

Bernard guzman

①

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(A ship at sea. The sound of wind and waves: a storm is rising. BERNARD is at the rail. His valet GUZMAN, pacing nervously, is watching something in the distance, across the ship in the opposite direction.)

BERNARD

The sea runs against us. The wind is all wrong.
Can this vessel sail no faster? What is taking so long?
The storm is rising. The sky in anger grows black
And conspires with the waves to prepare its attack.
Where is the wind?

GUZMAN

The wind? In the sky, Sir.

BERNARD

Fool! What direction?

GUZMAN

North by south?

BERNARD

Do you spy her?

Damn your eyes, if you do. Give me open sea.
Put deep, dark water between this isle and me.

Curse this drunken crew! Must they move so slow?
Can she still be seen? Answer!

GUZMAN

Sir, even so.
On the shore where you left her, there she stays.

BERNARD

I left her? Not I.

GUZMAN

Look. Now she prays.

BERNARD

She did this to herself. This action I abhor.
Her own deceit has brought her to this shore.

GUZMAN

She'll be frightened, near to death. Crippled with fear.
Master, you have won. Let her torture stop here.

BERNARD

Shut up.

GUZMAN

One word from you, and she is reprieved.
Go back and reclaim her. Sir, by your leave—

(BERNARD looks back; for a moment, his resolve weakens.)

BERNARD

Go back...?

GUZMAN

I give the order myself, if you wish.

BERNARD

Shut up, I say, or I'll throw you to the fish!
Where's your stomach, coward? I'm within my rights.

GUZMAN

Or it's murder, if not. That's a damnable sight,
A woman left to die on a deserted shore.

BERNARD

Justice, not murder! I shall hear no more!
Vengeance is my duty. It was lawful and just.
She dishonored me. I have done what I must.

GUZMAN

To your mercy, the crew appeal. They fear a curse.
The captain himself, Sir, returns your purse,
And begs you take pity—

BERNARD

Let him keep his reward!
I purchased his silence. He swore on his sword.
Sail on, you cowards! Bring this misery to an end,
Before the sea swallows all and claims its revenge.
The wind grows mad. Like a ghost, it moans.
Ghosts, they say, fear water. She can't follow us home.

GUZMAN (*staring off*).

There, Sir! Look there. She's freed her hands.

BERNARD

To look on her now would blind me.

GUZMAN

Now she stands,

And cries out.

BERNARD

Stop up my ears!

GUZMAN

A curse on this crime.

BERNARD

Hell itself did fashion this place and time!

(To the winds.) Damn my soul! What have I done!?

*(JULIE, on the shore in the distance, kneels in the sand
and calls out to the departing ship.)*

JULIE

What have I done? Husband!

JULIE & BERNARD

What have I done!?

*(Rising sound of the wind and the waves. Lights fade to
black.)*

Beatrice Guzman
(2)

Act I

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SCENE TWO

(A town outside Paris. The central square, with a fountain. Enter running and laughing, BEATRICE, a maid-servant.)

BEATRICE

Enough! Enough of your games. I refuse to play.

You keep your distance. What will people say?

(She halts. She looks behind, then all around, expecting to see her pursuer, but there is no one in evidence.)

Chasing me like a schoolboy through the town square.

It's disrespectful, I tell you. Guzman? Are you there?

Are you hiding? You come out here, I demand it.

Guzman? This is not funny. Guzman, dammit!

One last chance. I mean it. Stop this masquerade!

(GUZMAN, meanwhile, has crept up silently behind her.)

GUZMAN

Beatrice!

BEATRICE

Oh! You monster—!

GUZMAN

Pretty little maid...

BEATRICE

That was cruel. You nearly frightened me to death.

GUZMAN

You're delicious, my sweet, when you're all out of breath.

(Business: He places his hand on her breast; she slaps his cheek. He places the other hand on the other breast; she slaps the other cheek; etc. He fakes one; she stops in mid-slap. Again, his hand; she slaps, he ducks, etc.)

BEATRICE

Will you stop, you great fool? And tell me the news.
In detail. *(Grandly:)* Or henceforth your kisses I refuse.

