates in your mind a constant desire to be with one particular person—and when you *are* with them, you generally look like a fool.—You think them handsome, though they are frightfully ugly—you think them well shaped, though they are crooked—wise, though they are simpletons—and you hope they love you, though you are *sure* they do *not*.

*Aman.* You need not say any more, Sir,—I think I have had the disorder. *[Looking confused.]*

*Duke.* You have it now.

*Aman.* Yes, ’tis catching—and, I suppose, I caught it of the Count, and gave it to the Marquis—and so we all three have it.

*Duke.* And it is you only who can cure them.

*Aman.* How?

*Duke.* By marrying one of them.

*Aman.* Is that the way?

*Duke.* And, now, which of them will you heal?

*Aman.* Oh! the Marquis! [*With warmth.*]

*Duke.* And would you cure him of a disorder which makes him wish ever to be with you? which makes him behold you with admiration, hear you with ecstasy, and embrace you with transport?

*Aman.* No—not for the world would I cure him of that.

*Duke.* Then go and restore the Count.

*Aman.* I will; [*Going, returns*] but if it must be by marrying him, that's impossible—no, I will wed the Marquis.

*Duke.* Did not I hear you tell the Count you loved him, and would comply with his desires?

*Aman.* I did not know till now what his disorder was.—Oh! if, by my ignorance, I have given him cause to suppose I will become his wife, pray, Sir, go this moment and undeceive him.—I his wife?—Oh, not for worlds!

*Duke.* Hear me, Madam—I have listened to you some time with patience, but now I can bear no more—the sentiments you entertain for the Marquis are criminal, unless he were your husband.

*Aman.* And cannot he be so? what prevents it?

*Duke.* His noble birth, and your mean one.

*Aman.* My poor father was a gentleman, and the Marquis loved him.

*Duke.* He now, if living, is an exile, and would disgrace our family.

*Aman.* I thought not—he was unfortunate; but the Marquis ever taught me to respect and reverence misfortune.

*Duke.* The Marquis taught a doctrine of his own—I disapprove his marriage with you; and I have ever been considered as his father.

*Aman.* I know it—and for a name so tender, I feel every affection and veneration—but surely, if my



Lord loved me, if his happiness depended on my being his wife, a father could not refuse to give his consent ?

*Duke.* Do not flatter yourself with any hope—— you were not born for each other ; and therefore *conceal* from him the affection you have betrayed to me, and he, in time, will conquer his.

*Aman.* No—In the face of Heaven and you, I here make a vow—[*Kneeling.*]—I never will, never *can* conceal from him one emotion of my fluttering heart—that heart, which he, and only he, has taught to beat with truth, with sensibility, with honesty—with love.

*Duke.* And now, as I have been obliged to hear your resolution, hear mine. If he makes you his wife, he forces me to be no longer his father ; nor will I be even his uncle—nor even his most distant relation.—I undertook to render you happy in another marriage—to teach you how to make the man you pretend to love respectable, and yourself content.—I undertook to instruct you how to conceal your thoughts ; to laugh when you wished to cry, and cry when you wished to laugh—I wou'd have taught you every scheme, every *finesse*, every deception—in short, I would have taught you the “ art of love.” [Exit.

*Aman.* Rather let me die in ignorance—— Oh ! my Lord, dear object of the passion which I have but now learned the name of, how do I long to tell you what it is—but you, it seems, are no stranger to its name or power—why then hide from me a truth that must increase my happiness in your society ?—[Enter *Marquis.*]—Oh ! my dear Lord.

*Marq.* Before I listen to you, Amanthis, I beg you will attend to what I have first to say ; nor let me receive from you the smallest interruption.

*Aman.* You astonish me !—the alteration of your voice, the severity of your looks alarm me !—you will not hear what I would say, and I am afraid to listen to you—and yet I know not why I should.—I

was coming joyfully to open my heart to you, and, for the first time, you are not desirous to be acquainted with it.

*Marq.* I understand you—I know what you came to acquaint me with.

*Aman.* Then your answer is already given—I read it in your frowns.

*Marq.* That suspicion, Amanthis, is unjust—'tis injurious—[*Sternly.*]—You shall know me better.

