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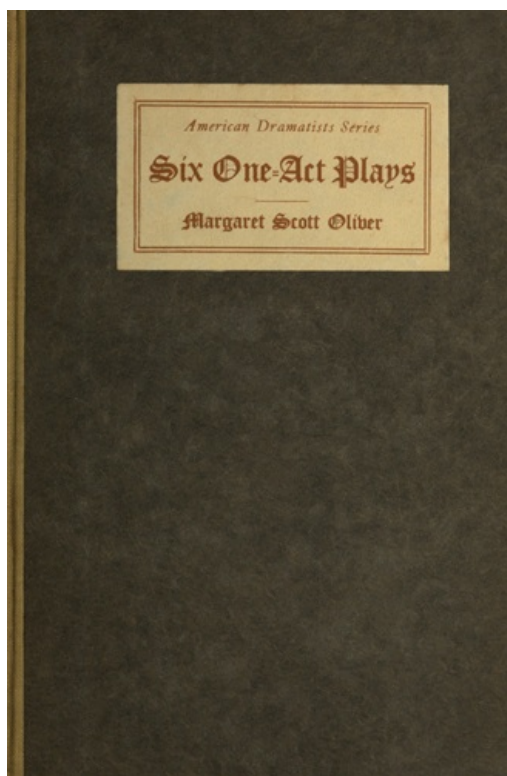
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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SIX ONE-ACT PLAYS \*\*\*



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*American Dramatists Series*

# SIX ONE-ACT PLAYS

*The Hand of the Prophet—Children  
of Granada—The Turtle Dove—This  
Youth-Gentlemen—The Striker—  
Murdering Selina*

MARGARET SCOTT OLIVER

[1]



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## THE HAND OF THE PROPHET

AN ARABIAN EPISODE

### CAST

KODAMA, *A Merchant of Riad.*  
HALIMA, *His Bride.*  
SINDIBAD, *A Young Sheykh, Cousin to Kodama.*  
SLAVE, *To Kodama.*  
SLAVE, *To Sindibad.*  
A SINGER.  
A DANCING GIRL.

*Scene—A room in the home of Halima.*

[10]

## The Hand of the Prophet

[11]

*From between the parted curtains two desert men in white costumes, with red sashes and turbans appear. They wear scimiters in their sashes, and are smoking very long cigarettes. They bow to one another, and walk to the two sides of the stage, where they remain until first curtain, then go behind. This is repeated before and after each part of the play.*

*Scene—A room in the home of Halima. Music and laughter are heard, and as the curtain is drawn, a slave girl is seen finishing a wild dance. As she sinks exhausted to the floor there are applause and sounds of approval, in which the merchant Kodama leads. He is seated beside his bride, Halima, on a dais. In the room are slaves, attendants and members of the two families. The wedding celebration is in progress, and all are in festal mood and dress. Rose petals are strewn on the floor, platters heaped with fruits are at the front and side of the stage, and incense is burning in two braziers.*

KODAMA—Thy slave dances with the grace of a startled gazelle. Command her again before night comes. I am pleased with her!

HALIMA—I am glad she is fair in thine eyes, my husband. She knows many magic dances that will delight thee.... But the wedding feast has continued four days, my lord, and thy kinsman from the desert not appeared. [12]

KODAMA—Four days more shall the feasting last. There is yet time.

HALIMA—I am eager for the jewels, and cloths of gold he was to bring. Thou didst promise my father—

KODAMA—Enough, enough! Art thou a child that patience is not in thee? Before the feast has ended he will come. I weary of these murmurings.

HALIMA—(*Claps hands.*) Music for my lord.

(*Slave sings. As the song ends a slave appears before Kodama.*)

SLAVE TO KODAMA—The young Sheykh Sindibad is here.

(*Sindibad appears L. with some men from his caravan, and a young slave, who is carrying three bundles tied in silken cloths. He walks airily to the dais.*)

KODAMA—Sindibad!

(*Sindibad and Kodama embrace. Halima, with a coquettish gesture, puts her veil before her face.*)

SINDIBAD—Let forgiveness for my tardiness be granted, cousin, when thou seest what I have brought. Many treasures have I found thy lady, before whom I prostrate myself.

(*Sindibad kneels and kisses Halima's hand and then his own. His slave boy quickly opens the bundles, and the contents are eagerly examined.*)

KODAMA—I had thought to see thee sooner; the wedding is four days old.

SINDIBAD—I had thought to come sooner, but there was a maiden.... Never have I seen such stars as were her eyes, and her lips, the blood of pomegranate. [13]

KODAMA—Thou wast ever led easily by starry eyes.

HALIMA—(*Holding out scarf.*) See, it is a wondrous cloth, with threads of gold and silver.

SINDIBAD—Thy loveliness will enhance its beauties a thousand times.

HALIMA—My loveliness did not tempt thee to hasten.

SINDIBAD—I have never seen thy face, and there was a maiden....

KODAMA—There was a maiden. Have done with thy raving! (*To Halima.*) Let thy slave dance!

HALIMA—Dance!

(*As the slave dances, all watch eagerly save Sindibad, who gazes at Halima.*)

SINDIBAD—Thy voice is soothing as the sound of water in the heart of the desert. Let me see thy face.

HALIMA—Look at these fabrics rather.

SINDIBAD—Nay, but an instant, while they watch the dancer, unveil, and let me see thy face.

HALIMA—I may not.

SINDIBAD—It is not forbidden. I am thy husband's kinsman. Let me see thy face!

*(Halima drops veil. Sindibad prostrates himself.)*

SINDIBAD—I am thy slave forever, oh fairer than the day at dawn.

HALIMA—Arise! they will see thee!

SINDIBAD—And thou hast married the merchant Kodama! Awah! Awah!

HALIMA—Arise! Arise!

KODAMA—Why cryest thou awah? This is not a time for wailing. Dost lament for the maiden of the desert? [14]

SINDIBAD—Her image has changed ... as sand upon the desert's face.

(CURTAIN)

*Scene—The same. Kodama and Halima are seated on the dais as before. Two slave girls are in the room. Kodama's slave enters C. and stands before Kodama.*

SLAVE TO KODAMA—The merchant from Baghdad awaits. Shall I bring him to have audience here?

KODAMA—I will speak with him in the myrtle court. Keep watch over my wife and the women. *(Exit C.)*

*(Sindibad enters L. as a slave comes from R. The slave is carrying coffee, and reaches Halima as Sindibad approaches.)*

SINDIBAD—I drink to thine amber eyes.

HALIMA—Thou must not.

SINDIBAD—Send thy women away.

HALIMA—I dare not.

SINDIBAD—Send thy women away! I have words they must not hear.

HALIMA—*(To attendants.)* Go!

*(Kodama's slave stands motionless.)*

SINDIBAD—*(To Slave.)* I am cousin to thy master. Go with the women.

*(Slave goes slowly C. from the room. Halima has risen from the dais, and seated herself on a rug in the centre of the room. She is humming coquettishly and is admiring herself in a mirror. Sindibad watches her eagerly for an instant.)* [15]

SINDIBAD—My blood has changed to leaping flame.

HALIMA—If thou comest nearer I shall call my women back.

SINDIBAD—Unbind thy wondrous hair. It is a fountain of living gold.

HALIMA—Thou must not sit so close.

SINDIBAD—I love thee, and shall stay until thou sayest, "I love thee."

HALIMA—*(Stopping her song.)* I am thy kinsman's wife.

SINDIBAD—By Allah! Thou art no man's wife but mine!

HALIMA—I am but a dream. Awake, lest the Prophet smite thee!

SINDIBAD—Oh, beautiful dream, I am mad for thee. To-night thou shalt fly with me into the desert.

*(Kodama enters C. unnoticed, and listens.)*

HALIMA—I am thy kinsman's wife. My father gave me to him.

SINDIBAD—The fire of youth has gone from his blood. He is old. Thou canst not love him.

KODAMA—Allah!

HALIMA—*(Slowly.)* I am his wife. *(Exit R.)*

*(Sindibad starts to follow her, but is arrested by the sound of Kodama's entrance.)*

KODAMA—Alone?

SINDIBAD—With a dream.

KODAMA—The beautiful maiden who delayed thy progress hither? [16]

SINDIBAD—I tell thee I have forgotten her.

KODAMA—Thy heart is fickle surely.

SINDIBAD—I have seen one more beautiful.

KODAMA—The dancing slave?

SINDIBAD—Yea ... even the dancing slave.

KODAMA—Thou shalt have her. She is like the little moon when it first peeps above the date palms. Thou shalt have her.

SINDIBAD—Thy wife is young.... I will not have the dancing slave.

KODAMA—How now!

SINDIBAD—Thy wife is young. Her skin is of pearl, her eyes twin amber pools where men may—oh fool, oh blind, thy wife is young and beautiful. Canst thou not see?

KODAMA—It is written: The blind man avoids the ditch into which the clear-sighted falls.

SINDIBAD—Thy heart is a dried grape. Thy wife is—

KODAMA—My wife! Art thou an honest Arab that she should so dwell in thy thoughts? Take the dancing slave, and begone.

SINDIBAD—Thy words are crystal dewdrops quivering on a leaf.

KODAMA—Thou art young—tempt me not too far.

*(Slave enters immediately C. with a tray on which is wine.)*

SINDIBAD—By the beard of the Prophet, wine! The Koran forbids it.

KODAMA—It shall turn to milk in the throat of the true believer.

SINDIBAD—Thou hast said it.

[17]

*(Kodama and Sindibad drink, and look at one another searchingly.)*

KODAMA—Thy black angel is ever at thy left side in the city. It will persuade thee into mighty wrong. Young cousin, it is wise that thou shouldst return to thy people. Go quickly, lest evil come. I will give thee rich presents for thy father. As for thee, choose one of the slave girls—

SINDIBAD—I will take with me nothing—but a dream. *(Exit L.)*

KODAMA—Allah send him swift away.... There shall be no returning.

(CURTAIN)

*Scene—The same. A slave is singing. Kodama is seated on the dais, while Halima comes in slowly and gazes anxiously at him. It is the next day.*

HALIMA—Thy brows are still lowered. In what have I offended thee, my husband?

KODAMA—Amber pools where men may—what do men find in thine eyes?

HALIMA—I know not, unless thou sayest.

KODAMA—And thy skin is of pearl, is it not so?

HALIMA—Shall I send away the women, oh my lord?

KODAMA—I am not loving thee. Let the women and the lights remain.

HALIMA—I had hoped—

KODAMA—Thou hadst hoped! Am I a fledgling to faint under thy beauty?

HALIMA—Thou didst marry me.

KODAMA—It was a wise bargain with thy father, whose hands will help carry my trade into the desert, and beyond.

[18]

HALIMA—I thought thy kinsman Sindibad would do that. He is a son of the desert.

KODAMA—I like not my kinsman. He is a fool and a magpie.

HALIMA—He is young and handsome, full of fire and poetry.

KODAMA—Full of deceit and treachery, with honeyed words that mean nothing. But yesterday he raved of a maiden whom he met in the desert. To-day he is mad for thy—

HALIMA—For my—?

KODAMA—For thy dancing slave. To-morrow he will go to the desert with another nightingale piping at his elbow. He knows not constancy, but flies from one deluded maiden to another.

HALIMA—Surely thou wrongest him.

KODAMA—I wrong him not. We shall not talk of him.... Thy shimmering hair has hidden thine ear. Let me put it back.

HALIMA—Oh, Kodama, thou hast never praised my hair before. See, it is a fountain of living gold!

KODAMA—(*Quickly.*) Who told thee that?

HALIMA—My ... women.

KODAMA—What other pretty things do they say to swell thy vanity?

HALIMA—They say—thou lovest me not.

KODAMA—As thou art a woman, and beautiful, I love thee ... no more ... no less. Thou art a woman. I have said it!

(*Kodama puts Halima from him, and leaves abruptly R. Halima for an instant puts out her hands pleadingly to Kodama's retreating back, and then with a hopeless little gesture drops her head on the cushions. One of the women picks up her lute, and sings a plaintive song. The young slave boy of Sindibad's appears L.*) [19]

SLAVE BOY—The young Sheykh Sindibad leaves for his father's tent in the desert, and would say farewell to his kinsman's lady.

HALIMA—Let him come. (*To attendants.*) I would be alone! (*Exeunt attendants C.*)

(*Sindibad enters L. and looks at Halima's despairing figure for a moment.*)

SINDIBAD—To-night I go to my people.

HALIMA—Allah, the compassionate, the merciful, guide thy footsteps.

SINDIBAD—And thou, white rose, wouldst thou be free?

HALIMA—Free!

SINDIBAD—A strong mehari is below, and my men are waiting.

HALIMA—I am afraid.

SINDIBAD—By the hand of the Prophet, it was written thou shouldst love me, and I thee.

HALIMA—His wrath—

SINDIBAD—Thou art not bound to him by any law.

HALIMA—He loves me not, and yet—

SINDIBAD—Come to the golden desert, and thou shalt learn the many ways of love.

HALIMA—He took me to seal a bargain with my father. But thou, thou wilt soon tire of me. He said thou lovest any woman.

SINDIBAD—I will not fail thee, until soul and body part. [20]

HALIMA—Oh, hungry ears, be not so eager for these words of love.

SINDIBAD—Thy body is wonderful as a hidden river whereon the moonlight dances. Rest thou upon my beating heart, oh beloved.

HALIMA—All of heaven is here.

SINDIBAD—I drink thy lips like wine. (*Kisses her. Exeunt. Stage is empty for a very short time.*)

(*The Slave and Kodama enter hurriedly R.*)

SLAVE TO KODAMA—This way, my master, they went but a moment since, and thou canst get them ere they reach the court.

KODAMA—(*Drawing scimiter.*) Stay! (*Exit C.*)

(*The slave remains motionless on the stage, and there is silence. Then Kodama returns wiping his blade. He spits on the floor.*)

KODAMA—Allah!

(*Halima enters C. She rushes to Kodama.*)

HALIMA—Thou hast killed him!

KODAMA—The babbling fool, to think he could steal thee from me.

HALIMA—(*Whispering.*) Thou hast killed him.

KODAMA—Go to thy women.

HALIMA—Bring him back.

KODAMA—Peace.

HALIMA—Bring him back.

KODAMA—Peace, peace, I say.

HALIMA—Oh, Sindibad, my love.

KODAMA—Love!

HALIMA—Thou snarling camel, hast thou lost thine ears? Age has dried thy bones, and turned thy blood to dust. I'll none of thee. [21]

KODAMA—(*Claps hands. Slave appears L.*) Bring him here. Go!

(*Slave carries in the body of Sindibad, and puts it on the dais. Halima sinks beside it with a little cry of distress.*)

HALIMA—He was Allah's shadow upon the earth. Thou canst buy a woman, but not hold her. Let me go with him.

KODAMA—Oh, amber pools where men may find oblivion, close ... close (*chokes her.*)

(*The body falls beside Sindibad's.*)

KODAMA—Allah has left no calamity more hurtful to man than woman. It was written in the stars. (*To Slave.*) Bring the women. Let music be played, and let there be dancing.