GUZMAN

The news? Heaven's full of thunder, rivers full of rain.
The earth is full of dirt. And master's gone insane.

BEATRICE

Bernard? Insane?

GUZMAN

Completely.

BEATRICE

And why?

GUZMAN

Such evidence as only a woman could deny.

BEATRICE

He wants to remarry. Does that make him mad?

GUZMAN

It'll never make him rich, but sooner make him sad.

BEATRICE

He's rich enough now. Richer than most

Men of this town. Bernard can boast
Of property and gold, the respect of his peers.

GUZMAN

She'll piss it all away for him within the year.

BEATRICE

How so? Some logic, sweet dunce, to defend you.
Give me reasons.

GUZMAN

Oh, I intend to.
Bernard, being charged with burden, for life—

BEATRICE

What burden?

GUZMAN

The most burdensome: a wife.
Yet by heaven, was pardoned.

BEATRICE

Oh?

GUZMAN

And a widower made.

A gift that husbands each and every day
Beg to receive. Was he the wiser for it?
No. And he will live to deplore it.
After three years of freedom, again the crime.
He will take himself a wife, for a second time!
Newer. Younger. Heavier a load. You call that sane?

BEATRICE

I do.

GUZMAN

Not "I do"! A curse on that refrain!

BEATRICE

My Constance, I admit, is yet young and naive.

GUZMAN

She is a lethal flirt.

BEATRICE

She does like to tease.

But it's pleasing to love, and a marriage is sweet
When it is well made.

GUZMAN

But would you leap,
Once burned, into the very flames
That scorched you? Do you call that sane?

BEATRICE

It would seem mad to you, who leap into beds,
Leaving but promises and stealing maiden heads.

GUZMAN

Sweet Bea. Honestly given, and humbly received.
Though I have oft entertained, I've never deceived.
I am straight.

BEATRICE.

Too frequent, straight up.

GUZMAN

A touch of lust.

But healthily, Bea! Do believe me.

BEATRICE

I must.

GUZMAN

If this new wife plays Bernard as rudely as the first...

BEATRICE

Let Julie rest in peace. I'll not hear her cursed.
I cried a month through when I learned she was gone.
Two years I served Julie, before Constance took me on.
She was virtue and innocence, purity and light.

GUZMAN

Virtue, you call it? You were present that night
When the husband got his horns.

BEATRICE

Not so.

GUZMAN

Bernard, unsuspecting, arrived late to home.
So not to wake Julie, silently he crept
To the door—when out from its shadow leapt
A strange man. Master gave chase.
The intruder disappeared without a trace.
Bernard, raging mad, returned to find you,
Who, seeing nothing, could give him no clue.
He grabbed you by the throat—

BEATRICE

Marks I still bear—

Frederic

Octavius

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LOVERS AND EXECUTIONERS

Act I

OCTAVIUS

No, I think not. If you push him too hard,
You'll discover there is a fighting side to Bernard.

(Swordplay.)

Be cautious. I urge you.

FREDERIC

That, and cunning, I will be.

Full well I know this man and his tendencies.
He used violence in the past, and may so again.
I shall act the part of his affectionate friend.

OCTAVIUS

You're his rival for Constance. To him, you're a threat.
He'll defend his betrothed.

FREDERIC

She's not betrothed. Not yet.

(Swordplay.)

OCTAVIUS

Your improvement continues.

FREDERIC

My instruction goes apace.

I've an excellent teacher.

OCTAVIUS

Who knows his place?

(Swordplay.)

FREDERIC

From all she has told me, big tears she has cried,
Inconstant Constance will not soon be his bride.

Bernard she despises. His *attention* she desires.
She would gladly roast his heart on the roaring fires
Of her passion. It's a game, Octavius. Do you see?
And sweet Constance plays it most expertly.
There's Don Lope the Spaniard, Bernard and myself
As her three present suitors: trophies for her shelf.
(*Swordplay.*)

OCTAVIUS

This game has its risks, both for you and for her.
I beg of you, Julie—

FREDERIC

Not "Julie"! "Sir."