*Aman.* Oh! pardon me, my Lord—but indeed the manner in which you speak, and look, gives me apprehensions.—But proceed—I have done—I will not interrupt you.

*Marq.* Remember to keep that promise.—You know, Amanthis, I was a father to you in an age when your understanding could not even thank me for my cares—and since that time I have consecrated to you my whole life—yet, in your education, there have been many things of which I have kept you in utter ignorance—my motives, in this, were pure, and I am now desirous to give you my reasons for them.—You are first to learn, there is a sentiment which governs the human heart with more tyranny, more force, more outrage, and yet with more softness, than any other—it is called—love—and why its name and nature I have thus long concealed from you, was from the apprehension that in the solitude where you lived, the sensibility of your heart might cause dangerous illusions:—I feared you might take the tender, calm ties of friendship, for love's superior passion; and seeing none but me, I should consequently become the object of your error—but, too delicate to seduce you, I have undone myself. I have just now been informed of all that has passed this day since you left your confinement, and of which I imagine you thought me unacquainted, and came now to inform me: but to spare you the declaration, I give you my reply without it.—For these four years I have concealed a passion for you of the tenderest, truest kind—but your heart decides for another, and I relinquish my

pretensions.—Yet do not imagine I approve your choice—Count Valantia is unworthy of you—but you are your own mistress—and however you determine, you shall possess my fortune, and be my daughter still.

*Aman.* The excess of my astonishment has alone prevented me from interrupting you many times.—You accuse me in every sentence—every word you have uttered upbraids—and your generosity, above all, degrades me.—Did you imagine I could accept your favours while I was wounding your peace of mind?—did you suppose I could prefer to you a stranger, who, if not unworthy, I could not know to be deserving?—And yet this is what you have expected from me.—Learn, my Lord, to be less suspicious—affect less generosity and moderation, and be less ungrateful and unjust.

*Marq.* Severe as your words are, they inspire a hope my heart had banished—explain yourself—deign—

*Aman.* No—you have too cruelly given me offence—you have made me blush at those favours I have received, and still more at those you offer.—What have I done to make you think thus basely of me? [In tears.]

*Marq.* Behold me at your feet to atone for all I have said—explain.

*Aman.* “Explain!”—even now he doubts me.

*Marq.* No—say but you love me with that passion I have described, and I will never doubt again.

*Aman.* Ah! can I behold you at my feet?—you to whom I ought to kneel as my father?—but whom I would rather thus tenderly embrace, as a lover.

*Marq.* [Rising.]—Oh! rapture!—have I heard those lips disclose a passion so sacred, and so dear, that my fond heart has for years concealed, yet cherished.

*Aman.* Yes, that passion, though unknown for what it was, has been the joy, the happiness of my life—it reconciled me to my solitude, and now could make the hardest lot with you a blessing.

*Marq.* And does my Amanthis know what is love—yet feel it but for me?—happiness unlooked for—O Alberto! my absent friend, how does my heart in this blest moment regret all your sufferings with a double force!—your joy, at a moment like the present, had equall'd mine, and even heighten'd this unexpected transport.

*Aman.* That tender thought endears you more than ever to my heart.

*Marq.* The recollection of my friends, reminds me of the Marchioness—Amanthis, to her this discovery will give a pleasure you little think of—I'll instantly go to her, and make her happy with the news. Adieu, my love—so far from expressing to you all that I feel at present, I scarcely can comprehend it. [*Exit.*

*Aman.* Sure I am now at the height of happiness! and yet my lord's mention of my poor father, cast for a while a gloom over all my joys—Oh! my dear father, why are not you still living to partake our bliss! how should I delight to tell you all that your friend has done for me. Ah! who is coming this way?—a stranger!—another follows—let me avoid them, and fly to my Lord. [*Exit.*

*Enter two Strangers, dressed like Peasants.*

*Second Peasant.* A young lady fled from the place this instant.

*Peasant.* Follow her, and prevail on her to return. [*Exit second Peasant.*] My trembling frame prevents the office.—Gracious Heaven! who through various calamities hast brought me to this spot, even for that benevolence I will bend in thanks, whatever be the event.

*Enter second Peasant, leading Amanthis.*

*Second Peasant.* She is alarmed, and wishes to retire to the castle.