(*Slaves and attendants enter, and there is music.*)

KODAMA—(*To the body of Sindibad.*) Dost hear the music for thy wedding feast? Thou art dead, honey babbler, and gone to the desert of forgotten desires. Thou art dead!

(*Slave dances. As dance ends, Kodama's slave kneels before him.*)

SLAVE—Master, thou hast killed a true believer.

KODAMA—I have killed—

SLAVE—In mistake, oh master.

KODAMA—And art thou a true believer?

SLAVE—Even as thou sayest.

KODAMA—Then I make thee free that the blood-wit be paid! Go forth, thou art free! (*Suddenly and hoarsely to the musicians.*) Break your lutes!

(*Music stops.*) Let there be lamentations! This is a house of sorrow! [22]

(*CURTAIN*)

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## CHILDREN OF GRANADA [23]

### A SPANISH PLAY [24]

#### SPANIARDS [25]

GENERAL DON FERNANDO DE LERMA.

LIEUT. DON RODRIGUEZ—*His Son.*

PEDRO—*An Officer.*

LAGRIMAS—*The Daughter of a Bull-Fighter.*

FELICIANA—*A Dancer.*

#### MOORS

HAFIZ BEN ALI.

HASSAN AKBAR.

CAFOUR—*A Wife of Hafiz ben Ali.*

TARIK, *Son of Hafiz and Cafour.*

SPANISH SOLDIERS AND MOORISH PRISONERS.

*Time—Spain during the reign of Philip III, about 1609.*

*Place—Courtyard of Alhambra in Granada.*

## Children of Granada [26]

[26]

[27]

*Scene—The back-drop shows mountains in the distance. Along the entire back of stage is a stone bench against a low wall which overlooks the Valley of the Darro River. The tops of one or two trees show above it. At right back is a little turret, with entrance toward the audience. Entrance at front right, through Moorish gateway. Entrance at left front from garden.*

*Don Rodriguez and Lagrimas are discovered sitting together on the bench. The soft tinkle of guitars is heard. Don Rodriguez is looking straight out towards the audience with his hands clasped. Lagrimas is gazing over the wall.*

RODRIGUEZ—I tell thee it would be the easiest thing in the world to capture Hafiz the Moor. I could creep through the Darro, for the thirsty sun swallows the little river with one gulp in summer, and it is dry as the road to Cordova. No one would see me until I reached the Mosque, where Hafiz will be at his infidel prayers. Hafiz the Moor! The greatest enemy to our King in all Spain, and I, I have found a way to capture him with a handful of men. I think my father will call me a soldier then, and thou wilt smile on my love, Lagrimas. No maiden can resist a victorious soldier.

LAGRIMAS—Look at the swallows building in the little turret. It must be nesting time.

RODRIGUEZ—Lagrimas!

LAGRIMAS—Don Rodriguez!

[28]

RODRIGUEZ—I have been telling thee my plans to take Hafiz the Moor, and of my love for thee, and thou answerest with some nonsense about swallows, and nesting time.

LAGRIMAS—I am very wise at times.

RODRIGUEZ—Surely it's not unwise to hear of my love and bravery?

LAGRIMAS—I have heard thee speak much of both, Don Rodriguez.

RODRIGUEZ—I am a fool to think I could ever win thee. Thou dost make sport of my affection, one minute cold, one minute hot. I never know how to take thee.

LAGRIMAS—Do not take me at all, Don Rodriguez.

*(They sit silently a moment, Rodriguez in despair. At last Lagrimas peeps provokingly at him.)*

LAGRIMAS—There is a caballero wooing his inamorata. Listen to the guitar. Music is very soothing in the cool of the evening. How rich and soft his voice is! I would find it hard to flout such a seductive lover. Dost thou not hear him?

RODRIGUEZ—No!

LAGRIMAS—I can hear him plainly. What has stopped thine ears?

RODRIGUEZ—The beating of my heart.

LAGRIMAS—A soldier's heart should not beat so loudly.

RODRIGUEZ—Mine does.

LAGRIMAS—Poor soldier!

RODRIGUEZ—I'll not have thy scorn.... When I'm killed by the Moriscoes, thou mayest repent thy coldness. [29]

LAGRIMAS—Little soldier, thou wast to *conquer* the Moriscoes; and capture Hafiz, the enemy of King Philip.

RODRIGUEZ—I shall conquer nothing. Deeds of valor are possible only because a lady smiled.

LAGRIMAS—I smile always when with thee.

RODRIGUEZ—Have thy jest. Broken lives mean nothing to a coquette.

LAGRIMAS—Timid lovers mean less.... Why rail against fate?

*(Pedro and Feliciana enter with a rush.)*

FELICIANA—Dance! Dance! I *will* dance whenever I please.

PEDRO—And have the commonest fellow in the ranks praise thine alluring ankles and twinkling feet. Hast thou no modesty?

FELICIANA—If my ankles were thick, and my feet clumsy, I'd be modest as a nun, and keep them chaste for thine eyes alone. Why should I hide them when they are beautiful?

PEDRO—They tempt men to foolishness.

FELICIANA—Foolishness is wonderful.

PEDRO—Well, they are not so bewitching as I have said. I have praised them in moments of weakness, but they are only so-so.



FELICIANA—Don Rodriguez, I appeal to thee! Thou givest many an admiring glance when I dance the zambra in the orange grove. Thine eyes betray thee, now say, are they but so-so? (*Raises skirt.*)

RODRIGUEZ—I—well—that is—

LAGRIMAS—Why dost thou not answer? Feliciana's feet are small, but not invisible. Look at them, and pronounce judgment. [30]

RODRIGUEZ—I grieve for thee, Pedro. They will often dance on thy heart, I fear, but in all truth and honesty, they are not so-so.

FELICIANA—Brave Don Rodriguez! I shall dance for thee to pay for thy gallant approval.

(*Feliciana dances with castanets, while the others keep time with hands. Before the dance has finished, General Don Fernando comes upon the scene, and surveys it with much displeasure.*)

GENERAL—Is it in this fashion the soldiers of Philip protect their country?

PEDRO—One must relax sometime, General.

FELICIANA—Caramba! Am I a relaxation? I thought thou didst take love more seriously, Lieut. Pedro. Seek new amusements for thine idle hours.

(*Exit Feliciana—Pedro runs after her.*)

PEDRO—Feliciana, I swear by the stars—

(*Exit. Pause.*)

GENERAL—Does my son court shame behind my back?

RODRIGUEZ—I love Lagrimas, I have asked her to be my wife.

GENERAL—Thou hast asked her?

RODRIGUEZ—I offer my hand, where I have given my heart.

GENERAL—Dost thou not owe me the courtesy of knowledge? Am I to stumble on thy secret like any outsider?

RODRIGUEZ—I would have told thee to-day.

GENERAL—To-day is too late. Thou hast not my permission to marry.

RODRIGUEZ—I am old enough to know when, and whom I shall marry. [31]

GENERAL—And if the door of my home is closed to thee?

RODRIGUEZ—If Lagrimas will marry me, I shall make a home of my own.

GENERAL—Fool! If she will marry thee? Dost think she will allow thee to slip through her fingers?

LAGRIMAS—I shall marry no son of thine, General Don Fernando de Lerma.

(*Exit Lagrimas.*)

RODRIGUEZ—Lagrimas!

GENERAL—The daughter of a bull-fighter!

RODRIGUEZ—My grandfather fought the bulls.

GENERAL—Thy grandfather! The most gallant gentleman of the Spanish court, who rode into the arena on his own steed, and defied the bull in the name of his lady love. To-day her father prods a sorry hack to its death, and fights ... for a handful of silver!

RODRIGUEZ—She is poor, I grant, but no word of scandal has ever tarnished her name. Why dost thou oppose?

GENERAL—Canst thou blot out thy life, and the traditions of thy race? Wilt thou not sicken of this girl's people?

RODRIGUEZ—I marry Lagrimas, not her family.

GENERAL—Oh, blindness of youth!

RODRIGUEZ—I have heard thee say Spain must look to the people for her salvation.

GENERAL—Spain must look to her soldiers. Infidels are in the realm. Help the King crush them out. Fight, fight and put love aside.

RODRIGUEZ—I may fight, but I will not give up Lagrimas. [32]

GENERAL—Thou must decide.

RODRIGUEZ—I have decided.

GENERAL—If thou goest from me to-day, thou goest forever.

RODRIGUEZ—I am a man.

GENERAL—When thou tirest of her, do not beat on my door. Lock thy bitterness in thine own breast, for mine will none of thee. (*Exit.*)

(*Rodriguez walks up and down.*)

RODRIGUEZ—He is hard, he is unjust. But I have defied him ... I have defied him.

(*Lagrimas enters and goes to the bench against the wall.*)

LAGRIMAS—I left my fan.

RODRIGUEZ—Thy fan?

LAGRIMAS—It is enough, Don Rodriguez. (*Starts to go.*)

RODRIGUEZ—Hast found it?

LAGRIMAS—It is of no consequence. Do not let me keep thee from thy father.

RODRIGUEZ—Ah, he hurt thee with his cruel speech.

LAGRIMAS—Nay, he was right. I can give thee nothing.

RODRIGUEZ—Thou canst give me what I most lack, faith in myself. I am a make believe soldier, a boy decked out with a sword at my side, and a plume in my hat. Until this day I never questioned his bidding, and now I have defied him, I have defied my father.

LAGRIMAS—Will he forgive thee?

RODRIGUEZ—I know not. Pride of birth, pride of position, pride of power, these are his gods. I have dared to attack his power. [33]

LAGRIMAS—Make him proud of *thee*. Capture Hafiz. He will forgive thee then.

RODRIGUEZ—Capture Hafiz? That may not be so easy.

LAGRIMAS—Thy plan will succeed because of its very daring. I know thou canst do it. (*Slowly.*) I believe thee to be a brave man.

RODRIGUEZ—And thou?

LAGRIMAS—I shall be proud also.

RODRIGUEZ—I must have thy promise. What else is there to inspire me?

LAGRIMAS—Thy name as a soldier of Spain, thy devotion to thy father, thy loyalty to holy church.

RODRIGUEZ—Church, country, my father, these do not count, if I have not thee.

LAGRIMAS—I stand between thee and thy father.

RODRIGUEZ—Between me and life itself.

LAGRIMAS—The sin of separating thee shall not be on my head. Make peace with thy father, fight as a soldier fights, and forget—

RODRIGUEZ—Thee?

LAGRIMAS—Make peace with thy father.

RODRIGUEZ—Now I *know* thou dost not love me.

LAGRIMAS—(*Slowly.*) I do not love thee!

(*Rodriguez looks at her an instant, then walks quickly away.*)

LAGRIMAS—I came for something. (*Takes fan from bosom.*) My fan? No, no! I do not love thee? Maria, forgive the lie!

(*CURTAIN*)

THE FOLLOWING MORNING

[34]

(*A group of Moorish prisoners, five men and two women are on the stage. The men and women are standing a little apart, the women veiled, all are motionless. Two Spanish soldiers are stationed at either end of the stage. The muezzin is heard from the Valley calling to prayer. The Moors prostrate themselves with face to East, then assume original position. There is silence for a moment, and birds are heard singing.*)

(*Pedro enters, and goes to the group to look them over.*)

PEDRO—Hafiz! He did get thee! Well, thou art a prisoner worth taking, and if I can read the

temper of our General, thy infidel soul and body may part company before the sun sets to-night.

*(Moors remain silent. Pedro leaves laughing.)*

HAFIZ—What manner of brutes are these Christians!

HASSAN—What manner of fools are we to be prisoners.

HAFIZ—No man could have forseen the trick of the Spanish Rodriguez, may his forehead be blackened with mud!

*(Cafour sways back and forth, moaning.)*

HAFIZ—Soldiers everywhere. There is no chance to escape, unless we go over the wall.

HASSAN—*(Looking over wall.)* We would perish.

CAFOUR—*(To Hafiz.)* What have they done with my son?

HAFIZ—The boy has gone the way of death.

[35]

CAFOUR—Death! And thou his father, stand calmly by, and know him dead!

HAFIZ—Have I not other sons to avenge him?

CAFOUR—The sons of other mothers, but not of my blood!

HASSAN—The Spanish General—

*(The Moors again are silent. General enters with Pedro.)*

GENERAL—When were they taken?

PEDRO—Last night, General. We tried to get thee, but thy house was closed and dark.

GENERAL—They said eight prisoners. I count but seven.

PEDRO—There was a lad who flung himself over the wall into the Darro.

GENERAL—A brave lad!

PEDRO—We have not looked for the body.

CAFOUR—Oh, my son!

GENERAL—Why are these women here?

PEDRO—They followed the prisoners. The Lieutenant would not have them harmed.

GENERAL—Thy victorious lieutenant hath a tender heart.

PEDRO—Tender? He has proved there is no braver soldier in Spain. Don Rodriguez will be an idol now.

GENERAL—*(Amazed.)* Don Rodriguez!

PEDRO—The men who went with him say he did it all as—*(To Cafour.)* Back there to thy place.

GENERAL—My son!

CAFOUR—I would speak!

PEDRO—Speak when spoken to. Get back to thy place.

[36]

CAFOUR—I would speak to him. *(Pointing to General.)*

GENERAL—Remove thy veil.

*(Cafour hesitates a moment, then throws back her veil. The Moors turn their backs, that they may not see her face.)*

GENERAL—Thou art not a Moorish woman.

CAFOUR—I am Cafour, the Abyssinian, third wife of Hafiz the Moor.

GENERAL—What dost thou desire of me?

CAFOUR—I want to know of my son.

GENERAL—Thy son?

CAFOUR—It was he who jumped, there. *(Points over the wall.)*

PEDRO—The boy who would not be a prisoner.

CAFOUR—Thou saidst "brave." Send down and see if he lives.

GENERAL—He could not live.

CAFOUR—He could not die. He is young, strong, happy,—he could not die.

GENERAL—If he lives, I will have him shot for trying to escape.

CAFOUR—Thou saidst "brave," thou wouldst not kill him?

GENERAL—As I would kill all infidels who fight against Spain and our holy religion.

CAFOUR—I do not fight against thy country, or thy God. I beg for the life of my boy. He is not dead. I know he is not dead. Perhaps he fell into a tree, and is only hurt. Send down the soldiers and see.

GENERAL—(*To Cafour.*) Go!

CAFOUR—Send down the soldiers and see, Allah will put a blessing on thy house. He will give thy son his delight. He will make his children to rule over men. [37]

GENERAL—Infidel! I care not for thy blessing. (*To Pedro.*) Take her.

CAFOUR—Oh, heart that is dead to pity! As my child is lost to me, so thy child shall be lost to thee! Allah will make it so.

GENERAL—Take her away!

(*Cafour is led out by a soldier.*)

GENERAL—(*To Hafiz.*) A boy to capture thee! Surely Allah slept while thou didst pray in the Mosque, Hafiz!

HAFIZ—He will not sleep forever.

GENERAL—Ye serve a God who betrays. Renounce thy false Mohammed, thy futile faith—

HAFIZ—Is faith so lightly changed?

GENERAL—Believe in the holy church.

HAFIZ—Is there but one road to Paradise, but one God who points the way?