(*A beat, as they glance around to make certain they have
not been overheard.*)

Caution, good Octavius, and presence of mind.
I will unmask myself, but all in good time.
To return to this place took me three long years.
I've overcome a great deal, but not all my fears.
When my husband abandoned me, his boat sailed away,
I fell to my knees. For my own death I prayed.

OCTAVIUS

But heaven refused you. Then a ship passed near,
Heard your cries and rescued you.

FREDERIC

My duty then was clear.

I made my way to Venice, assumed this disguise.

OCTAVIUS

And ceased to be a woman in your fellow men's eyes.

FREDERIC

As a man, I could move freely, my safety assured.
Again heaven helped me. I was granted a word
With the Duke of Modine, sovereign lord of these lands.
He befriended me. I placed my fate in his hands.
He was good to his Frederic, and at his behest
I joined him on his travels, not forgetting my quest.

OCTAVIUS

Now the Duke has returned here. Full circle you've come.

FREDERIC

The final stage of my journey now has begun:
I must uncover the truth, somehow must I learn,
Why my husband from lover to executioner did turn.

OCTAVIUS

But have you the courage to play this part?
You must rely on your reason, and not on your heart.
You forget you once loved him? Will your anger not show?

FREDERIC

To answer you honestly: I don't know.
I see him, and I am consumed with rage.
And with longing, too, for that golden age
When we loved, and loved dearly. All too brief.
Now my purpose is to capture and punish the thief
Who stole all I held worthy, my love and my life.

OCTAVIUS

Would you punish Bernard? Let him take a new wife.
In the eyes of the Church and the law, he is lost.

FREDERIC

The strategy is simple. But I am fearful of its cost.

OCTAVIUS

To yourself, is your meaning.

FREDERIC

Take it as you will.

OCTAVIUS

I take it to mean, some love is there still.

FREDERIC

Octavius—

(Swordplay. OCTAVIUS quickly overwhelms his student.)

OCTAVIUS

Poorly played. You let down your guard.

FREDERIC

My mind was distracted.

OCTAVIUS

With thoughts of Bernard.

FREDERIC

How changed he looks. There is a grimness to his eyes,
A cruelty new to his lips. I did scarcely recognize
His face. With such love it once did look upon mine.
He has aged not three, but ten years' time.

(A beat.)

OCTAVIUS

You charged me keep a secret—have I not obeyed?

FREDERIC

And I promise, you will one day be generously paid.

OCTAVIUS

In swordplay, you begged instruction. I've complied,
And taught you well.

FREDERIC

Which I do not deny.

My trust and gratitude, these you have earned.
Soon to the Duke's service you may return.

OCTAVIUS

Give me no payment, but this pledge, if you can:
To see me not as servant, but as a man.
Dearest Julie—

FREDERIC

No—

OCTAVIUS

I must speak.

FREDERIC

Hold your tongue!

OCTAVIUS

I will not! Men too have hearts. May I have none?
For one reason alone am I here by your side.
This reason, Madam, I no longer wish to hide.

FREDERIC

I seek out Bernard—

OCTAVIUS

The man who sought your death.

FREDERIC

He was taken perhaps by madness—

OCTAVIUS

Is *your* madness less?

This battle within you, that overtakes your soul,
That blinds you to me, that makes you play this role—
Is there yet a woman beneath this disguise?

FREDERIC

I did believe it.

OCTAVIUS

Julie. Give up this enterprise
Before it damns you. Come away now with me.

FREDERIC

Once was I damned. If again I must be,
My fate I accept. You must do so, as well,
Octavius. Although I can not tell
Where my quest will end, or where, my life,
While I live, I am yet this man's wife.

OCTAVIUS

I'm sorry, for us both.

FREDERIC

More wit, and less apology,

Constance Don Lope
Beatrice (4)

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LOVERS AND EXECUTIONERS

Act II

CONSTANCE

I want a husband, not a general. Don Lope. Are you mad?

(BEATRICE sees DON LOPE, tries to signal CONSTANCE.)