*Peasant.* Young lady, do not fear me because I am poor—I mean no harm to any—I only wish to ask which are the apartments of Amanthis, and how I could speak with her?

*Aman.* I am Amanthis.

*Peasant.* Indeed!—I thought so by my trembling heart! [*Aside.*]—[*To her.*]—You are Amanthis?

*Aman.* Yes,—what would you have with me?

*Peasant.* [*To the other.*] Wait at a little distance, and let me know if any one is coming, that I may steal away unseen. [*Exit second Peasant.*]

*Aman.* Why these precautions?—what have you to say to me that requires them?

*Peasant.* My agitation is so extreme, I fear I cannot hide it. [*Aside.*]

*Aman.* Pray speak—you terrify me.

*Peasant.* Do not be frightened—Ah! it is not terror I would inspire.

*Aman.* [*Aside.*] Poor man! his appearance, his apprehensions, declare his poverty. [*To him.*] Why did you come to me in this mysterious manner?—why send that man away who accompanied you?

*Peasant.* Because I wished to speak in secret to you—The man who conducted me hither is an honest peasant, known in the house, and but by his assistance I could obtain admittance into these gardens—he said I had a petition to Lord Almanza, and sought you, to beg your interest in my favour.

*Aman.* If you are in affliction, that is all the interest you will want with Lord Almanza.

*Peasant.* Yes, I am afflicted—poor—persecuted—forgot, no doubt, by all who were most dear to me, and remembered only by my enemies.

*Aman.* Say what I can do for you? [*Aside.*] He blushes to ask, and I'll prevent him. [*She takes from her neck a collar of pearls, and bracelets from her arms.*] Here, this is all I possess of value—take them—and how much soever they are worth, I am sure I never made a better use of them.—Why do you weep?

*Peasant.* Because my joy compels me—these tears,

young lady, express my joy, not my sorrow. I find you have a heart open to compassion, and now my afflictions are in less want of it—take back your generous gifts—for when you know who I am, you'll find they would be useless to me.

*Aman.* Who are you?—what is your name, your occupation, your country?—you are all emotion—why, are you afraid to trust me?—do you fear I will betray you?—no—open then your heart.

*Peasant.* To do so will recall to your memory some scenes that may affect you.

*Aman.* What are they?

*Peasant.* Have you preserved in your remembrance any idea of the unhappy man to whom you owe your being?

*Aman.* My father—Oh, Heavens! did you know him?

*Peasant.* You have heard talk of him then?

*Aman.* Yes; and a thousand times with my tears I have bathed his picture, the only treasure he left me when he went away. But tell me, were you with him when he died? for though I have heard of his death, I never yet heard of one circumstance relative to it.—Do not be afraid to speak—you have said too much not to proceed—to leave me now in doubt, would be the height of inhumanity.

*Peasant.* Suppose he were not dead?

*Aman.* Not!—Oh, heavens!—You turn pale! your eyes are filled with tears!—Ah! how could I be so long mistaken?—I know you.—I remember you!

*[He opens his arms, and she runs into them.]*

*Peasant.* My daughter—my poor Amanthis!

*Aman.* This joy is too much!—my father!—my suffering father! *[Falls at his feet.]* This is the happiest moment of my life. Let me but fly to tell my Lord Almanza, then never, never quit you more.

*Alberto.* *[Raising her.]* Alas, my child! repress this ecstasy, and learn in what a state of misery you see me—without fortune, without friends, without support.

*Aman.* Are you less dear to me for that? besides, your state will soon be changed—my Lord Almanza can do much; and what he can, he'll do with transport. Within a few days we shall be united in marriage; and you were only wanting to complete our happiness.

*Alberto.* Are you then ignorant of the horrors that surround me?—My enemies are become more powerful than ever; and, learning, by their spies, that I am still living, a large reward is published for apprehending me, and my life must be the consequence.

*Aman.* Oh, Heavens!

*Alberto.* But hear the full extent of your poor father's miseries. I have travelled sandy deserts, braved the perils of the most dangerous seas, forsook a peaceable and safe asylum, to risque the snares laid by my enemies here—but I came with the hope to find my child, and never again to lose her.—I knew not your sentiments for Almanza—Pity my error—I pleased myself with the thought, that an affectionate, suffering father, might be more dear to you than all the world besides; and that in following him, and partaking his fate——

*Aman.* Oh, whither do you lead my imagination?—Stop, and let me take a view of what I see before me.