GENERAL—There is the true God of the Christians.

HAFIZ—(*Bitterly.*) Shall I measure the depth of his mercy by—thine?

GENERAL—Beware lest thy tongue cut thy throat.

HAFIZ—I shall give it fair chance.

GENERAL—Thou art too wise to throw thy life away. A man of thy cunning could be of value to the King.

HAFIZ—The King! A weakling whose brain's befogged with the ignorance and bigotry of women and priests. Hafiz has not fallen so low he can serve such a one. [38]

GENERAL—The King will give thee freedom and safe passage to Africa if thou wilt but place in his hands the plans of those Moriscoes who head this uprising.

HAFIZ—Yea, turn traitor to serve a traitor, and after I betray my people, be traitorously killed.

GENERAL—Philip does not forget those who work for the welfare of the crown.

HAFIZ—Am I a miserable animal that experience has not taught me how short is the memory of Kings? Have I not heard of that Italian who found land beyond the farthest seas, and gave Spain a greater glory than she had ever known? Unhappy voyager, he sailed to a death of obscurity and neglect! Thy Kings are destroyers, and we who build, fear the jackals who tear down.

GENERAL—I warn thee, Hafiz, tolerance will not stretch much further.

HAFIZ—Tolerance! Spain does not know the word. Thou hast banished the Jews, thou hast given the rack, the gibbet and the stake to the Christian heretics, thou wilt kill and exile the Moors. But beware, we are the growers of rice and sugar, of cotton and silk, how will Spain live when these fail?

GENERAL—Enough! Cool thy Moorish spleen in the dungeon. When fasting brings discretion, thou mayest talk more soberly.

HAFIZ—Glut thy pious hatred as the priests and fanatic Kings dictate. Spain's life is the price! Her glory will go with the going of the Moor.

GENERAL—Away with him. [39]

(*The guards march the Moors off the stage.*)

PEDRO—He hath an evil tongue.

GENERAL—The honor of Spain is not to be attacked. (*To Pedro.*) He must have no food until I give thee word.

(*Exit Pedro. Enter Rodriguez.*)

RODRIGUEZ—Father, I tried to see thee last night, and thy door was closed to me. I craved but thy blessing.

GENERAL—I know of thy bravery. All Spain will praise thee.

RODRIGUEZ—I want no praise.

GENERAL—Thou hast chosen thy way. Is it bitter so soon?

RODRIGUEZ—Can it be aught but bitter when thou hast turned against me? Am I not of thy blood, flesh of thy flesh?

GENERAL—Why dost thou come back to me?

RODRIGUEZ—Last night when I faced the Moor, Death stood grinning at my side, and I was afraid. Suddenly I thought of thee and my childhood. I forgot everything that success or failure might bring, I fought only to win thy love. My arm grew strong, and the grim spectre at my side faded, for Love was stronger than Death!

GENERAL—Hast thou given up this girl?

RODRIGUEZ—(*Slowly.*) No!

GENERAL—(*Coldly.*) It shall be my duty to report to the King and ask for thy promotion. Thou art a brave soldier, and Spain will not be slow to honor thee.

RODRIGUEZ—I seek no honor from my country-men. I beg only for thy love.

[40]

GENERAL—(*Sneering.*) Art thou a soldier or a troubadour that love is always on thy lips?

RODRIGUEZ—I am thy son.

GENERAL—I speak to Lieutenant don Rodriguez de Lerma.

RODRIGUEZ—Thy son.

GENERAL—(*Slowly.*) I have no son!

(*CURTAIN*)

LATER IN THE SAME DAY

(*Lagrimas is discovered leaning far over the wall.*)

LAGRIMAS—Brave little lad, brave little lad, the limb of the tree will hold thee, and then my hand. Come, steady, steady....

TARIK—My arm!

LAGRIMAS—Did I hurt? Steady, little lad. (*Tarik climbs over the wall.*) Brave little lad—

LAGRIMAS AND TARIK—(*Together.*) Thou art an infidel!

LAGRIMAS—I thought thou wast a Spanish boy.

TARIK—I thought thou wast my mother. The blood was in my eyes, I could not see. Now, I must throw myself down again.

LAGRIMAS—Little fool, is not once with death enough?

TARIK—I am Tarik, son of Hafiz the Moor, and Cafour his wife. I will not live to be the slave of a Christian.

LAGRIMAS—I won't eat thee, dirty infidel! (*Shakes Tarik and he all but faints on her hands. She is smitten with remorse and stanches the blood which flows from his head.*)

[41]

LAGRIMAS—If thou wouldst not be a slave, why didst thou come back?

TARIK—There are soldiers in the valley.

LAGRIMAS—There are soldiers here, hundreds of them.

TARIK—(*Half sobbing.*) I—I wanted my mother.

LAGRIMAS—(*Tenderly.*) Little lamb, little lamb.

(*General and Pedro enter, closely followed by Feliciana. Lagrimas tries to get away with Tarik whom she shields with her dress. They escape to the turret.*)

FELICIANA—Pedro, thou art unveiled!

PEDRO—Sh!

FELICIANA—Unveiled, and not an hour since thou didst swear—

PEDRO—I swore only to please thee.

GENERAL—Is the dancer always at thy side?

PEDRO—She is a dancer no longer, General.

FELICIANA—I am not so sure, Pedro. There was thy part to the bargain. If thou failest, I shall not answer for my feet.

PEDRO—I pray thee, Feliciana,—

FELICIANA—Do not attempt to silence me, a bargain's a bargain. I promised to cover my feet, only if thou wouldst cover thy face. Where is the veil I gave thee?

PEDRO—Why must thou shame me before the General?

FELICIANA—(*Fumbling in Pedro's coat and bringing forth a veil.*) There, put it on.

[42]

GENERAL—Why art thou veiled, Pedro?

PEDRO—I never meant to wear it. It is a whim of hers because I spoke against her dancing.

FELICIANA—Thou must learn not to break hearts. Handsome men are dangerous to be adventuring through the land in these days. It were better to veil them all, than have maidens' hopes go smashing.

GENERAL—Who will succumb to Pedro?

FELICIANA—There are women among the Moorish prisoners. Pedro will flaunt his tempting face before them every day. It were sinful if they should love a Christian, and die of hopeless affection.

PEDRO—(*Contemptuously.*) Moriscoes!

FELICIANA—In the city, Señora Jacinta is pining for him already, and Lagrimas, the bull-fighter's daughter, will singe her wings on the altar of his beauty.

GENERAL—(*Aside.*) Lagrimas!

PEDRO—Curse my alluring face!

FELICIANA—Nay, Pedro, thou canst show it to me at intervals, and I will let thee have a little peep at my ankles. It will refresh us in our modesty.

(*General withdraws to side of stage.*)

PEDRO—Tsch! It is all an invention of thine to make me suffer for scolding thee. These tales of succumbing maidens are false. Thou dost know Señora Jacinta is a child of ten, and Lagrimas hath bestowed her heart ... elsewhere.

FELICIANA—Jacinta will grow up, and Lagrimas is free. She must be protected from thy subtle charms.

PEDRO—Lagrimas is not free. She hath a lover who is mad for her.

[43]

FELICIANA—The lover hath been discarded, Lagrimas will none of him.

GENERAL—(*Aside.*) Santissima Maria, my son!

FELICIANA—Now, I will not have thee create havoc. Thou must hide thy loveliness behind a veil, or thou too shalt be discarded, and the city can mock thee also.

(*General arises in silent rage and walks back and forth.*)

PEDRO—(*To Feliciana.*) The lover of Lagrimas is—

FELICIANA—I know!

PEDRO—This discussion! The General's pride!

FELICIANA—It is time he understood that people do not lie in the road to keep his haughty feet free of dust.

(*Enter Rodriguez. Lagrimas again attempts to steal off with Tarik—but is discovered by the General.*)

GENERAL—Who goes there?

PEDRO—(*Stops them.*) Santa Maria, a miracle!

GENERAL—Who is this boy?

PEDRO—It is the boy who was killed!

RODRIGUEZ—Killed?

PEDRO—The woman's boy who flung himself over the wall. He must have been killed. It is a miracle.

GENERAL—Hold him! (*To Lagrimas.*) Thou, what art thou doing here?

LAGRIMAS—I came to help the boy. I saw him struggling up the face of the wall. He is hurt, let me care for him. [44]

GENERAL—(*Sternly.*) He is a prisoner.

LAGRIMAS—Surely thou dost not fight against children, as well as women? Let me care for him.

GENERAL—Lieutenant Don Rodriguez, wilt thou explain that our King deems it a crime against holy church to aid or shelter the infidels?

RODRIGUEZ—My word will have little weight.

GENERAL—Love should make thy tongue eloquent.

RODRIGUEZ—(*To Lagrimas.*) Do not bother with the child, let Pedro take him.

LAGRIMAS—(*Bitterly.*) Has success withered thy brave heart, soldier?

RODRIGUEZ—Wilt thou not understand? Interference may spell death.

LAGRIMAS—Better my body, than my soul to die. (*To General.*) Is there no pity in thee? Does thy lust for conquest extend to babies?

GENERAL—It is for thy safety he pleads.

LAGRIMAS—I do not need his pleading.

GENERAL—Is it thus thou showest love for Don Rodriguez?

LAGRIMAS—I have not said I love Don Rodriguez.

GENERAL—Hast thou not promised to marry him?

LAGRIMAS—No, no, no!

RODRIGUEZ—I have no power to either make her love or marry me.

GENERAL—No power! The man who captured Hafiz the Moor, to have no power with a woman!

RODRIGUEZ—A woman is difficult. [45]

GENERAL—Dost thou not know, the people in the streets say she flouts thee, and mock thee for a sorry lover?

RODRIGUEZ—They will talk anyway.

GENERAL—Where is thy pride? Wilt thou have them jest at thee?

RODRIGUEZ—What have I to do with pride?

GENERAL—If thou wouldst be a son of mine, marry her out of hand. Marry her, I say! Scorn Don Rodriguez, the jade! It is intolerable.

(*Exit.*)

FELICIANA—Thy father must be a terrible care, Don Rodriguez.

RODRIGUEZ—He is not always easy to understand.

FELICIANA—Thou dost not manage him right. Bring his Castilian nose nearer the earth. There are wholesome smells he is missing.

PEDRO—(*Shocked.*) Feliciana!

FELICIANA—Pedro, I'm going to dance, I feel I'm going to dance. Throw thy veil away. Beauty should never be hidden.

(*Pedro throws the veil over the wall.*)

PEDRO—Feliciana!

(*Pedro and Feliciana exeunt laughing.*)

LAGRIMAS—(*Shyly.*) The little fellow is hurt.

RODRIGUEZ—He is faint. Let me get some wine.

TARIK—(*Sobbing.*) I will not drink wine. It is forbidden.... I want my mother.... She will make me well.... I want my mother.

(*Lagrimas and Rodriguez catch him as he faints.*) [46]

LAGRIMAS—See, his eyes are open again.

TARIK—I am well. Let me stand alone.

RODRIGUEZ—Thou art a brave lad despite thy brown skin.

(*Enter soldier.*)

SOLDIER—The General says the boy prisoner is to go with his mother.

(*Tarik looks at Lagrimas, then stoops and kisses the hem of her dress.*)

TARIK—Allah will bless thee, and thy little children. It is written. (*Exit with soldier.*)

(*Lagrimas and Don Rodriguez sit as they were in the opening scene.*)

LAGRIMAS—It is just as it was last night.

RODRIGUEZ—(*Quietly.*) But I have captured Hafiz.

LAGRIMAS—And thou speakest neither of thy bravery nor thy—

RODRIGUEZ—I am getting wisdom.

LAGRIMAS—Too much wisdom will make a monk of thee.

RODRIGUEZ—(*After a pause.*) I think the stars will shine to-night.

LAGRIMAS—(*Piqued.*) Oh, dost thou?

RODRIGUEZ—The air is blowing up a little sharp.

LAGRIMAS—Maria be adored, there is always the weather.

RODRIGUEZ—Of what else shall I speak?

LAGRIMAS—Of thee and—oh anything!

(*Silence. Guitars tinkle in the valley.*)

LAGRIMAS—Dost hear the guitars?

RODRIGUEZ—No.

LAGRIMAS—I can hear them plainly. The señor is a constant lover; she will yield to him soon.... [47]  
What has stopped thine ears?

RODRIGUEZ—The beating of my heart.

LAGRIMAS—A soldier's heart—(*stops suddenly.*)

RODRIGUEZ—Hast thou lost something?

LAGRIMAS—It is no matter. I do not want it back.

(*Looks fixedly at his coat until he fidgets.*)

RODRIGUEZ—Why dost thou stare? Is my coat—?

LAGRIMAS—What I lost, it has gone inside thy breast. I saw it.

RODRIGUEZ—(*Bewildered.*) I—oh—what is it?

LAGRIMAS—My heart, most beautifully stupid, my heart!

RODRIGUEZ—(*Clasping her.*) Lagrimas!

(CURTAIN)

[48]

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## THE TURTLE DOVE

[49]

### A Chinese Play

[50]

#### CAST

[51]

CHORUS.

CHANG-SUT-YEN, son of CHANG-WON-YIN, the GREAT, *ruler of the Province of Canton.*

THE MANDARIN.

KWEN-LIN, *His daughter.*

THE GOD OF FATE.

THE PROPERTY MAN.

THE GONG BEARER.

[52]

The Turtle Dove

[53]



*The play is acted in the Chinese manner, without stage setting. The back drop is painted to represent a Willow plate. Chorus is present at the left side of the stage throughout the action, to explain the story, announce the characters as they appear, and thank the audience for its interest. The Property Man, in a black costume, remains at the back of the stage. At various specified times, he hands the necessary properties to the several characters, from a small box beside him. When not occupied with stage work, he spends the time reading a Chinese paper, and smoking a pipe or cigarette.*

*All the persons in the play are in blue and white costumes, to make the plate picture. The Gong-bearer may be in royal yellow, and Chorus in emerald green.*

*The Curtain is drawn slightly open, and the Gong-bearer appears, strikes the gong three times very slowly and ten times rapidly, then walks to the right side of the stage, and stands there throughout the play. Chorus appears between the parted curtains, holds up his left hand while the Gong-bearer strikes once, then addresses the audience in a very suave manner.*

CHORUS—Most illustrious friends, I deliver the three bows to Heaven, Earth, and Man, (*bows ceremoniously to right, left, and centre*) and obtrude myself on your exalted vision that you may know the meaning of our poor play. The story deals with the always new love of youth for maid, the abrupt tempering of a father's wrath to forgiveness, and the immutability of Fate. [54]

Our hero, Chang-sut-yen, (*Chang-sut-yen appears between the curtains, bows to right, left and centre, then disappears behind the curtains*) will come before you as a servant, but in reality he is none other than the son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, ruler of this province of Canton. (*Gong-bearer strikes the gong.*) The God of Fate decreed that he should be known as a turtle dove, and have his image forever emblazoned on the shining surface of a Willow plate. To avert this calamitous ending to his august life, Chang-sut-yen has fled the home of his father, and entered the service of a rich and powerful Mandarin, where he hopes, by virtue of his obscure position, to escape the notice of the God. But, as we have said, Fate is immutable, what the God plans must ever be, despite the efforts of puny man.