CONSTANCE

Of all the men in France, he's the first that I would flee.
If he's learned of my engagement, he'll be furious with me.

DON LOPE

Señorita.

(CONSTANCE, startled, nearly jumps into BEATRICE's arms.)

DON LOPE

I come to hear you deny the news.
That Bernard wins your hand, and your heart I do lose.
I know this is some rumor. A lie. It could not be.
"No, no," I say, "My Constance, she is promised to me.
She would not betray me, drive a sword through my heart."

CONSTANCE *(having recovered her composure)*.
Don Lope. Dearest. People make such remarks.
It is folly to believe everything one has heard.

DON LOPE

Then it's a lie?

CONSTANCE

Did I say that?

BEATRICE

She did not use that word.

DON LOPE

Then it's true?

CONSTANCE

Well...

BEATRICE

To be honest...

CONSTANCE

Less untrue than not.

(*A beat.*)

DON LOPE

One question.

CONSTANCE

Yes?

DON LOPE

Have you been won... Or been *bought*!?

CONSTANCE

Oh!

DON LOPE

Bernard's money is what has turned your head!

CONSTANCE

How could you think that?

DON LOPE

How could *you* strike me dead?
You murder my affection. You wound my very soul!

CONSTANCE

But mother has betrothed me. I must do as I am told.
I go to this wedding as I would go to my own death,
With thoughts of Don Lope here, deep in my breast.
Dearest, believe me. I would never cause you pain.
I treasure the heat and power of your flame.
I have seen the passion glowing deep in your eyes.
I have gloried in the sound of your manly sighs.
My captain! Your willing prisoner I would be.
But there's Bernard. And my mother. And... reality.

DON LOPE

To lose you, Constance—I would lose my own life!

CONSTANCE

If I marry—quite unwilling—you *would* lose a wife.
But think, my brave soldier, what you would gain:
A mistress, and a rich one...

DON LOPE (*rejecting her*).

Are you quite insane?
You dare to imagine I would share you with another?
That I would accept defeat and become your lover?

CONSTANCE

These transports of emotion, I find them distasteful.
You rage to no avail. It's really quite wasteful.
Calm reason, Don Lope, this would serve you well.

DON LOPE

Reason? You reason your way straight to hell!
I shall have justice. I swear by this sign:
(He makes the cross.)
As I am Don Lope— Wench, you will be mine!

(Exit CONSTANCE, insulted and angry.)

DON LOPE

By all the saints in heaven! That woman, she is hard.
I don't believe my own ears. Marry Bernard?

BEATRICE

It shall never be.

DON LOPE

What? What is that you say?

BEATRICE

I am forbidden to talk.

DON LOPE

Beatrice. I know the way
To loosen your tongue. A ducat. Now tell me.

BEATRICE

One lonely ducat, Señor, could hardly compel me
To betray my lady.

DON LOPE

Then I make it two.
Tell me what you know, Beatrice. Do.

BEATRICE

Two little coins? A childless couple. How sad.

DON LOPE

Here is progeny. Take it, before I get mad.

BEATRICE

A family of three. God forgive them their sins,
And bless their fine house, by sending them ... twins.

DON LOPE

Five ducats!?

BEATRICE

A bargain, Señor, to learn your true fate.

DON LOPE

This is robbery!

BEATRICE

As you wish, Sir.

(She makes to hand him back the coins.)

DON LOPE

No. Wait.

Five ducats it is. Now tell me all you know.

BEATRICE

To such generous persuasion, I could not say no.
The truth is this: Though Bernard seeks her hand,
Constance will not have him, for she loves another man.

DON LOPE

Who?

Constance Don Lope (5)

ACT FIVE

SCENE ONE

(DON LOPE, practicing his expert swordplay; flexing, sharpening, cleaning, etc., his collection of weapons. CONSTANCE, making an effort not to appear impressed, observes.)

CONSTANCE

You're not bad at that.

DON LOPE

I am a deadly force.

CONSTANCE

In war, or conversation?

DON LOPE

You mock me, of course.

CONSTANCE

I, mock you? Sir, what gives you that impression?