*Alberto.* Nay, be not thus alarmed, Amanthis. I do not command, nor even *entreat*.—In following me you had surely been a comfort—without fortune, without friends, nay, without society, you had atoned for them all!

*Aman.* Oh, my father! to be your comfort in a state like this, would be my happiness—but, oh! to leave Almanza——

*Alberto.* You leave *him*, surrounded by his family—in his own country, with fortune, honours, and a thousand blessings to console him.

*Aman.* No; not one for the loss of me.

*Alberto.* I see my fate, and submit to it—My

child, live happy, and forget me as often as you can.—Receive my blessing, and my last farewell.

[*Going to embrace her.*]

*Aman.* [*Falling at his feet.*] In this wide world of sorrow, I alone am left to comfort you—and at your feet I vow, though dying with despair, I'll follow you to the furthest part of the universe—What did I say? dying! No, I will live to soften your pains—to be a blessing to you.

*Alberto.* Do not give me a false hope.

*Aman.* I do not—No, thus met, we will never part.—[*Firmly.*]—But how tell the news to—

*Alberto.* Almanza must not know it. I depart this very night; and one look, one unguarded word, might betray me, and prevent my escape.—Should you tell the Marquis, in the first transports of his grief, he'd not be enough master of himself, to conceal the secret.—But now consult your heart: if you repent, you have made no promise; I restore it to you—speak—pronounce.

*Aman.* I have spoken—have pronounced—have promised—and will keep my vow.

*Alberto.* Then have I found my child, and found her [*Embracing her*] all my fondest wishes hoped!—Adieu, my Amanthis, till a few minutes hence, when I shall be at the door which opens to the park—here are two keys; take one of them—[*She takes it.*]—My guide, I see, is coming—Adieu—Was ever parent blest as I am! [*Exit.*]

*Aman.* “A few minutes hence?”—terrible—What have I done? what promised?—Oh, Heaven! I am sinking under a weight of misery—a chillness seizes me—my strength is nearly gone.

[*Leans against the scenes, and exit.*]

## SCENE II. *An Apartment in the Castle.*

*Enter Marchioness.*

*March.* In every part of the house I seek in vain Amanthis—where can she be?



*Enter Amanthis, pale and trembling.*

Amanthis, I came here to find you—the Marquis has told me—Oh, Heavens! what do I see? you are pale as death.

*Aman.* 'Tis nothing, Madam—a sudden weakness—what did the Marquis say?

*March.* His joy is beyond all words—intoxicated with his bliss, he is this instant making preparations for your bridal day—already the gates of the castle are thrown open, and nothing heard but rejoicings.

*Aman.* Alas! I am not able to bear what I feel on the occasion—Let me retire—and in reflection——

*March.* Go, and indulge the pleasure of reflection without constraint.

*Aman.* Farewel, dear Marchioness—when you see my Lord, tell him—paint to him—adieu. [*Going.*]

*March.* Nay, stop—this sudden weakness is more than you described—Hark—is not that Almanza?

*Aman.* Gracious Heaven forbid. [*Going.*]

*March.* No—'tis the Duke—Why thus alarmed?

*Enter Duke.*

*Duke.* The Marquis has overcome me—he has knelt to me, and prayed to me—and praised you [*Going to Amanthis*] till at last I have resolved to overcome, by degrees, the aversion I have to you. But if you should ever prove ungrateful, and forget what he has done and suffered for you——

*Aman.* Forget! oh, impossible.—How he tears my heart—but the time flies—I must be gone— [*Aside.*] Dear Sir, excuse me a moment—I am going—going—impressed in the liveliest manner by your goodness—but I cannot now reply—my heart's too full at present—hereafter I shall prove—fare-wel. [*Exit.*]

*March.* What strange disorder!

*Duke.* All joy, because she is going to be married—and my nephew is much in the same state.—It al-

most makes me wish to be young again—and yet, when I married, I remember I was not in spirits.

*March.* Her illness afflicts me.