You will see the Mandarin, (*Mandarin appears, bows, and disappears*) rich, proud, majestic, with eyes for everything that may tend to make him more powerful, but superbly blind to virtue and worth in the humble.

Kwen-lin, his daughter (*Kwen-lin appears, bows, and retires*) is swayed by love alone; a dangerous practice usually, but in this story, one begging your approval. Do not judge her harshly, in that her heart leads her. Remember she is a woman. Much may be forgiven women.

(*The Property Man appears, bows, and looks inquiringly at Chorus, who hesitates an instant, and then, as if fulfilling a rather unpleasant duty, proceeds.*) I would I might ignore the Property Man. He composed a version of this poetic tale, putting in all the ugly truths, and serenely forgetting all the possible flower like episodes. As artists we could not consider it. (*Property Man with a slight shrug leaves stage.*) The Property Man is not sufficiently large minded to accept our ripe and impartial opinion. He is superbly indifferent to the luminous fruit from his successful rival's quill, and will probably sulk through his duties. That you may not be disturbed by his presence, we have clothed him invisibly in black, and you will therefore be spared the pain of seeing him at all. [55]

I fear I have kept you all too long from the feast prepared for your delectation. If my brothers behind the curtain show not that histrionic merit you so rightly demand, I pray you be lenient, and listen with ears, and see with eyes, not too critical. I conduct you at once to the moon-lit garden of the wealthy Mandarin, where Chang-sut-yen is loitering, hoping to meet there the Mandarin's beautiful daughter, Kwen-lin, who smiles on him. Is it not traditionally the fashion of women to adore most that youth who is forbidden?

I bow to you for your attentively honorable ears. I bow. I bow. (*Gong-bearer strikes gong. Chorus walks to left of stage, and curtains are pulled apart, revealing Chang-sut-yen standing before the back drop.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.* Kwen-lin will know that song. It is nothing, it says nothing, therefore it is pregnant with meaning, and my Bright Water-lily will understand. (*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.* She will come, dancing like sun-rays on the flowers of my mind, and I will press my honorable lips to hers, and our solemn breaths will mingle. Though I seem but a servant, I am Chang-sut-yen, son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, ruler of this province. (*Gong-bearer strikes gong.*) I am also the most glorious lover the Gods have made. My soul was fashioned from the wind of Heaven, and the purple fire of the mountain peak. My illustrious body is the sturdy tree to which maidens will ever sigh their timid love. [56]

CHORUS—It is the Mandarin who walks this way.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy,*—who comes? Alas, not Kwen-lin the fragrant, but my master. He will spit anger that I linger in the garden. I must summon my snake tongue to puzzle his cow-brain, lest he suspect I wait for her. I will divest myself of my honorable senses, and speak with an empty head. I will be gloriously fool possessed. (*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.*

(Enter Mandarin.)

MANDARIN—The night is full of chill. If the God of Frost bites his sharp teeth into my fruit trees, they will perish. Br-r-r, cold!

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Clasping Mandarin in his arms.*) August one, the white moon lady slumbers in the chamber of Heaven, while I wait for you to light the path of my dreams. [57]

MANDARIN—Ancestors, save me!

CHANG-SUT-YEN—We will make loud prayers to the tablets of our magnificently worthy ancestors after we embrace. Let me pluck you, and wear you across my heart, before your flower beauty fades.

MANDARIN—(*Recognizing him.*) Miserable three footed dog, what maiden did you think to greet?

CHANG-SUT-YEN—I press to my superb breast only your lily feet, honorable Cherry Blossom.

MANDARIN—I am no Cherry Blossom.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—You are all the Cherry Blossoms in the Garden of Earth, shedding perfume and petals with every sighing breeze.

MANDARIN—I shed nothing but the light of Truth and Justice.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—My heart cracks with love for you, and your tasks. At night when sleep seals the minds of other servants, I journey forth to count again your dazzling possessions. Your peach trees bend before me, and I am blinded. I beg to work for you until Death sews a black seam in my brain, and I go to my ancestors.

MANDARIN—You have departed your unhappy wits. I give you to-morrow to offer gifts to the gods. Pursue sleep, and think not of my possessions, but rather of your venerable poverty. Your august brain is not large enough for Death to waste thread on. Thread is costly. Away with you, and rest.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—May your golden finger nails grow, and grow, and grow, until they grasp all wealth and honor. (*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.* [58]

(Exit Chang, singing.)

MANDARIN—He is a faithful dog, who begs but a kick to make him lick my hand. I have given him too many tasks. He is bereft of his toad mind. I dislike a man who sings as he works. Life does not plan it so.

CHORUS—Kwen-lin, Bright Water-Lily, comes to meet her lover.

(Enter Kwen-lin, singing. Property Man hands her a branch of blossoms.)

KWEN-LIN—(*Singing.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.*

MANDARIN—The mad one croaked that. (*Turns back and sings.*) *Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo,—*

KWEN-LIN—(*Clasping him.*) Supreme lover! The happy breezes dance when your voice is the lute.

MANDARIN—My important ears to be so assailed! The world box collapses, and tumbles round me.

KWEN-LIN—Noble father! I thought it was my—

MANDARIN—Your?

KWEN-LIN—My singing bird.

MANDARIN—A Cherry Blossom, and a singing bird! An illustrious choice for a man of high position.

KWEN-LIN—You sound very like a singing bird.

MANDARIN—Something has broken in their heads. Spring has tangled the brain threads. It must be Spring!

KWEN-LIN—It is Spring, and soon it will be superb Summer, then Fall, then Winter. The year gone pff! like that, and miserable life flower desolated. [59]

MANDARIN—Before the honorable year goes pff! like that, you will be an exalted wife.

KWEN-LIN—A wife! I, a wife?

MANDARIN—For seventeen years of moons, your nurses and teachers have polished you into a state of passable excellence. You are very wonderful as foolish little girls go. You are something of a somebody.

KWEN-LIN—But to what impressive man are my charms to be presented?

MANDARIN—(*Looking at invisible garden.*) This late frost will surely steal the jewels in my garden. The servant Chang must cover the iris. I can trust Chang.

KWEN-LIN—You marry me to Chang-sut-yen?

MANDARIN—Do I throw my child of five thousand and one delectable graces into the arms of a servant? I was speaking of my garden.

KWEN-LIN—If I am to wed, let us speak of husbands.

MANDARIN—Ah, many men have sought to wed you, but I have turned their eyes away, until the sublime one should ask.

KWEN-LIN—To whom do I go?

MANDARIN—To the greatest of all! To be dazzled, to be petted, to be surrounded by every superior luxury.

KWEN-LIN—(*Impatiently.*) To whom do I go?

MANDARIN—There is honor and eminence the alliance will give me, and money it will add to my already considerable store. We will not, as a matter of policy, show we are flattered. We will be proud, we will be haughty, we will drive a shrewd bargain when the wealthy Ta-yin of Canton would make you his bride. [60]

KWEN-LIN—The Ta-yin of Canton! I will not marry the Ta-yin of Canton!

MANDARIN—What strange words do your lips produce? Does my daughter oppose her insect mind to mine?

KWEN-LIN—I will not marry the Ta-yin of Canton. He's ugly, he's bold, he's yellow as—

MANDARIN—Gold!

KWEN-LIN—He shakes when he walks—

MANDARIN—He's a—

KWEN-LIN—Hundred years old! My heart would crack with grief were I to marry him.

MANDARIN—I never yet heard that any maiden died of grief at the prospect of being a bride.

KWEN-LIN—Br-r-r-r!

MANDARIN—(*Jumping.*) What was that?

KWEN-LIN—My heart cracking. Death is clutching for me.

MANDARIN—(*Wearily.*) Go away, Death. Take her, if you must, after she is wed. The wealthy Ta-yin can better bear the sad expenses.

KWEN-LIN—I'm dying now, dying, dying. It's quite delicious! (*Lies down. Property Man puts a blue cushion under her head.*) I'm almost dead!

MANDARIN—You can't die like this. It's most absurd, besides being unbeautiful.

KWEN-LIN—Have no fear, my death will be magnificently beautiful. I have practiced many times, and know. [61]

MANDARIN—Get up, fox soul!

KWEN-LIN—(*Sitting up.*) Have respect for my solemnly departing life. My heart will not throb longer. (*Lies down.*) I am dead!

MANDARIN—(*Prodding her with foot.*) Get up, get up, get up! I must carry her! (*Stoops, and puts arms under Kwen-lin.*) Oh, for the strong muscles of my lusty young arms. We have fed her too well. She weighs many pounds. (*Stands up, and claps hands. Chang-sut-yen enters.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—My serene mind presents itself to you, great master.

MANDARIN—Sleep should be gathering up the ends of your serene mind, but it is as well. My daughter's honorable body has persuaded itself to seek its illustrious ancestors—

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Kneeling beside Kwen-lin.*) Kwen-lin dead, dead! Then let the lady moon fall from the mighty loft of Heaven, and burn my life to ashes of wistaria!

MANDARIN—Your overwhelming grief at my bereavement becomes a servant, but let not the pockets of your eyes fill with tears. Bear her to the house. She shall be whipped alive! (*Kwen-lin shudders.*) The sublime wasp shakes at that?

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Bending over Kwen-lin, and looking into her wide open eyes.*) It was a death throe, exalted one.

MANDARIN—Can your arms support her?

CHANG-SUT-YEN—I lift a Cherry Blossom with more effort.

MANDARIN—Speak not of Cherry Blossoms. Pick her up. (*Chang starts to lift Kwen-lin.*) No, no, that is not wise. How shall we do it? [62]

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Craftily.*) I can guard the crystal vase of her departed soul, while you go for help.

MANDARIN—It had not penetrated my disturbed brain. I go for help.

(*Exit Mandarin.*)

KWEN-LIN—(*Sitting up.*) Superb love mate!

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Hurriedly.*) Augustly enter the world of the venerable dead again, luscious one, your honorable father looks this way.

KWEN-LIN—(*Lying down.*) Do your eyes grow pearls that I am with my ancestors?

CHANG-SUT-YEN—The love butterflies are winging in the happy recesses of my heart. My breath will smother me with joy.

KWEN-LIN—(*Sitting up.*) Joy, when my father is going to marry me to the Ta-yin of Canton?

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Exalted joy, because before that can happen my father will have the Ta-yin beheaded.

KWEN-LIN—An orphan has no father.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—I have a celestial now and then father, who does these necessary but disagreeable things. I think he will dispose of the wealthy Ta-yin if I ask him.

KWEN-LIN—It must be a wonderful convenience. We will make a list of all those superbly annoying persons we do not like, and have your celestial now and then father, behead them.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—We will ponder it, Bright Water-lily, when we are not serenely happy. [63]

KWEN-LIN—I do not like being whipped alive! My teeth chatter when I think of it, and I can't be happy.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—A base whip to touch you! Nay, my lips shall make you live. (*Kisses her.*) I am gloriously versed in lip magic. (*Kisses her again.*)

KWEN-LIN—Let us fly on our illustrious legs, and be married with the six ceremonies, before my father returns. I like that lip magic. It makes singing here.

(*Kwen-lin touches heart. She and Chang-sut-yen exeunt. The Property Man looks around the stage slowly, glances in the property box, then saunters casually off.*)

## (CURTAIN)

CHORUS—I bow.

(*Chorus leaves stage followed by Gong-bearer.*)

## Scene II

(*Chorus again appears before the closed curtains, and raises his left hand, while the Gong-bearer, who has walked to his original position at the right side of the stage strikes the Gong once.*)

CHORUS—Many perfumed months have passed since Chang-sut-yen wedded Kwen-lin, and each has added a white hibiscus blossom to the garland of life. But now bitter winter comes, snow is on the paeony hill, the hosts of evil are abroad. The Mandarin, with never ending rage, has spent the months searching throughout the Empire to discover their dwelling place. Now he has learned where it is, and pursues Chang-sut-yen with a death dealing thong, which he will wield with dire results. It is the pleasure of the illustrious author that the villain act in a supremely unpleasant manner, in order to bring out the tenderness of the play. Our lovers, not knowing this is a comedy, (and therefore must conclude with smiles and feasting), are overwhelmed with fear. I beg you not to share this fear, except inasmuch as it may make the after enjoyment of the happy ending more piquant and superbly satisfying. [64]

I bow to you, and conduct you to the home of Chang-sut-yen, and Kwen-lin, his wife.

(*Gong-bearer strikes gong. Chorus walks to his place at the left of stage. The Curtains are drawn apart, and reveal Chang-sut-yen, and Kwen-lin. The Property Man is at the back of the stage, as before.*)

KWEN-LIN—Is my august father yet stamping on the road? Peep out of the door, heroic one, and show but part of one eye, lest the radiance from both light the world like stars, and he swoop upon us.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Looking out of imaginary doorway.*) I see not his angry body.

KWEN-LIN—I would not face him here. Let us go outside, and sit neath the eaves of the pagoda. He may miss our presence, and leave without shattering this temple of our love dreams.

(*Property Man opens invisible door, they descend two steps and sit down, and Property Man closes the door.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Little humming bird, your heart wings beat wildly against my solemn breast. [65]

KWEN-LIN—His fiery breath will wither our blood. Feel how it scorches the grey veil of night. He is coming to consume us, he is coming to consume us! I fear his terrible rage.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Nay, tremble not, for I, your lover, shelter you in my heart.

CHORUS—The Mandarin comes.

KWEN-LIN—(*Sadly.*) The wine cup is drained, the love songs all are silenced.

(*Enter Mandarin.*)

MANDARIN—Base thief and destroyer, at last I have found the hole in which you hide!

CHANG-SUT-YEN—A lover seeks only food for his love. If he destroys or thieves what matter? Love is first.

MANDARIN—My tongue sends flame into your viper soul. Go to your ancestors, they beckon you.

KWEN-LIN—Let us escape across the bridge!

(*Property Man holds bamboo stick horizontally for bridge.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Why should we flee?

KWEN-LIN—Why should we perish? To the bridge! We will outrun him.

(*They run onto bridge.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Grasping bamboo.*) The bridge shakes. Its ribs are rotten. We will fall into the water.

KWEN-LIN—(*Off stage.*) I fall, I drown!

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Bright Water-lily, float upon the water's face.

MANDARIN—I pull down your star from Heaven's dome.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—My star dropped to Earth, when the light of hers failed.

[66]

(*Property Man hands whip to Mandarin.*)

MANDARIN—I strike with my exalted whip. By the God of Fate, you die!

(*Strikes Chang with whip. Chang falls. Gong-bearer strikes gong. The God of Fate, wearing grotesque mask, enters.*)

FATE—Who calls me to the world of men?

MANDARIN—What unknown fear are you?

FATE—I am the God of Fate.

MANDARIN—I have sent a dog to death. (*Stoops and takes a small red bag from Chang's breast.*)

FATE—Chang-sut-yen is mine! He must not die.

MANDARIN—My exulting mind does not record your meaning.