DON LOPE

Laugh while you can. I have in my possession
Certain means to take that smirk off your face.

CONSTANCE

So. The brave soldier will put me in my place?

DON LOPE

For that very task, Madam, I have been bred.

CONSTANCE

And where is my place?

DON LOPE

On your back, in my bed.

CONSTANCE

You will win *that* battle, Captain, only in your dreams.
I am free to choose my lover.

DON LOPE

To you, so it seems.
I have set myself a goal. I plan to succeed.
I intend to tame you. It is discipline you need.

CONSTANCE

The boasting soldier. Really, Sir. You bore me.
All these swaggering tales and Spanish vainglory.
You're a champion swordsman. I grant you, that's true.
Yet, of all your admirers, the foremost... is you.

DON LOPE

You accuse me of vanity and pride. Is that it?

CONSTANCE

Oh, you're sharp, Don Lope. What rapier wit.

DON LOPE

Your insults do not harm me. These I rise above.
And I counterattack by reasserting my love.

CONSTANCE

Ha! You're relentless. You refuse to understand?
Let me spell it out: You're not my kind of man.
Your favor and attentions, these I reject.
Is that clear?

DON LOPE

Yes. But this I cannot accept.

CONSTANCE

Good God...

DON LOPE

You underestimate the military spirit.
This attempt to dissuade me— No, no, I won't hear it.
Unconditional surrender—this is your fate.
With my weapon unsheathed, I stand at your gate.

CONSTANCE

Well, re-sheath it, please, and leave me alone.

DON LOPE

No negotiations. Madam, let it be known
That you are my target, my trophy of war,
Or I am not Don Lope, conquistador!

CONSTANCE

He's mad. He's mad. He hears nothing I say.

DON LOPE

Once we are married, I shall take you away.
France is full of Frenchmen, which I cannot abide.
We'll to Spain.

CONSTANCE

Not this girl.

DON LOPE

I shall decide.

CONSTANCE

Captain, give up. You shall not win this heart.

DON LOPE

I am determined as a rock.

CONSTANCE

And just as smart.

I have plans, Don Lope, and they don't include you.
With my life, I alone shall decide what to do.

DON LOPE

Tell me, proud Constance, what your plans entail.
Are you looking forward to a wedding in jail?

CONSTANCE

Jail? What is this, conquistador humor?

DON LOPE

You yourself are free to confirm the rumor.
Of your three suitors, there is now one less.
Bernard has been placed, it seems, under arrest.

CONSTANCE

What?

DON LOPE

The murder of his wife is the charge.

Not the ideal husband, hot-tempered Bernard.
At this moment, he sits, a prisoner in chains.

(A beat. CONSTANCE giggles.)

DON LOPE

Impressive, my dear, how you mask your pain.

CONSTANCE

Bernard, charged with murder. Of course, don't you see?
Frederic has acted—he's done it for me!
His rival for my hand, now utterly defeated.

DON LOPE

By law, not by sword. I say he cheated.

CONSTANCE

You're jealous—and worried. I shall have the last laugh.
Cross swords with Freddie, he'll slice you in half.

DON LOPE *(laughing)*.

Spare me such jesting, I beg of you, please.
Your "Freddie," with his sword, couldn't slice cheese.

(DON LOPE now advances on CONSTANCE.)

CONSTANCE

Slanderer! Very soon, you'll learn your lesson,
When Frederic recoiffes your hair with his weapon!
First one ear, then the next. Your knees grow weak,
As he coolly carves his name in your cheek.
Count yourself lucky to escape with your life—

(DON LOPE takes her in an embrace.)

Don Lope Octavio
Constance Frederic
Bernard Beatrice
Guzman

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DON LOPE

And mine. Show this man some leniency. //

CONSTANCE

He has suffered, surely, for the wrong he has done.

FREDERIC

Mercy for the murderer? No. There can be none.

Justice must act in the victim's name.

A victim now in turn justice does claim.

DON LOPE

Is this not retaliation?

CONSTANCE

An eye for an eye?

FREDERIC

Men created this law, and this law I must apply.