*Duke.* Go, go; comfort the poor girl; and tell her, however she may be alarmed by her approaching situation, you would be very glad to be in the same state. [Exit.

*March.* Yes, my state wants comfort most. But I will go to her and— [Going, meets Count Valantia.

*Count.* I am running from place to place, inquiring of every soul I meet, what all this rejoicing is about? and not a creature has time to tell me—perhaps your Ladyship will do me that honour.

*March.* Is it possible you should not know?

*Count.* I positively do not.

*March.* Nor can you guess?

*Count.* No—unless it is because I am going away—for I never could be in favour with the master of a house, if he had a pretty woman in it.

*March.* Vain, disappointed man!—the rejoicings are, because the Marquis is shortly to be married to Amanthis.

*Count.* Poor young lady! poor young lady—and will she never see me again? what does she say? how does she bear it? how does she look?

*March.* She appears at the summit of happiness.

*Count.* Nay, nay, I am sure she sighs, and gives some signs of grief—tell me honestly—now lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me, if she does not appear confused, sorrowful, uneasy, and disturbed? does she, or does she not?

*March.* Why, if I must speak, she does.

*Count.* Poor girl, poor girl! I protest I feel for her.

*March.* But have you the vanity to suppose she has these emotions upon your account?

*Count.* Certainly—and it is the only supposition that reconciles me to her loss—for if I thought she did not love me, I should never be happy till I had made her—I would tear her from Almanza's arms,

and *make* her love me—but she does, she does—and I want no other reward.

*March.* And did you imagine you had gained *my* love, that you became cloyed?

*Count.* Oh, certain of it! or I should have loved you still.

*March.* Why then, upon my honour, and as I hope for happiness, I do *not* love you.

*Count.* Ay, this is all pretence—and, it won't have any effect—I can see by your looks, you don't speak truth—and I positively cannot love a woman who loves me, for I know myself such a weak, vain, impertinent, foolish fellow, that I must have a wife of a better understanding, than one who can value such a flimsy coxcomb.

*March.* Hark—what alarm is that?

*Enter the Duke and Marquis.*

*Marq.* Amanthis is lost, gone, stole from me!

*Count.* I hope your Lordship does not suspect me—for however I might flatter myself with possessing her affections, I certainly should not have stolen her away, without going along with her.

*Marq.* I do suspect you—draw.

*[The Duke interposes.]*

*March.* *[To the Duke.]* Dear, my Lord, don't prevent the Marquis; is he not in his own house? and surely he may treat his guest as he pleases.

*Count.* *[Aside.]* Egad, I begin to suspect she does not love me.

*Duke.* Nephew, you must not resent without better proofs—though Amanthis is fled, it must be by her own consent; for was not a key found on the inside the door, by which she escaped? and, no doubt, she unlocked it herself.

*Marq.* I have lost her; what is it to me, whether by force or fraud?

*[A voice behind the scenes.]*

Amanthis is returned.

*Enter several Servants of the House. The Marquis drops his Sword, and runs impatiently to the Door at which they entered.*

*Marq.* Gracious Heaven!

*Enter Alberto, superbly dressed, leading on Amanthis.*

*Alberto.* 'Tis I who am the ravisher—and thus resign my prize to one, whose right, by every tie of gratitude, is superior.

*Marq.* My Amanthis, tell me, do I dream, or do I know that voice?—Yes, 'tis my friend Alberto! [*They embrace.*] And do I receive Amanthis from thy hand?—and can I see you here, without apprehensions for your safety?

*Alberto.* Yes; for my unjust sentence is revoked, and my misfortunes at an end.—In the Indies, where my distresses carried me, I did some service for my native country, for which I have been repaid with honours, and with riches.

*March.* My dear Amanthis! how sincerely do I rejoice to see you happy as you merit!

[*To Amanthis.*

*Count.* Madam, I sincerely hope you are happy, and that no remembrance of me may ever disturb your tranquillity.

*Duke.* I'll answer for that.

*Marq.* Count, I have to beg your pardon for a suspicion——

*Count.* I assure you, my Lord, you did me honour by it—where a Lady is the subject, I like to be suspected.