FATE—(*Stooping over Chang, and putting the red bag back.*) Chang-sut-yen, son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, I give you back your heart! (*Gong-bearer strikes gong.*)

MANDARIN—Chang-sut-yen, son of Heaven! I bow in the dust three times. (*Prostrates himself.*)

FATE—(*To Chang.*) Arise, and continue your exalted life.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—(*Rising.*) My path is lost in crookedness until I join her. Let me go.

FATE—The gods have not yet dried the ink on the pages of your book of life. You must live, to live upon a Willow plate.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—And be broken by the heavy hand of august Time, and unkind Chance. (*Property Man hands knife to Chang.*) With this frosty blade, I cut the circle of life, and press my lips to the jade cup of nothingness. I am a lover bereft of my mate.

[67]

FATE—You must live! (*Touches Chang's arm with staff. The knife falls to the ground. Property Man picks it up, and puts it back in the property box.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—Kwen-lin, I leap across the river of Heaven to your arms!

FATE—She is not dead. She dreams, and smiles upon the bosom of the water.

(*To Kwen-lin.*) Awake! Awake!

(*Kwen-lin enters, and goes to Chang.*)

FATE—Your sublime father, Chang-won-yin, has gone to his ancestors. You are Chang-sut-yen, the Great, ruler of this province.

(*Gong-bearer strikes gong.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN—I renounce my rule. I am a lover, not a ruler.

FATE—You are a turtle dove. (*To Mandarin.*) To your home, and set forth majestic feasting. Chang-sut-yen will honor your house. He rules.

CHANG-SUT-YEN—I rule not. I am a lover.

KWEN-LIN—Exalted one, a lover is a turtle dove.

FATE—It is sometimes given to women to know the truth. Thus Fate is fulfilled, and Chang-sut-yen, the turtle dove, will live upon a Willow plate.

(*Gong-bearer strikes the gong twice.*)

(*CURTAIN*)

CHORUS—For your eager ears, for your shining eyes, for your smiling faces, I bow, I bow, I bow.

(*Chorus followed by the Gong-bearer goes behind the curtains.*)

[68]

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## THIS YOUTH—GENTLEMEN!

[69]

A FANTASY

[70]

CAST

[71]

A MAN.

A BOY.

[72]

## This Youth—Gentlemen!

[73]

*Scene I—A narrow lane sharply ascending the hill-side. In the distance a lake shimmers in the sunlight. As the curtain rises the BOY is discovered sitting on a huge boulder. He curiously watches the approaching MAN.*

MAN—The road is narrow.

BOY—(*Curtly.*) I like it so.

MAN—I have followed you from the valley.

BOY—(*Moving aside.*) I'll follow you up the hill.

MAN—(*Smiling.*) I may wait here.

BOY—I may play. (*He throws a stone across the waters, and laughs as it strikes the surface.*)

MAN—(*Sharply.*) Now! You have disturbed the frogs and hidden green things!

BOY—A ripple on the waters! It's the smile that quick adorns my lady's face when I tell.... A little ripple—it whispers of spring and youth to the hidden green things. I am glad I flung the stone!

MAN—Youth! A braggart word employed by fools and poets who have not lived.

BOY—Youth! A magic word, the talisman of those who seek the promised land!

MAN—(*Slowly.*) I seek the world of yesterday!

BOY—We left it ... yesterday. Your road lies back in the valley.

MAN—I carry a chart in my breast, it marks the place where yesterday stands. This lane leads there. [74]

BOY—It leads to the land of promise.

MAN—I carry a chart in my breast....

BOY—Your chart, it lies! I'm going on; follow if you like.

MAN—What shall you, who have not lived, do when we reach the world of yesterday?

BOY—Show you my land of promise.

MAN—Then haste!

BOY—Never fear. My feet are swift.

MAN—Dear lad, let us rest here.

BOY—(*Laughing.*) This is the edge of the world.

MAN—Sit not too near, I beg you.

BOY—I'll dangle my legs over the cliff, and watch the shadow of the devil diminish.

MAN—(*Lying wearily on the ground.*) To flutter like a feather from the wing of a soaring eagle—to lie unseen and forgotten among the dead leaves of the forest.

BOY—Come, and see the shadow.

MAN—I feel it on my heart.

BOY—The devil made that chart you boast about!

MAN—And locked it in my breast.

BOY—It has taken away your peace.

MAN—Peace! To hear that name on all men's lips, to search and search and never know its habitation.

BOY—They say: He that pursueth, never shall overtake!

[75]

MAN—(*To himself.*) Desires die, ideals are forgotten, love passes away. The mantel of eternal snow envelops all men, what shall escape?

BOY—Youth!

MAN—Which knows not life.

BOY—Must one experience to know?... Do I not feel?

MAN—In all these days we have been together, what have you felt for me?

BOY—That you sowed wisely, but knew not how to garner. You speak of ideals lost—

MAN—I am not sure I ever had them.

BOY—Is it work or play, love or life, your ideal of yesterday?

MAN—Yesterday! Did it ever exist?

BOY—It died the night of its birth, and vanished in rose smoke, making incense to the gods who once reigned.

MAN—Who told you all this?

BOY—My lady—in the twilight.

MAN—Your lady?

BOY—She sent me to find the promised land. She will come when I am there. My heart is strong, and I can wait for her.

MAN—My heart was strong and passionate; it pulses no longer like a man's, but serves to beat out the unconsidered tickings of the ashen days.

BOY—Then sit with me, be a child, and laugh at the shadow. So faith may come again.

MAN—The day is breaking.

BOY—(*Whimsically.*) Alas, the shadow's gone, and you have not seen it! Look yonder at the little stream, it leaps like a white flame down the grey old rocks. [76]

(*They peer over the cliff together.*)

MAN—I smell the living earth.

BOY—I want to climb the mountain side. Who knows what treasures may be there?

MAN—(*Slowly.*) I know the place—the place above.

BOY—Have you been there?

MAN—No.... I dreamed and thought to reach it once, but lost the way.

(*They climb together.*)

BOY—Why do you laugh?

MAN—My blood has turned to flame. I feel it burning in my body.

BOY—The morning sun is in your veins. I know.... What do you see?

MAN—(*Whispering.*) Your land of promise!

BOY—It is not so! My land of promise is more beautiful than anything one may imagine!

MAN—This is more beautiful.

BOY—I would know if this were it.

MAN—This is the land I say. Laugh with me and shout. The shadow of the devil has gone. I have found the place and myself.

BOY—Not so! The place is farther off, and higher. I am not content with this!

MAN—Come with me, youth, to the summit!

BOY—(*Eagerly.*) I'll climb with you.... I'll climb ... to the summit!

(*CURTAIN*)

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## THE STRIKER

[77]

[78]

### CAST

[79]

JOHN QUINN, *A mortorman on strike.*

MRS. QUINN, *His wife.*

MOLLY, *His daughter.*

BILL MARTIN, *A neighbor, also on strike.*

MRS. MARTIN, *His wife.*

[80]

## The Striker

[81]

*Scene—A dining room in a workman's home. Plain but scrupulously neat and clean. Door L leads to kitchen. Door R leads to front door. Mrs. Quinn is seated at centre table darning socks and talking to her neighbor, Mrs. Martin.*

MRS. MARTIN—(*Dropping a few pennies into a purse, and shutting it with a snap.*) Seven weeks, and not one cent coming in. I don't know how we'll live, if it keeps up much longer.

MRS. QUINN—A strike's a bitter thing Mrs. Martin, and no one knowin' how it will end.

MRS. MARTIN—Why can't they talk it out? It seems to me if the motormen and conductors sent a committee to the company, they might arrive at an understanding.

MRS. QUINN—But the company don't take stock in the Union, and a committee of men would be a Union committee, or nothin'.

MRS. MARTIN—Let them arbitrate, I say, let them arbitrate.

MRS. QUINN—It's a nice soundin' word, is arbitrate, but no one wants to do it, save them as ain't interested. A man hits with his fist first, and arbitrates afterwards,—in the police court.

MRS. MARTIN—Men are queer creatures. There's my Bill, a more religious man never walked, if I do say it myself, and yet he's as bitter as poison against the company.

MRS. QUINN—Religion don't always kill bitterness—

[82]

MRS. MARTIN—This morning I wakened up before five o'clock, and he wasn't in bed. I went down stairs to see what had happened, and found him sneaking in the back gate like a thief. Heaven only knows what he was doing outside at that time in the morning. Mischief, I'll bet.

MRS. QUINN—Aye, it was mischief, and my old man in it too. I got it out of John when he came back. They had been out before the dawn, pryin' up trolley tracks with a crow-bar.

MRS. MARTIN—A fine mess if they'd been caught.

MRS. QUINN—Locked up, that's what would have happened, nice pair of old fools that they are!

MRS. MARTIN—It must be devilish though, to have strike breakers come in and run the cars, while the men are sticking out for a principle.

MRS. QUINN—A principle's a fine excuse now and then, for a bunch of men to fight behind.

MRS. MARTIN—But this is a principle worth fighting for.

MRS. QUINN—Maybe it is.



MRS. MARTIN—I wish you'd go to the lectures at the Lyceum with me. You'd understand things better. My, I miss your Molly. We heard so many wonderful men talk, and she was so quick getting their ideas, it was just great to be with her.

MRS. QUINN—Well, you know, she'd *tell* me about them when she got home. I remember that first man who talked of the virtue of humility and self-sacrifice. Molly was that full of onselfishness after hearin' him, that she almost gave her job to Jennie Tubbs, thinkin' *she* needed the money more than we did. [83]

MRS. MARTIN—That was Prof. William Mason. He was a noble character.

MRS. QUINN—Aye, but he didn't last. He was followed by the moral uplifter one. Sure, we lived on pins and needles then! After him we had a course in sanitation, and pure food, and how to feed a fam'ly of six on \$4.00 a week. Oh, them last was wonderful fairy tales. The meals that woman could manufacture out of an old ham bone! It was past belief.

MRS. MARTIN—I tried a few of her receipts, but Bill wouldn't eat the things I made. He said he wasn't a horse yet.

MRS. QUINN—Aw, she was a joker, I'm thinkin', put in the pack to lighten the others up a bit. Lectures is an easy way of gettin' scraps of learnin', but it's done neither of ye lastin' hurt that I can see.

MRS. MARTIN—I heard the walking delegate talk this afternoon. The men got pretty excited listening to him. He told them their rights, and it'll be a wonder to me, if they don't do a good bit of damage to the Company's property before this thing ends.

MRS. QUINN—The walkin' delegate's a smart lad, from all I hear.

MRS. MARTIN—He's smart enough to get paid for the work he does.

MRS. QUINN—He gets paid for startin' strikes, is it?

MRS. MARTIN—He goes all over the country telling the men when to strike, and what to strike for. He gets paid for that. [84]

MRS. QUINN—But the men don't get paid for strikin'.

MRS. MARTIN—That's a silly idea, Mrs. Quinn.

MRS. QUINN—You can have it for what it's worth. Molly used to say I had more ideas than a dog has fleas, but I fancy she was just slatherin' me over with the blarney.

MRS. MARTIN—Well, I believe the walking delegate's right. The men must fight this out to a finish.

MRS. QUINN—It's likely to be our finish, alright, alright.

MRS. MARTIN—(*Unconsciously imitating the delegate.*) It's not only for ourselves, but for our children that the war must be waged.

MRS. QUINN—Our children! Sure, it shouldn't be a bequeathment job, this trolley business.

MRS. MARTIN—He says our children will be saved a fight for their rights, if we conquer now.

MRS. QUINN—Whist darlin', our children will have their own notion of rights and fights by the time they grow up. They can blow on their own broth when it bubbles over.

MRS. MARTIN—But the noble way is to consider the ones who come after us.

MRS. QUINN—Maybe that's so, me dear Mrs. Martin, but I'm after lookin' out for the man of to-day. The better off we are, the better off our kids'll be.

MRS. MARTIN—The walking delegate says that's a very selfish way of looking at it.

MRS. QUINN—The walkin' delegate's got the fine words in his mouth. [85]

(*Silence.*)

MRS. MARTIN—Have you heard from Molly lately?

MRS. QUINN—Poor darlin', I got a letter from her this mornin'. She's comin' home.

MRS. MARTIN—Does Mr. Quinn know?

MRS. QUINN—I'll have it out with him to-night.

MRS. MARTIN—He's a pretty stubborn man.

MRS. QUINN—I'll bring him around, never fear.

MRS. MARTIN—I think you're a wonderful woman, the way you manage him, Mrs. Quinn.

MRS. QUINN—Sure it's just me knowledge of that, keeps me goin'. When I lose conceit of meself, I'll be fit for no place but—Heaven.

MRS. MARTIN—(*Listens, with finger uplifted.*) Sh! That's Bill slamming the back gate. I'll go put the kettle on. A cup of hot tea soon takes all the ugly kinks out of him.

MRS. QUINN—It's an upliftin' beverage, is tea. It does miracles for my old man, when he has his back up.

MRS. MARTIN—(*Going to door L. then hesitating.*) I'm not a specially religious woman, Mrs. Quinn, and I've never heard you say much about it, but I think now that everything else has failed and the strike seems no nearer an end, we might as well take it to God in prayer. As Bill says, we've tried every other way.

MRS. QUINN—(*Slowly.*) Well, I guess Gawd's used to bein' the last on the list, so I'll join ye in yer prayers, Mrs. Martin. Good-night to ye.

(*Exit Mrs Martin door L.*)

[86]

(*Mrs. Quinn pulls down the blind and fusses about the room. There is a sharp bang on the front door. She leaves room R. and returns with the evening paper. Looks out the window again, raising the blind ever so little, then sits at table, and opens the paper.*)

MRS. QUINN—(*Reads—then.*) Nothin' but strike, strike, strike, wherever ye look. A few cents an hour more, a few hours a week less, what a little to fight for, and yet they won't get it, they won't get it.

(*Quinn enters door L. Hangs hat and coat on rack near kitchen door. Sits in chair at side of table, and is noticeably nervous.*)

QUINN—(*After a pause, during which they both steal furtive glances at one another.*) Well?

MRS. QUINN—I see yer home again. Anything doin'?

QUINN—Nothin'.

MRS. QUINN—(*Tartly.*) Well, it's a fine husky way for a man to be makin' a livin' for his wife, throwin' up his good job as a motorman, and walkin' the streets.

QUINN—(*Moodily.*) Good job,—hell!

MRS. QUINN—I don't see what way ye'll pay for shoe leather, if ye don't get some money soon.

QUINN—We'll live. The Union won't see us go under for the lack of a dollar or two.

MRS. QUINN—I don't like livin' on the Union.

QUINN—We ain't beggars yet.

MRS. QUINN—We're not far from it, Gawd knows.

(*Picks up paper, and again reads. A pause.*)

[87]

QUINN—(*Irritably.*) Can't ye stop rattlin' that paper?

(*Mrs. Quinn glances at him casually, and calmly proceeds with her reading. It is the sort of calm that arouses temper in a jumpy person.*)

QUINN—(*Springing up.*) Stop that infernal noise! Seems like a man might have peace in his own house. Here I am walkin' the streets all day, with me legs and head that tired I'm ready to drop, and when I get home at night, a clatter that would wake the dead, in me ears.

