

The Balconies of Madrid

Tirso de Molina (Gabriel Téllez)

Translated by Kenneth A. Stackhouse

This translation is based on the text of the edition of **LOS BALCONES DE MADRID** by Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch in the *BAE*, Vol. 5.

Dramatis personae:

- Don CARLOS, a count

ACT I

A sitting room in Don Alonso's house. Elisa enters carrying a letter, accompanied by Coral

ELISA: I just cannot believe how our Don Juan
Has gone to such extremes to write a note!
He really does not lack for wit or style!
Why do you think he takes such chances? Well?
Coral, this time he really goes too far.

5

CORAL: He goes this far to please and that is all,
For his desire to please you has no match.
His pleasure, if he were, let's say, in Burgos,
Would be a corner stone--for convents, yes!
You might first guess the meaning of his words
By looking at one line, as you judge wool
By testing just one thread from off the skein,
Or as you might assess an entire hotel
By asking them to bring their list of wines.
Now read what he has written. Your reward
Will be fine ballads, sonnets, quatrains, too,
As tithes upon his love, ...he is no priest...
As taxes on affection never sold.

10

15

But hush! I hear them coming in this way!

ALONSO: Elisa! The new year promises to be
An excellent one for us, because today,
A man has come to court who brings with him
My new lease on life. His servant must be here,
Since he was not there waiting at the door.
But you! Tell me why you are here?

20

25

CORAL: Oh, shoe!!

ALONSO: Speak up! Who are you? What do you want here?

CORAL: (Saint Michael! Help me speak!) **Aside**

I am, good sir,
A certain person who...person, but uncertain...
Because I have not been here very long...
And not a real person, as such, to tell the truth,
Because there are so few of them today...
I distill the quinessentials...the essences...
And polish teeth, remove corns, style hair;
A noble lady called me from her rooms...
They say it's true, when they wear signet rings...
I think they lie, don't you? I must leave now...

30

35

He tries to leave

ALONSO: What is all this? Now, wait a moment here.

CORAL: To wait..to hear...to hear... to judge, and that
Is not for me. I never studied law
Nor learned to speak in rhetoric, although
There are some well-read melon heads whose names
Are carved on bookstore rinds yet turn out green
Or over ripe, or just plain bunk when tested.

40

ALONSO: (The man lacks something between his ears.) **Aside**

Now wait right there!

45

CORAL: To wait means losing hope.

ALONSO: Has there ever been such wit? What do you want?

CORAL: Who? Me? The stairs! They must be invisible.
They must be like the gallows steps: the climb
Is easy "up" but "down" is only for
The executioner.

50

ALONSO: (Without a doubt **Aside**

Don Pedro sent him here to say he arrived.)
Do not be so upset I found you here,
In my house; the man you serve will soon become
Its owner, too.

CORAL: The man I serve?

ALONSO: My sweet

Elisa owes as much to his good faith, 55
As I owe him for his many gifts to me.
I asked him to come and make our family strong.
I recognized him near our house and then
Complained about his lack of courtesy
In waiting for so long to visit us. 60
Of course, I welcomed him with open arms.
He asked me to forgive his oversight
And said that he had left a servant here:
"I did not want to bother anyone
Arriving unannounced at night," he said, 65
"In spite of love's impatience it seemed best
To wait for dawn and miss another day."
And so, as you can see, I saw the man
You serve and welcomed him. Since you have come
To announce that he is here, you should not fear 70
But rather hope I give a big reward!

CORAL: (This man has taken me for someone else! **Aside**

It seems to me they switched our bags!
Since he has welcomed whom he thinks I am,
I have no choice. I must become the one 75
He wants to see.) Good Sir! I feared I might
Offend your reverential ancientness
But since the winter of your days is spring
To me, let me kiss your sacred shoes
And then implore your kindly venue to think 80
Your vindication for...to apologize
For that foul smell which you, without a doubt,
Like me, perceive now rising from my pants.

Exit CORAL. Enter ELISA

ALONSO: Elisa, I could not but note how hushed
You always are and how your eyes are cold. 85

You take this news quite badly, or so I fear.
 You know, Elisa, that my years require
 Someone to take control of my affairs
 And care for you, to lighten my load, someone
 Whose name deserves to be allied with yours. 90
 Don Pedro is that man; his family name,
 His pleasant ways; I know him as do you.
 He has a good income, as well, it seems.
 But most of all, I like him. No matter how
 You feel, he will be here to see you soon-- 95
 Tomorrow, if I can arrange it. Then
 The papers will be written right away,
 Or else you leave Madrid by coach tonight
 For Lerma where a convent waits for you.