*Alberto.* And now, Almanza, say you pardon me the momentary pang I gave you while I made trial of my daughter's filial love—a trial which has added to my happiness—for never was a moment half so precious, as when I beheld duty and compassion conquering every felicity that awaited her.

*Aman.* Oh, my father—I forget all my sorrows past, in my present joy.

*Duke.* I think we seem all extremely happy—every one, except the poor Count.

*Count.* The *poor* Count, Sir!—

*Duke.* Yes—you like to be suspected; and I must own I suspect at this time—

*Count.* What, Sir?

*Duke.* A lady is in the case, so don't be angry.

*March.* If I am the object, I here protest.—

*Count.* Come--if you will swear that you have no regard for me, and that you will never by any part of your conduct prove you have, marry me; and I will be the most constant, faithful husband—

*March.* You are so indifferent to me at present, I think I may venture.

*Count.* But remember, the first time you are in love, I am so no longer.

*Duke.* Take him, and at least respect him that he is no hypocrite—for all lovers are the slaves of caprice, though few have the virtue to acknowledge it.

*March.* I *will* take him; for, with all my care, I might do worse—To love with sincerity and judgment, is only reserved for superior minds—~~for~~ beings, such as Almanza and his—Child of Nature.

THE END.

## EPILOGUE,

WRITTEN BY MILES-PETER ANDREWS, ESQ.

*SPOKEN BY MRS. MATTOCKS.*

MEN are strange things—'twere happy cou'd we scout 'em,  
 Make up our minds, and fairly do without 'em.  
 The cautious dame prefers a single life,  
 The ancient maiden to the anxious wife;  
 For her no absent mate, no tender fear,  
 'Dews the fond cheek with nature's loveliest tear;  
 For her no prattling race, in sweet employ,  
 Awake the transport of maternal joy;—  
 Contented fair, secure from nuptial fuss,  
 She sits all day to comb her fav'rite puss;  
 Now kindly chirrups to dicky-bird, and now  
 Binds the pink ribband round the dear bow-wow.

These are delights superior far to mine;  
 Ah! how cou'd I to such a swain incline?  
 A strange, capricious, wild, eccentric rover,  
 Who felt no passion till my flame was over;  
 Sued for my hatred as his best reward,  
 And dreaded nothing but his wife's regard!  
 Take courage, bachelors, your fears suspend,  
 Few modish wives will ever so offend;  
 Trace the gay circles, and you'll rarely prove  
 That wedlock suffers from immod'rate love.

“Loch!” says Miss Dolly Drylips, an old maid,  
 “I wonder the young flirts are not afraid—  
 “The Child of Nature!—I suppose that means  
 “To have two lovers ere she's in her teens—  
 “I'm out of mine—but yet, may wedlock seize me!  
 “If any nasty man has dar'd to tease me!”—

" What does the creature mean," cries Widow Waddle,  
 " By flirts, and nasty men, and fiddle-faddle?  
 " We're born to love and cherish, great and small;—  
 " I've had five husbands, and I lov'd them all—  
 " I hates to fondle dogs, and cats, and stuff;  
 " I always walks upright, and that's enough." [Waddles.

The Child of Nature was, in days of yore,  
 What, much I fear, we shall behold no more,  
 The simple dress, the bloom that art wou'd shame,  
 The frank avowal, and the gen'rous flame;  
 The native note, which sweetly warbling wild,  
 Told the soft sorrows of the charming child—  
 Turn to a modern Miss, whose feather'd brow  
 Speaks the light surface of the soil below,  
 Whose little nose its due concealment keeps,  
 And o'er a muslin mountain barely peeps,  
 Taught by Signor to squall she knows not what,  
 Thumping the harpsichord, is all she's at.  
 Papa, a true John Bull, cries, " Nancy, sing—  
 " Give us my fav'rite tune, ' God save the King.'"  
 Miss, simp'ring, says, ' Pa', now I'm grown a woman,  
 ' I can't sing English music, it's so common;  
 ' But, if you please, I'll give you a bravara,  
 ' For Signor says I soon shall equal Mara.'

[Imitates an ignorant Miss, singing.]

Thus are the feelings of the youthful day,  
 By fashion's raging tempest whirl'd away :—  
 May I, but with no wish to under-rate her,  
 Entreat you to prefer our Child of Nature?