MRS. QUINN—Yer blood may be Irish, John Quinn, but yer nerves are American.... I never saw such a changed man in me life. It's bad enough to have ye walk out on strike—

QUINN—Now see here, I didn't walk out on strike, and ye know it. I'd be workin' yet if the Union hadn't told us to lay off until we got our rights.

MRS. QUINN—Ye'll rot before ye get yer rights, I'm thinkin'.

QUINN—Maybe, maybe so.

(*Silence again.*)

MRS. QUINN—(*Putting down paper.*) I see the walking delegate discussed the strike at an elegant banquet at the Hotel Hoffman last night. Ye know, *he* don't seem to suffer no privation. Mrs. Martin says he gets a princely wage for orderin' strikes all over the country. No wonder he's in earnest about his job.

QUINN—Some one has to lead the men.

MRS. QUINN—I fancy he wouldn't lead far, if his wage stopped.

[88]

QUINN—(*Shortly.*) Aw, don't be a fool.

(*Silence again. Quinn moves uneasily in his chair.*)

MRS. QUINN—What's on yer mind? Can't ye sit still?

QUINN—What should be on me mind?

MRS. QUINN—I haven't lived with ye five and twenty years without knowin' when ye've done somethin' ye're ashamed of.

QUINN—I've done nothin' I'm ashamed of.

MRS. QUINN—Out with it.

QUINN—(*After a slight hesitation.*) I walked down town to-night to see the sights. Bill Martin went with me.

MRS. QUINN—(*Content to get her knowledge by Quinn's roundabout way of telling it.*) Were the streets crowded?

QUINN—Nothin' like they are up here.... D'ye know they have the State Constabulary on the Avenue now?

MRS. QUINN—I saw them this mornin'. Big hulkin' brutes they are, chargin' into groups of women and children like as if they were offenders agin the law.

QUINN—It's makin' the men see red.

MRS. QUINN—If the men are wise, they'll give them a wide berth, and not start any ructions, or they'll get smashed heads for their pains.

QUINN—Well, we can smash heads, too.

MRS. QUINN—And be put in the lock-up for it.

QUINN—Am I in the lock-up?

MRS. QUINN—(*Quickly.*) Whose head have *you* smashed John?

[89]

QUINN—To-night while we stood at the corner of Fourth and Marion, a trolley came along with passengers in it, a woman and two men.

MRS. QUINN—John, ye didn't—

QUINN—The dirty scab who ran the car must have come from New York with that last bunch of strike breakers.

MRS. QUINN—What did ye do?

QUINN—(*Defiantly.*) I picked up a brick, and let it fly through the window. Maybe the company can starve us, but we'll teach the public it's a damned unsafe thing to ride in the cars, while we're bein' starved.

MRS. QUINN—Did ye do any hurt?

QUINN—Well, I guess I damaged the woman's arm, if ye want to know. She let out a yell ye could hear a mile, and flopped over. Then I took to me heels.

MRS. QUINN—(*In a rage.*) Ye fool, have ye quite quit yer senses? Ye'll be caught and locked up fer this.

QUINN—(*Glad that he has gotten the story out.*) Not much.

MRS. QUINN—Yer temper'll do fer ye, one of these days, me man. I suppose that's what ye call seem' red? Seein' red! Gawd'll get ye by the scruff of the neck when yer not lookin', and shake the ugly devil of a temper out of ye. Ye'll face the consequence for it, sooner or later.

QUINN—Aw, stop yer blather, and get me a cup of tea.

MRS. QUINN—Tea! I'm tempted to put a pink bean in it, and make ye croak before the gallows gets ye, ye ruffian.

[90]

(*There is a knock at the front door. Mrs. Quinn exits R. and returns with the Martins.*)

QUINN—Hello Martin, what's up now?

MARTIN—Have ye seen the papers?

QUINN—No.

MARTIN—It's in them already.

QUINN—What's in them?

MARTIN—Listen, (*reads*) "Just at dusk this evening a mob of strikers attacked a west bound car at Fourth and Marion Streets, and did considerable damage to the car and occupants. The only woman passenger was seriously injured in the right hand and arm, and was taken to the Lester Hospital, where"—

QUINN—(*Interrupting.*) Do they know who done it?

MARTIN—(*Reads.*) "No clue to the man has been found, but Chief of Police"—

QUINN—(*Shortly.*) Aw, cut it, Martin. They'll never find the man who did it, unless your tongue wags. I'd like to break the arms of ev'ry one who runs or rides in the cars till we win our fight.

MARTIN—(*Somberly.*) Maybe the only way *is* to do a little damage, break a few bones, show them

we've got some spunk ... and yet it is written if a man smite thee on the right cheek—

Mrs. QUINN—I thought the plan this time was to keep the confidence of the people?

QUINN—We've tried that for seven weeks, and it's taken us nowheres.

Mrs. MARTIN—We've tried most everything I guess, but prayer. Maybe we'd do more if we prayed over it. [91]

QUINN—(*Slowly.*) Do ye say pray over it?

MARTIN—(*Diffidently.*) If we could all get together on it. I know it's hard to talk religion to the boys, they all think different about it. It takes some courage for a man to come out and say he's a Christian, but I'm willing to do it. Think—if all the men and women and children would pray for a settlement, it would have some weight with the Lord.

Mrs. MARTIN—(*Eagerly.*) He'd give an answer, I know. I heard a minister say once, if we'd ask for *anything* with all our hearts and souls the Lord wouldn't deny us.

Mrs. QUINN—What a mix-up we'd have then!

QUINN—Well, I've not much use for prayers when there's a fight on—but if ye—

Mrs. QUINN—Ye know, I had a mad sort of a dream tother night.

QUINN—(*Impatiently.*) Whist woman, with yer dreams!

Mrs. QUINN—(*Undeterred.*) I dreamed I was after havin' a nice easy talk with Gawd, and he sez to me, "Mary Ann Quinn, I want ye to sit up here with me in Heaven on me right hand side. For sure," sez he, pleasant like, "*you've* never pestered me with requests since ye've been a woman grown." "Well Gawd," sez I, "I've been that mortal busy tendin' to the bodily comforts of me man John, and me daughter Molly, that I've had me mind fair occupied, and I apologize for not comin' to ye oftener." "Oh, Mary Ann," sez he, "can't ye see I like it? I'm fair sick of havin' to stand sponsor for all the mistakes of me numberless Christian children. They go along in their headstrong ways doin' the things they *want* to do, right or wrong, and when they run amuck, they up and come to *me* with prayers and supplications, cryin' and pleadin' for help, when a slight use of their own wits and decency and common sense would have kept them from difficulties in the first place." [92]

"Oh, Gawd," begins I, but he smiles at me and sez he, "get up wid ye on me right hand side, and keep that grin on yer face Mary Ann Quinn, while I tend to me regular customers."

QUINN—(*Shocked.*) I can't help ye bein' heathenish in yer views, but I'll not have ye outspoken voicin' them.

MARTIN—(*Puzzled.*) It was a very odd dream to have.

Mrs. MARTIN—It certainly was.

Mrs. QUINN—The meanin' of it's mortal clear, I'm thinkin'. But, that's not gettin' the tea, is it?

(*Exit to kitchen L.*)

QUINN—Martin, I don't know about yer prayers, but fer meself I'm in this fight till the finish, and man nor devil'll make me yield an inch.

MARTIN—Then I'm with you, Quinn. (*To Mrs. Martin, who goes to him protestingly.*) No, Bessie, its no use. We can *pray* after we've won.

(*Molly enters door R. She is in hat and coat, and carries a muff.*)

Mrs. MARTIN—Molly!

(*Molly does not answer, but stands and looks at Quinn.*) [93]

MARTIN—(*Taking Mrs Martin by the arm, and going to door R.*) I guess you'd rather be alone with her.

(*Exeunt Martins door R.*)

MOLLY—Father.

(*Quinn rises and looks at her, but does not speak.*)

MOLLY—Father.

QUINN—(*Slowly.*) Two years ago when you married that damned fiddler, I told ye never to come here again.

MOLLY—Father.

QUINN—(*Sternly.*) I meant it then, and I mean it now. Get out!

MOLLY—Won't you let me speak to you?

QUINN—There's nothin' you can say to me, I gave you yer choice of us long ago, and ye stuck to

him. Stick to him now, I don't want ye.

MRS. QUINN—(*Enters door L with tea things.*) Molly, my dear little Molly.

MOLLY—Mother!

MRS. QUINN—(*Ignoring Quinn.*) Sit down now, and I'll give ye a dish of tea.

QUINN—She'll not sit down in this house.

MRS. QUINN—(*Easily, tho her heart is beating rapidly.*) Will she not? Here, take off yer hat and coat, and drink this while it's hot. I'll bring another cup for yer father.

(*Exit to kitchen. Molly remains standing, and faces her father. She makes no attempt to remove her wraps.*)

MOLLY—Won't you let me come back to you and mother? Won't you forgive me? [94]

QUINN—(*Slowly.*) Why are ye so eager to be back?

MOLLY—I need you and mother, now I'm alone.

QUINN—(*Quickly.*) Alone? He's left ye, has he?

(*Molly unable to answer for her tears, nods head.*)

QUINN—The things I told you about him were true then? He was no fit man to marry a decent girl!

MOLLY—Father, father, don't say that!

(*Mrs. Quinn enters.*)

QUINN—(*Working himself into a rage.*) The fine gentleman has left Molly. All his grand love makin' to end in two years, tho Gawd knows I didn't expect it to last that long. (*To Molly.*) Why hadn't ye sense enough not to be gulled by him? Didn't I tell ye, he was a rogue and a scoundrel? Chucked aside for another woman, I suppose ye were! Left ye, left ye—

MRS. QUINN—Ye blunderin' idiot, last Tuesday the boy died.

QUINN—(*Helplessly.*) Died? I—I thought—(*to Molly.*) Sit down—drink the tea.... Is—is there an egg for her?

MRS. QUINN—There's no eggs here. The hens went on strike with the trolley men. Let me help you off with yer coat, Molly. What have ye done to yer arm? What's that bandage on yer arm for?

MOLLY—You remember, I told you in my last letter, mother—

QUINN—(*Sourly.*) So ye've been writin', hev ye? [95]

MRS. QUINN—D'ye think a mother will let her only child slip easily out of her heart and life?

MOLLY—(*Pleading.*) Mother, father!

QUINN—(*With poor grace.*) Aw, well, let it go.

MOLLY—(*Sitting at back of table, Quinn and Mrs. Quinn at either side.*) When I settled up everything, after—after his death, I planned to go back to my old job. I went to the office and saw Mr. Bowen, and he said the place was still open for me.

MRS. QUINN—(*Admiringly.*) I don't wonder he's glad to get ye back. There ain't many stenographers clever as you are Molly.

QUINN—Be quiet mother, and let the girl talk.

MOLLY—I knew if I could work, and bring good wages into the house, father could afford to stay out on strike until the men had won.

QUINN—Molly!

MOLLY—I *did* plan for that father, I did plan for that, and now—

MRS. QUINN—Well, go on, go on.

MOLLY—To-night at the Lester Hospital when they fixed my arm, the doctor said I couldn't use it before a month.

MRS. QUINN—What happened to it? How did ye hurt it?

MOLLY—I did the wrong thing, and I guess I deserve what I got, but I was dog tired and the walk here is endless. I took a car at the ferry, everything went all right till we got to Fourth and Marion Streets— [96]

QUINN—(*Startled.*) Fourth and Marion!

MOLLY—There was a crowd of strikers there, and one of them threw a brick into the car, and it struck my arm at the elbow. Crushed it pretty badly, I guess.

QUINN—My Gawd!

MOLLY—(*Misunderstanding his emotion.*) I'm not going to live on you, father. I know you and mother are hard enough pushed as it is.

MRS. QUINN—What's ours is yours now. Ye'll stay here with us.

QUINN—(*Dazed.*) I wonder can I get a job at Newton's? They needed men last week.

MOLLY—Father, he ... left insurance, and we can use that until you start again, or until I'm able to go back to the office.

QUINN—The strike's a mistake, I'm thinkin'. I'll go to the barn to-morrow and take me car out, if the boys kill me for it.

MRS. QUINN—(*Quickly, and unconsciously imitating Mrs. Martin's imitation of the walking delegate.*) Ye'll do no such thing. The strike's on till it's settled. Yer fightin' fer a principle, and ye'll not give in till ye win. This is not a war for us only, but for our children. *They'll* be saved a fight fer their rights if we conquer now. We'll go at the company in the way that that walking delegate says. (*As she becomes conscious she is quoting the quoted delegate.*) The walking delegate? Well, he's alright, we'll do things his way, and we'll win.

MOLLY—Of course we'll win. Public sympathy is with the men this time.

QUINN—Well, it won't be fer long, if the men see red, and go about bustin' up perfectly good arms of innocent bystanders. Me mind's made up, violence must stop. [97]

MRS. QUINN—And mine's made up too, the strike must be won.

(*Quinn goes to wail rack, and takes down hat and coat.*)

What are ye doin' with yer coat?

QUINN—I'll go and have a talk with the boys. I've some power with them. Violence must stop. I'll try to make them listen to reason, and if they won't, I guess I'm good for a job at Newton's.

(*As he leaves room he is heard muttering.*) Violence must stop!

MOLLY—I never knew father so set against a fight. What's he want to work in a coal yard for?

MRS. QUINN—Never fear, he won't work in a coal yard. Ye see Molly he's awful mad at the man who smashed yer arm. It makes him wild to think a fellow is free to go about harmin' innocent people, just because he thinks he sees red.

MOLLY—I hope he never finds the man.

MRS. QUINN—D'ye know, I think he has a hunch who did it. Oh, he won't hurt him! Father's been gettin' close to some hard home facts this day, and a good walk in the fresh night air will help him to digest them.

(*As curtain descends.*) I'm so sorry about yer poor arm. Tell me, does it hurt you much?—etc.

## CURTAIN

[98]

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## MURDERING SELINA

[99]

[100]

### CAST

[101]

KING, *Editor of the Gazette.*

BART, *A Reporter.*

AN OFFICER.

A BOY.

A GENTLEMAN.

SELINA.

MISS BROWN.

TIME—*The Present.*

PLACE—*A Little Café in the Park, Managed by Miss Brown.*

[102]

## Murdering Selina

[103]

*Scene—Interior of a frame restaurant in the park. At the left side, running almost the entire width of the room, is the counter at which one may buy soft-drinks, peanuts, pop-corn, newspapers, etc. A talking machine and telephone are on counter. Against the wall, at centre back, is a screen, behind it is a door to another room. At the right side, back, a table and couple of chairs. Small table and two chairs near front of stage, left. When curtain rises, Miss Brown and*

*The Boy are discovered. Miss Brown is a red haired, good-hearted, sharp tongued old maid of uncertain years; positive in her opinions, quick in bodily action—giving one the impression of great nervous energy. The Boy is the typical roguish, rather fresh, "newsy" of fifteen, or thereabout.*

*A fox trot is being played on the victrola, and The Boy is teaching the steps to Miss Brown, whom he is pulling around with spirited good-nature.*

BOY—*(In time with music.)* Slow, slow, slow, slow, now fast, fast, fast, fast, fast, fastie, fastie, fast.