BEATRICE

I, Sir, too, for mercy do appeal.

Though he threatened my life, yet I feel

My guilt in this. Must the law be so cold,

To condemn his earthly life and his mortal soul?

DON LOPE

The bounds of propriety, in revenge, you exceed.

FREDERIC

He must hang.

CONSTANCE

This goes beyond what we agreed.

BERNARD

Let no one plead for mercy. 'Tis not justified.
Julie now is dead and may never be revived.
Only she can forgive me. No hope have I in this.
Had I a life to trade, I would, for one last kiss.

(BERNARD now stands on the gallows, the noose about his neck.)

FREDERIC

Bernard, see now what price your honor did demand.
Prepare your soul for its descent. Your time is at hand.
You tremble.

BERNARD

The first chill of death I feel.
Your voice, Sir, and eyes. I know not what is real.

(The hood is placed over BERNARD's head.)

FREDERIC

Your dead wife now does exact her due.
Your life for hers. Bernard. Adieu.

(JULIE pulls the lever that opens the trap beneath BERNARD's feet. BERNARD and all the observers let out a cry as he plunges beneath the scaffold, and is hung.)

DON LOPE

Murderess!

CONSTANCE

You fiend! What have you done?

DON LOPE

Your own hanging, Woman, follows this illegal one!

FREDERIC

Justice is mine!

CONSTANCE

You've killed an innocent man!

DON LOPE

Your husband's blood is on your hands!

FREDERIC

Who mourned for Julie when *she* was killed?
Who called for punishment? Was heaven filled
With cries that *her* death be revenged?

DON LOPE

You are mad! See where your madness ends!

FREDERIC

In justice. And I am by it transformed.
So, too, Bernard—behold him now, reborn.

*(OCTAVIUS has lowered BERNARD; he now pulls the
hood from BERNARD's head: He is alive.)*

CONSTANCE

This is witchcraft!

DON LOPE

Is this a corpse or a man?

FREDERIC

Something of both—all according to plan.

(All stare in amazement as BERNARD stands and surveys the group.)

BERNARD

Can this be heaven?

(Fixes on GUZMAN, who gives him a weak wave.)

No, no, it must be hell.

Are you spirits, too? Are *your* souls damned, as well?

FREDERIC

Heaven, Sir, or hell—upon ourselves that depends.

CONSTANCE

You've won. Now show mercy.

DON LOPE

And let his trial end.

FREDERIC *(removing her disguise)*.

Facing death, it is said, come visions of one's life.

Behold you now this vision.

BERNARD

God forgive me. My wife.

DON LOPE

Who yet lives.

BERNARD

She? Alive?

CONSTANCE

Sir, as you are both.

BERNARD

If not dead, I am mad, for I behold now a ghost.

DON LOPE

A spirit far too spirited.

CONSTANCE

Yet a vision to be adored.

Your wife, much forsaken, is now to you restored.

BERNARD

This soars above belief.

CONSTANCE

Rise to it, Sir. 'Tis true.

BERNARD

Will she speak?

DON LOPE

Address her.

BERNARD

Julie. Is it you?

JULIE

Much changed and resurrected, it is and is not I.

BERNARD

My judge?

DON LOPE

And executioner.

CONSTANCE

Here's "an eye for an eye"!

(GUZMAN seizes the moment to worm his way up to BERNARD.)

GUZMAN

What a pleasure, Sir, to see you looking so ... undead.
In celebration, let's just forget everything I ever said.

(GUZMAN is unceremoniously pulled away by DON LOPE.)

DON LOPE

Marvel all, how heaven does arrange man's fate.
No funeral do we attend, but a wedding, celebrate.
To all this town, I announce my hard-won victory:
This young beauty does consent, Don Lope's bride to be.

CONSTANCE

Though my Captain, I do warn you: I've nothing to wear.

DON LOPE

In nothing, sweet Constance, I'll find you passing fair.
Feast with us, my friends. Help us consecrate this day.
To hope, let us drink. For redemption, let us pray.

CONSTANCE

These two we leave in private, their own way to find.
May they journey to what will, and what was, leave behind.