MISS BROWN—Oh, wait until I get me breath.

BOY—You gotta dance without it, see?

MISS BROWN—How can I dance with me wind all gone? Let go of me while I rest.

BOY—Aw, come on, and be a sport. All the girls is doin' the fox trot.

MISS BROWN—*(Pathetically.)* My heavens, I ain't no girl.

[104]

BOY—Yer learnin' it fine. I bet if ye had a couple lessons ye'd put it all over that bunch at the pavilion.

MISS BROWN—*(Trying to stop.)* Let go of me, will you?

BOY—*Slow, slow, slow,—*

MISS BROWN—Ye young snipe, can't ye see I'm ready to drop?

BOY—Aw, stop coddlin' yerself! Yer good for a mile yet.

MISS BROWN—*(Pulling herself free.)* You run and get the papers. It's almost dark, and there ain't one here yet.

BOY—*(At victrola.)* Well, I'm goin,' ain't I?

MISS BROWN—*(Out of breath.)* Quit foolin' with that machine, and go get yer papers.

BOY—I won't be three minutes, and then we can try it again.

MISS BROWN—I think I've had enough. It ain't no game for an old hen.

*(Boy puts on sweater and cap.)*

MISS BROWN—Is it four slow, and four fast?

BOY—No, that ain't right. Four slow, eight fast, then two turnin' steps. See? *(Shows steps, then exits.)*

MISS BROWN—*(Meditatively.)* If I get goin' I suppose I'll be dotty, like the rest. This dance craze is certainly worse than hittin' up the booze. They say that Lizzie Smith, the hussy, roped that poor misguided Jones boy into marrying her with her dancing, though heaven knows I never saw nothin' in her grace or beauty. Oh, for ten years of my misspent youth. If I'd only learned the blamed thing before I lost my figure! *(Puts record on machine, and dances hesitatingly, counting "one, two, three, four," etc. Bart, much dishevelled rushes into room. He is well dressed, but mussed looking, as if he had slept on a park bench for a night or two, and had not had recent acquaintance with hair or clothes brush. He bumps against the peanuts on the edge of the counter, and scatters them all over the floor.)*

[105]

MISS BROWN—Can't ye see where yer goin'?

BART—*(Fumbling in pocket.)* Here. Sorry.

MISS BROWN—A dollar! Ye never can tell a millionaire by looks these days.

BART—*(Sinking into chair.)* Am I doomed to blight everything I touch?

MISS BROWN—Are ye sick, mister? Can I help ye?

BART—Get out, get out, let me alone, and stop that machine!

MISS BROWN—*(Commiseratingly.)* Poor fellow! *(Stops machine.)* He's got the Willies.

BART—Don't talk to me, for Heaven's sake; I can't stand it!

MISS BROWN—*(Sarcastically.)* Oh, I was just commuin' with me other nuts.

*(She stoops to gather up the peanuts, but catches a glimpse of Bart's side face, and sits on floor, looking at him intently.)*

To think of that profile bein' wasted on a man! It's terrible the way good looks is chucked around where they ain't needed!

*(Boy enters with an armful of newspapers. King is close behind him. Bart rushes to King, knocking against the Boy as he does so, and sending the papers flying.)*

[106]

BOY—Ye big stiff, what ye doin'?

BART—King, I thought you'd never come!

BOY—Look at me papers, will ye?

BART—(*Impatiently.*) Oh, shut up!

(*Boy, grumbling and muttering to himself, helps Miss Brown pick up the peanuts and papers.*)

KING—(*With great displeasure.*) This is a nice out of the way place to bring a man to. What's wrong with you anyway? Drunk?

BART—(*Grimly.*) I haven't been sober for three days.

KING—Don't boast about it.

BART—Boast, good heavens!

KING—What do you think a newspaper is, a day nursery? Here's Billy Sunday in town, the war, the Mexican situation, everything at boiling point; the Gazette short of men, and you off on a three days' jag! I've a good mind to fire you.

BART—(*Miserably.*) I'm up against it, King, don't rub it in. I don't know which way to turn.

BOY—(*To Miss Brown, as they seat themselves behind counter.*) I wish those ginks would clear out, so we could trot again.

MISS BROWN—They'll beat it to a free lunch counter soon.

(*She gets the Boy to hold a skein of worsted, which she unwinds and rolls into a ball. During the conversation between Bart and King, Miss Brown and the Boy now and then glance at them with a show of irritation, Miss Brown because they are not buying any of her wares, and also because she cannot hear enough of their talk to make sense of it.*) [107]

KING—What have you done, a second story job?

BART—(*With much humility, and some pride.*) I've broken a girl's heart.

KING—(*Utterly disgusted.*) Oh, hell!

BART—I tell you, I've broken a girl's heart, and ruined her life.

KING—Rubbish! Sober up, and go back to work.

BART—I can't. She has threatened to do something desperate. There will be a scandal.

KING—Forget it!

BART—I wish I could, but suppose she shoots herself, or takes poison?

KING—That sounds pleasant.

BART—I didn't know she loved me, I protest I didn't.

KING—Cut out the heroics.

BART—She's mad about me, and I didn't understand till too late.

KING—(*Firmly.*) Too late! You scuttle back to town, get a license, and marry her.

BART—I came to the city to earn money to marry a girl back home, and I'll marry her, or no one.

KING—Winning a girl's love, and throwing her over, is cheap sport. I'm disappointed in you, Bart. I didn't know you were that kind of a chap.

BART—I'm not that kind. It's all a horrible mistake. She misunderstood my—my attentions. I was just nice and friendly to her, and she, well she—

KING—That's right, put the blame on her.

BART—(*Hotly.*) Well, I'm not going to blame myself. If women see fit to fall in love with me, it's not my fault. [108]

KING—You conceited pup!

BART—I don't care. I've suffered enough these last three days, and I've just about gone to pieces. It's not my fault, I don't care what you say, it's not my fault.

KING—Every cad says it's not his fault.

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy.*) What in the name of common sense are they gassin' about?

BOY—Aw, they're holdin' hands, I guess.

BART—(*To King.*) I asked you here for advice, not abuse.

KING—(*Shortly.*) You have my advice, marry her.



BART—And I tell you I won't. I don't love her, and I do love Lucy.

KING—Lucy. The girl up home, I suppose?

BART—Yes.

KING—What will she think of this mess?

BART—She need never know that Selina existed.

KING—(*Starting.*) Selina!

BART—That's her name.

KING—Selina, what a coincidence!

BART—I thought you'd understand, and help me out.

KING—Tell me, I'll try to understand.

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy.*) My Gawd, ain't they never goin'?

BOY—Talk about yer cheap skates!

BART—(*To King.*) I've been kind of lonely down here in the city, and she was a regular oasis in the desert. I took her to a good many first nights, and the opera pretty nearly every week, and she— [109]

KING—(*Gently ironical.*) Gazette passes, I presume?

BART—You don't think I could pay for them out of my salary, do you? I've not had a cent from father since I left home.... She always gets herself up well, and wears good-looking clothes, and I felt proud to take her around. Besides, she's older than I am, and I thought I was safe.

KING—I had no idea you were so irresistible.

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy.*) It's time to give them the acid test. (*She turns a sign advertising Coca Cola, with its face to the wall. On the back is printed in large letters, "This ain't no free rest room. Buy something, or get out." King turns around, glances at the sign casually, then gives his attention to Bart.*)

BOY—Hully gee! The big boob can't read!

MISS BROWN—What's a poor girl to do now?

BART—(*To King.*) Why, I never even kissed her, although once or twice, I think she wanted me to.

KING—With such a platonic background, how did you manage to break her heart?

BART—That's the queer part. Tuesday night after Tosca, we had a little supper at her apartments. We were talking about friendship, and I told her what a bully little pal she had been, and how I'd miss our good times when I went home and married Lucy.

KING—You mentioned Lucy?

BART—Why shouldn't I?

KING—*I* should call it a strategic error. [110]

BART—I suppose it was a mistake.

KING—It's rank idiocy, my boy, to tell one woman you love another.

BART—It seemed to break her all up. She declared I'd led her to believe I was going to marry *her*, that she had given her heart unreservedly to me—

KING—(*Quickly.*) She had "given her heart unreservedly to you?" Did she use those words?

BART—I'm not apt to forget them, especially as she repeated everything half a dozen times. She made me feel as if I'd deserted her at the altar. I tell you, I never went through such an awful hour in my life.

KING—Didn't you explain to her?

BART—Explain to a weeping woman? She was lost in an ocean of tears, I'd have had to use a foghorn. I got so rattled I began to cry myself. Then she flung herself in my arms, and said if I jilted her (jilted her, mind you!) she'd blow her brains out. And she'll do it, too, she'll do it. That's what I'm afraid of. If Selina kills herself for love of me, it's all up with Lucy; she'll never marry me.

KING—Does anyone know of this scene?

BART—Her maid came in while she was sobbing in my arms. I tried to shake her off, but she clung like a leech.

KING—Her maid, that's bad.

BART—(*Moodily.*) I know it's bad.

KING—Are you sure you never made her think you loved her?

BART—I protest on my word of honor, I never even hinted at love.

[111]

BOY—(*To Miss Brown, as he yawns over newspaper.*) There's nothin' worth readin' except this blame suicide.

MISS BROWN—(*Looking up from her newspaper.*) It certainly gets my goat the way some fool women go dippy over men.

(*King glances at Miss Brown suddenly, as she raises her voice during her last remark, then turns to Bart.*)

KING—Have you seen the papers?

BART—I've been afraid to look at them for fear of reading something about her.

KING—(*Turning to counter.*) Bring me a Gazette, boy. (*Hands coin.*) No change. Go along.

BOY—(*Impudently.*) The woods is full of 'em.

KING—(*Looking at paper.*) I guess you're in for it, Bart.

BART—(*In a stifled voice.*) What—what is it?

KING—This suicide. I never connected it with you. The body of an unknown woman was found at the Riverton dam this afternoon. She was about thirty-eight years old, five feet five, had light brown hair—does that fit your Selina?

BART—I don't think Selina was more than five feet three or four, and she can't be thirty. She told me herself she was only twenty-six. (*Puts out a shaking hand for the paper.*) Let me see.

KING—(*Holding paper.*) The newspaper description may not be accurate Bart, but all her underclothing was marked with initials. That is the clue the police are working on.

(*Hands paper to Bart, pointing out the place.*)

MISS BROWN—(*Reading her newspaper.*) Poor soft soul, it's certainly awful.

[112]

BART—(*Clutching his head.*) Great heavens! She left a note. "I did it for love, *he* will understand. S. W." She's dead, she's dead, there's blood on my hands.

KING—Pull yourself together. Don't make a scene here.

BART—I've killed her just as surely as if I'd thrown her into the water myself. I'm a murderer, that's what I am. I've murdered Selina!

KING—Sit down, and listen to me.

BART—Murderer, Selina's murderer!

KING—Sit down! We must work this out together quietly.

BART—(*Bitterly.*) Be quiet with a murder on my conscience.

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy, folding up her newspaper.*) Well I ain't seen the man, I'd kill myself for.

KING—(*To Bart.*) I'm going to tell you something no one in all the world knows except me, and a poor heart broken old woman in New Hampshire.

BART—Don't talk to me. I'm a murderer.

KING—(*Whispering.*) So am I!

BART—(*Jumping.*) What!

KING—That's what I want to tell you about.

BART—You too!

KING—Eight years ago, I trifled with a woman, just as you have done. I was more to blame than you, for I made her think I loved her. She loved *me*, there was no doubt about that, but I thought she was after my money, and that of course, ended everything. I quarrelled with her, and went about my business. She left the city. A month later I received a letter from her mother. She told me her daughter had died in her arms of a broken heart. Her last words were, "I have given my heart unreservedly to him." My name was the last she ever breathed. And the poor old lady was left alone and penniless. I would have gone to her at once, but she could not bear the shock of seeing her daughter's murderer.

[113]

BART—What a coincidence!

KING—It does not end there, for she was called Selina!

BART—(*Amazed.*) Selina!

KING—A tragic coincidence.

BART—Both of us murderers!

KING—Murderers, yes, we have murdered our Selinas.

MISS BROWN—*(To Boy.)* Merciful heavens, they've killed someone! *(Takes down telephone, and calls.)* Main 674 ... 674 I said. Say operator, you get me Main 674 will ye? Oh, stop polishing yer nails, you ain't no society dame.... Is this 674? Send a cop quick to Miss Brown's restaurant. Someone's been murdered, and the men who done it ... here in my restaurant. I ain't stringin' ye ... right away. I don't like bein' alone with them. *(Hangs receiver up, and watches Bart and King closely.)*

BART—*(To King.)* What did you do?

KING—What could I do? From the day of her death until now, I've kept her mother. It's the only reparation I can make, and I have done it for eight years. [114]

BART—*(Tragically.)* My Selina was alone in the world. With her death I have blotted out an entire family.

KING—*(Humbly.)* We possibly can't help being handsome and fascinating, Bart.

BART—But we must learn to be careful with women, and not lead them on.

MISS BROWN—*(To Boy.)* Now you sit tight, and if they come over here, brain them with a soda water bottle.... *(Looks out of doorway.)*

BOY—*(Dancing with excitement and pleasure.)* Ain't this some picnic!

KING—*(To Bart.)* I have never dared look at a woman since then.

BART—I can't imagine Lucy killing herself for me. She will never love me as Selina did.

KING—*(Sighing.)* Selina.

BART—Mine?

KING—Mine.

*(Enter a plain clothes Officer, and a Policeman, breathlessly.)*

OFFICER—*(To Miss Brown.)* Now, which one of them done it?

MISS BROWN—It's that young one, I think. You could spot his ugly mug for a crook anywhere.

*(Officer goes up to King, and turns him around suddenly, while the Policeman does the same to Bart.)*

KING—What do you want?

OFFICER—*(Slipping handcuffs on.)* Come along peaceful.

*(Policeman handcuffs Bart.)*

BART—Stop that! What are you doing? [115]

OFFICER—Keepin' you safe. The lady just phoned to headquarters what you've been doin'.

BART—*(Angrily, to Miss Brown.)* I gave you a dollar, what more do you want?

OFFICER—Hush money won't go, boss.

KING—Take these things off, or I'll brain you.

*(The Boy dances around the stage in glee, getting into everyone's way.)*

BOY—Keep the nippers on 'em, Casey, or they'll muss up the shop!

OFFICER—I'm running no risks with murderers.

BART AND KING—Murderers! *(they collapse. King drops his cane, and Miss Brown makes a dive for it, and shakes it at him.)*

MISS BROWN—I heard ye, ye bloodthirsty thug.

KING—*(To Officer.)* Now see here, don't be a fool. I'm George King, editor of the Gazette—

OFFICER—Can it, boss, everything you say will be used against you at the trial.

BART—*(Despairingly.)* It only needed this!

KING—Is Lieut. Mason in the guard house?

OFFICER—Maybe he is, maybe he ain't. I ain't sayin'.

KING—Take us to him at once. He'll identify us. You can't run men in like this, on a pink headed old maid's say so. Where's your warrant?

OFFICER—The warrant's comin'. We hadn't time to wait for it, while you skinned out.

KING—Take us to Lieut. Mason at once.

OFFICER—Well, come along, and none of your funny tricks, or I'll wing you.

(*Takes out revolver.*) You too, Miss Brown, the chief'll want your testimony.

[116]

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy.*) Watch the Café, while I'm gone, and don't you give nobody nothin'.

(*Exeunt Bart, King, Miss Brown, Officer and Policeman. Boy puts record on machine, and before starting it, says, "Gee, life's great!" then dances to the music, stopping when Selina and Gentleman, in evening attire, appear at the door.*)

GENTLEMAN—It's too bad the tire's punctured.

SELINA—(*Graciously.*) I really don't mind it in the least.

GENTLEMAN—Really?

SELINA—Really.

GENTLEMAN—A car's such a rotten nuisance. Always something wrong with it; much rather ride in a hack.

SELINA—(*Coquettishly.*) Even a hack would have no terrors with you, though I confess, I prefer the machine.

GENTLEMAN—We'll be late for dinner, too. It will take Thompson half an hour to put on that tire.

SELINA—Then let's sit here, look at the moon, and talk.

GENTLEMAN—About the moon?

SELINA—Oh dear no,—about you and me.

GENTLEMAN—About you, you're such a ripping sort. Maybe I can get something to drink while we wait.

SELINA—Do, I'm chilled to the bone.

GENTLEMAN—Boy, let us have two cups of fresh hot coffee.

BOY—You gotta wait.

GENTLEMAN—Wait, why?

[117]

BOY—The lady's out. I can't make cawfee. I'm just mindin' the shop.

GENTLEMAN—You get us something to drink.

BOY—Aw, this is a temperance joint.

(*Grins impudently at the Gentleman, who stares at him with great disdain for an instant, then turns to Selina.*)

GENTLEMAN—Botheration! I suppose we might as well stay out of the cold until Thompson is ready.

SELINA—There's a draft along there. Don't sit too near the wall.

GENTLEMAN—I'll fix the draft with this screen. (*Places screen across one corner of room.*) That will keep that fresh kid from seeing us, too.

SELINA—Why don't you want the boy to see? What are you going to do?

GENTLEMAN—Well, for one thing, kiss you, if I get the chance.

SELINA—(*Severely.*) I think you are forgetting yourself.

GENTLEMAN—(*Confusedly.*) I beg your pardon. My tongue slipped. I wanted to ask you to, to—I'll take a look at Thompson.

(*Exit Gentleman. Boy makes a smacking noise with his lips.*)

BOY—Um, honey!

SELINA—(*Behind screen, exultingly.*) It'll be easy enough to work him. He's ready to drop into my hand now, like a ripe plum. Lord, what fools men are!

(*Boy puts on record, and starts machine. Selina listens a moment, then picks up her skirt, and does a few steps behind screen. Bart and King enter.*)

[118]

KING—Stop that infernal racket.

BOY—Big stiff. (*Does not stop machine.*)

KING—Where's my cane?

BOY—You gotta wait till Miss Brown comes back.

KING—You get my cane.

BOY—(*Picking cane up from counter, and hiding it behind him.*) I don't know where she put it. You gotta wait, see?

KING—(*To Bart.*) I'd like to jump that cop. Nice fix for us if Mason hadn't been there.

BOY—(*Stopping machine.*) Say, didn't you do it? What did they let you come back for?

KING—Of course we didn't do it.

BART—(*To King.*) And yet we *are* guilty of murder.

KING—Luckily for us, the law won't see it that way.... I'll double my allowance to her mother.

BART—And I'll put flowers every week on my Selina's grave.

KING—We are bound together by ties of death. We must be brave, and face the world serenely.

BART—(*Clasping King's hand.*) And no one must know.

SELINA—(*Peeping around screen.*) George King and Bart! My gosh, what a pickle! (*She hurriedly enters the little room back of the screen. Bart and King just catch a glimpse of her as she disappears.*)

KING—Sh!

BART—Great heavens, an apparition!

KING—She has come to haunt me.

[119]

BART—I shall throw myself at her ghostly feet, and crave pardon.

BART AND KING—(*With outstretched hands.*) Selina!

KING—(*Tragically.*) That was the spirit of the Selina whom my coldness killed.

BART—It was the spirit of my Selina, who drowned herself for love of me.

KING—How terrible is the vengeance of heaven! It makes the one woman haunt us both.

BART—I shall go mad now.

KING—Bart, I feel my reason tottering.

(*They sit at little table, heads on hands, backs to the entrance door. Gentleman enters, and goes behind screen.*)

GENTLEMAN—It will take about ten minutes more—hello, where have you gone?

SELINA—(*Peeping from room off stage.*) Sh!

GENTLEMAN—Why, what's the mystery?

SELINA—Did you see two men in there, as you came in?

GENTLEMAN—Didn't notice, but I'll take a look.

(*Bart and King hide behind counter when Gentleman appears.*)

GENTLEMAN—Not a soul but the boy. (*Returns to Selina, who comes into the room, but remains behind screen. Bart and King stay behind counter, but listen intently to Selina and Gentleman.*)

KING—Something queer about this.

SELINA—(*To Gentleman.*) Flatterer!

GENTLEMAN—I remember the first time I saw you at the opera. By the way, who's that chap you always go with? [120]

SELINA—(*Lightly.*) Oh, that!

BART—Her voice!

GENTLEMAN—He interests me. Seems very sweet on you.

SELINA—Think so?

GENTLEMAN—I have eyes.

SELINA—He's just a boy.

GENTLEMAN—It's these young cubs who always run off with the prizes. Are you in love with him?

SELINA—I do not think you have any right to question me.

GENTLEMAN—I beg your pardon for seeming impertinent. I merely ask, so I may know where I stand.

SELINA—Do you think *he* is the type of man I could love? Frankly, he bores me to death.

BART—Great fish!

GENTLEMAN—I don't think you bore him.

SELINA—(*Sadly.*) Poor boy!

GENTLEMAN—He's gone on you, isn't he?

SELINA—(*Pleadingly.*) Please don't think me a heartless coquette. He's alone here in the city. I was just nice and friendly to him, and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with me.

GENTLEMAN—(*Gallantly.*) I don't blame him.

SELINA—That's quite sweet of you, but it's made me very unhappy. He was engaged to a girl up the state, and I'm afraid she will blame me. Women are so cruel in their judgments.

GENTLEMAN—(*Soothingly.*) Well if you don't love him—

SELINA—How can I? Yet I'm worried sick, for he has threatened to kill himself if I don't marry him. [121]

BART—(*Springing up hysterically.*) Liar!

KING—(*With deep conviction.*) She's no ghost.

SELINA—(*To Gentleman.*) Do you wonder I am unhappy?

GENTLEMAN—You certainly couldn't throw yourself away on a young puppy like him.

BART—(*Clenching fists.*) Oh!

KING—Sit down!

SELINA—He hasn't been at his office since I refused him. I'm afraid he's done something desperate.

GENTLEMAN—Don't worry about him. What you want is a man with position and wealth. Now, if I should say I loved you, and wanted to marry you?

SELINA—(*Quietly.*) But you have not.

GENTLEMAN—(*With an embarrassed laugh.*) I'm trying to hard enough.

SELINA—Shall I say, "this is so sudden?"

GENTLEMAN—Heavens, no, not that stuff! Say "yes."

SELINA—But I'm not used to this sort of proposal.

GENTLEMAN—I don't mind being romantic, I'll get down on my knees, if you like.

SELINA—Don't don't, the floor's dirty.

GENTLEMAN—Well then, say "yes."

SELINA—But you've known me scarcely two weeks.

GENTLEMAN—And loved you the first time I saw you. [122]

SELINA—I wish I'd known it.

BART—(*Heartily.*) So do I.

GENTLEMAN—I'm telling you now, isn't that enough?

SELINA—I've no family, no money save a small allowance from my mother's estate. I'm really a very poor girl.

GENTLEMAN—Don't worry about that, I've money enough for two.

SELINA—The little income I get barely keeps me, but I've managed to live on it for eight years.

KING—(*Grimly.*) You've got your last check from me, mother dear!

GENTLEMAN—Poor little woman, what a struggle you must have had to keep up appearances. (*Horn blows outside.*) Come, there's Thompson. We can announce our engagement at the dinner.

(*The Gentleman helps Selina into her wraps, while Bart and King again hide behind counter. Miss Brown enters. She is in a fine rage.*)

MISS BROWN—The way law's handed out in this town's a crime, a howlin' crime!

BOY—What's eatin' ye now?

MISS BROWN—Lieut. Mason let them murderers off. He's a fool, that's what he is, a soft pie-eyed fool!

BOY—Aw, forget it!

MISS BROWN—Don't tell me to forget it, or I'll slap your face for ye, ye rat.

(*Chases Boy behind counter, and bumps into King.*) Holy cats!

KING—(*In a whisper of suppressed rage.*) Woman, give me my cane.

[123]

MISS BROWN—(*Goes to door and shrieks.*) Police, police!

(*Selina and Gentleman are about to leave, but Selina pulls Gentleman behind screen again.*)

SELINA—(*To Gentleman.*) Come back!

BART—What's she going to do now?

BOY—Better leave her be, she's got her dander up.

(*Enter Officer.*)

OFFICER—What do ye want now, Miss Brown?

MISS BROWN—Call 'em innocent, if you like, but I got a hunch they're crooks, and I want you to clear them out of my café, see?

OFFICER—You got me in wrong once. I ain't huntin' trouble.

SELINA—(*To Gentleman, who urges her forward.*) No, no, stay here till they go.

KING—I came back for my cane, and I'm not going to leave without it.

(*Horn blows again.*)

GENTLEMAN—Hang it all, we'll be dreadfully late.

SELINA—(*In an ecstasy of fear.*) No, no, stay here till they go. (*Leans against screen, which shakes, and almost falls over.*)

MISS BROWN—What's back of that screen? I saw it move!

(*Goes toward screen. Bart and King make a bolt for the door, and Officer stops them.*)

MISS BROWN—(*Discovering Selina and Gentleman.*) Pipe these two dolls, will ye?

(*Selina draws scarf over face, and hurries toward door.*)

[124]

OFFICER—(*Detaining her.*) Not so fast please, I want to see you first.

GENTLEMAN—We're all right officer, just waiting here out of the cold, while my car was being—

OFFICER—(*With easy familiarity to Selina.*) Hello kid, where did you hook the gown?

GENTLEMAN—Officer!

OFFICER—Easy, boy, easy.

SELINA—Let me pass, you have no right to detain me.

GENTLEMAN—This is an outrage. I'll report you.

OFFICER—(*To Selina.*) Some style to you now, kid. Who you workin'? Must have money to rig you out like that!

SELINA—Let me pass, I tell you, let me pass!

OFFICER—You're a wonder, Lena. Your own mother wouldn't know you.

BART—My gosh!

GENTLEMAN—How dare you insult this lady?

OFFICER—Say, what are you buttin' in for? Who are you anyway? What's it matter to you?

GENTLEMAN—Everything. I'll not let you bulldoze a lady who's going to be my wife.

OFFICER—She's not going to be your wife while I'm alive, Clarence.

GENTLEMAN—What do you mean?

OFFICER—I don't believe in divorce, and—

SELINA—(*In suppressed rage.*) Keep quiet, will you!

OFFICER—(*Coolly.*) And she happens to be *my* wife.

(*General consternation.*)

[125]

GENTLEMAN—Good heavens!

BART—Great fish!

KING—I'll be darned!

MISS BROWN—They're all dotty. The whole fool ranch is dotty.

GENTLEMAN—(*Tensely, to Selina.*) Is this true, tell me, is this true?

SELINA—(*Shrugging shoulders.*) Oh, what's the use!

OFFICER—Sure, it ain't any use, Lena, but if you're havin' a good time, go to it. Gawd knows I don't want any more of ye.

(*Horn blows again.*)

GENTLEMAN—I must be going.

SELINA—Would you mind dropping me at my apartments?

GENTLEMAN—(*Coldly.*) Certainly not, if you wish.

(*Exeunt Selina and Gentleman. Bart, King and Officer bow to her with mock courtesy as she passes them.*)

OFFICER—She's got her nerve, all right. Knew I picked a pippin' when I married her. She'll cook up some story to hoodwink him before they get to her apartments. (*Stands in doorway, meditatively.*)

KING—Died in her mother's arms! And I've been keeping the fictitious old lady eight years.

BART—I'll put no flowers on her grave, the siren.

KING—She worked us all very nicely, didn't she?

BART—(*Suddenly.*) King, our hands are bloodless. We have not murdered Selina!

(*King and Bart fall into one another's arms, overcome with emotion. Miss Brown watches them a moment in supreme disgust.*) [126]

MISS BROWN—(*To Boy.*) Put on a fox trot, Jimmie, maybe it'll bring them to, the poor prunes!

(*Boy puts on record.*)

(*CURTAIN*)

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## NOTES

[127]

THE HAND OF THE PROPHET was written February, 1913. It was first performed March 8, 1913, at Artsman's Hall, Rose Valley, Pennsylvania.

The three songs used are from "A LOVER IN DAMASCUS," words by Charles Hanson Towne, music by Amy Woodforde-Finden. In the order of their singing in the play, they are "Far Across the Desert Sands," "How Many a Lonely Caravan," and "If in the Great Bazaars." The songs are published by Boosey & Co.

The first dance is from Saint Saens' "Samson and Delilah." Melody is included in this volume. The second dance is the "Dance Arabe" from Tchaikovski's Casse-Noisette (Nut-cracker) Suite. The melody of the third dance is included in this volume.

CHILDREN OF GRANADA was written March, 1914. It was first performed May 2, 1914, at Artsman's Hall, Rose Valley, Pennsylvania.

Music of Muezzin's Call to Prayer included in this volume.

THE TURTLE DOVE was written February, 1915. It was first performed April 6, 1915, at the MASQUE OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES, Horticultural Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Music of the Chinese Song is included in this volume.

THIS YOUTH—GENTLEMEN! was written February, 1909. It was published in THE BUTTERFLY QUARTERLY, Winter 1908-1909.

THE STRIKER was written January, 1915. It was first performed March 5, 1915, at Artsman's Hall, Rose Valley, Pennsylvania. [128]

MURDERING SELINA was written January, 1915. It was first performed March 5, 1915, at Artsman's Hall, Rose Valley, Pennsylvania.



## Children of Granada

El Sa.la.ma.lek E...le...koum El Sa...lam El Sa.....  
 ..... Jam Al..... lah ouak.bar  
 ia...les Salah la Al...lah ou Ma..ham...med ras...soul Al..  
 lah Al.lah ouak...bar...  
 ...sa... les Sa... lah

**MUEZZIN'S CALL TO PRAYER**

## The Hand of the Prophet

FIRST DANCE >

THIRD DANCE

## The Turtle Dove

CHINESE MELODY

Bor lo un doy Bor lo un doy chin lo chin lo  
 Bor lo un doy.

### TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

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