(DON LOPE and CONSTANCE begin to exit, accompanied by GUZMAN. BEATRICE approaches JULIE, and kneels before her.)

BEATRICE

My lady, your pardon, and my joy is complete.

JULIE

Pardons are as love. For the worthy, mine I keep.

(BEATRICE, rejected, rises and exits. OCTAVIUS remains. He goes to BERNARD.)

OCTAVIUS

In more ways than you know, Sir, you are blessed.
This your resurrection is the mirror of my death.

BERNARD

'Twas you who set the rope?

OCTAVIUS

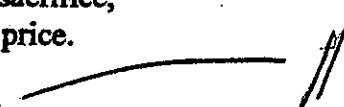
And kept you alive.
For one knot less, I could have watched you die.
Good Julie, as I feared, I must now bid farewell.
Of Frederic's transformation, the Duke I shall tell.

JULIE

Loyal Octavius. Fortune was mine the day we met.
My gratitude go with you.

OCTAVIUS

I take it, with regret.
And, Sir: If from this woman you exact more sacrifice,
I swear upon this heart, I'll make you pay the price.



Bernard Julie

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(Exit OCTAVIUS. JULIE and BERNARD are now alone.)

BERNARD

My wife...

JULIE

"Husband." Bitter tastes the word.

BERNARD

To my ears now, no sweeter sound ever heard.

JULIE

Anger, as the sea, does but slowly subside.

BERNARD

Too well I know it. I was drowned in that tide.

JULIE

Revenge is a poison. Its damage yet I feel.

BERNARD

How physic this disease, Julie? How may it heal?

JULIE

How indeed, when in my blood, it does burn?
No, it's incurable. To the Duke I must return.

BERNARD

Stay, Julie. I implore you. Help me redeem
Our love. It once was worthy of esteem.

JULIE

To see it yet abused. No, I should rather live alone,
Upon that deathly isle.

BERNARD

'Tis here you have a home.

JULIE

Empty now, and haunted, by the ghosts of who we were.

BERNARD

And can be again.

JULIE

And what assurance, Sir,
That betrayal does not yet lurk behind each door?
Can trust, a thing so fragile, once broken, be restored?

BERNARD

So must it be. Or else, how may we live?

JULIE

Apart. And in regret.

BERNARD

No—if you but say the word, forgive.

*(Sounds of the wedding feast can be heard, off: music,
laughter, shouts. A beat.)*

I envy them. Such music we once made.
Have we not as much to celebrate as they?

(Enter GUZMAN, a bit drunk.)

GUZMAN

M'Lord, m'Lady: The Spaniard bid me come
To verify if hostilities are all done
Between you. No further executions planned?
Then he bids you come, to sit at his right hand

And toast the lady author of the wound so cruel
Applied to his ...self-esteem in the famous duel.

(GUZMAN bows. For the first time, JULIE allows herself a laugh.)

BERNARD

Did she not cut a figure most wondrously fine
With sword in hand?

GUZMAN

Aye. If she were mine,
I'd get her to the feast, and slake her thirst—
Though I'd take care to disarm her first.
(Prepares to leave, halts.)
Madam! I would say a word in this man's behalf.

BERNARD

No, please—

GUZMAN

Though a veritable monster in the past,
Though a servant-basher. A sausage. A lout.
He's a better man by far with you than without.

JULIE

Thank you, Guzman. I shall bear it in mind.

GUZMAN

Your servant, Madam.
(To BERNARD.) Better luck, this time.
(Bows and exits regally, if a bit unsteadily.)

BERNARD

My judge, I beg acquittal.

JULIE

Yet which Bernard are you?

My executioner?

BERNARD

He is dead. Your lover, born anew.

JULIE

May both a man and a love ever be reborn?

BERNARD

Let me show you proof of a man transformed.
Return with me, home.

JULIE

To what?

BERNARD

Our better lives, within.

JULIE

Our trials, you say, are ended?

BERNARD

Let forgiveness now begin.

(He reaches for her hand. Their eyes meet.)

END OF PLAY