Exit Don ALONSO

ELISA: All know that unforeseen misfortunes lead 100
 To a kind of delirium; if lightning fails
 To kill us, it deprives us of our senses,
 Don Juan. My father strikes like lightning, fast.
 But I am safe because I am true to you.
 Although the lightening bolt is feared by all, 105
 It never strikes the bay, a tree whose leaves
 May tremble but they never, ever fall:
 His wrath will see me always green and firm.
 And if they try to force me, love does not

CONSENT TO COMPROMISE: Don Juan or death.

***Exit ELISA. The street on which Don Alonso and Doña Ana live in
 neighboring houses. Enter Don CARLOS and Don JUAN***

CARLOS: I never saw an evening quite this clear. 110
 It seems December turned to May tonight.
 JUAN: Count Charles, good sir: if youthful love is wild
 And like a child prefers playthings which fire
 The passions more, tonight will bring me luck
 And end my pain. I know 'tis so because 115
 The old year ends and the new begins so fair.
 CARLOS: Well, then, forget your old, sad ways for friends
 Are always gentle, kind, and that, my friend,
 Is all I ask of you. Unless you share

Your thoughts and trust me with your cares 120
I can not call you "friend."

JUAN: If I refuse
To tell you, it is not because I doubt
Your faith, but simply that the usual path
To love is not the path I choose to take.
I fear that people will not see me as 125
A lover but instead will think me mad.
Come hear the ways of love that do not take
The usual paths to joy, a love which now,
From habit, is not accidental, no,
But has become essential to my being. 130
But understand, good Count, that you are not
To know her name. I swore to tell no one.
She so respects the silence of my fire
That she forbids its glow to reach my eyes.

CARLOS: Then tell me. I will never say her name. 135

JUAN: Don Carlos. I adore the pearl more than
The shell, the diamond far more than the gold
In which it lies, the idea more than its form.
I mean by this that I have come to love,
With pure intent, her soul, with love so free 140
From all desire that to think it seems a crime.

CARLOS: Sometimes, a graceful wit that comes from strength
Of mind can win the love of understanding,
If understanding is what she has won,
The lady you refuse to name must be 145
So ugly that she kills all your desires
...and though you love your host, you stubbornly
Refuse to accept her hospitality.
What good are eyes, if you refuse to take
The spoils which come with every stolen glance? 150
Do you believe that she is beautiful?

JUAN: She is the sun in heaven, the rose in May,
And since she is as I have painted her,
My love for her is so unlike all others
That I can only let my eyes enjoy 155
Her sight in passing. They must not remain
Too fixed upon her loveliness, their prize.
My eyes are sharp; through them I know the host
Of the great, noble house that enflames my heart.

CARLOS: They are right when they proclaim all love is mad. 160
 Love seems to try to go to the extremes
 In everyone each time. But good Don Juan:
 Every madman has his day, and I
 Refuse to love the part and not the whole.
 But are you sure that she loves you as well? 165

JUAN: I am certain that I have no peer
 And that my love is met with pure intent,
 With a willingness to accept the bonds of love.
 Do not assume that I am much too sure
 Or careless, either. Look how fortune smiled 170
 On me no less than one short hour ago:
 I took a chance and won my lady's smile,
 Which issued from her self-congratulations
 For promising to be my wife. Just read
 The note which fortune used to favor me. 175
 It says, "You probably have made him mad
 With envy. Your constancy will win the day:
 Great beauty never easily was won."
 Now, this note makes me proud. She wrote to me!.

Feigning

CARLOS: Your overconfidence, Don Juan, will end 180
 In disillusionment, for women's ways
 ARE LIKE THE SEA: their only constancy
 Is change. What you call proofs of favor, sir,
 Which you think fortune brought you, are a trick,
 Duplicity from one who vainly hopes
 We believe such artfulness is simple truth. 185
 Before I met you here, her confidante
 Had come to me. Before she spoke to me
 She veiled her news with a caress to hide
 Her greed behind deceit.... As you can see,
 Has her reward not cost me dearly, now? 190
 Just listen to the note she sent to me...

TO US...: "You probably have made him mad
 With envy, but constancy will win the day.
 Great beauty never easily was won."

JUAN: But is not that the note I read to you?

CARLOS: The same few lines of verse can often serve 195

Many very different ends. Those lines
Which you have read were also sent to me.

JUAN: Your proofs have won against my stubborn will.
If death delays in coming now, I need
Not fear the mythic basilisk. And lightning
Has no power, nor serpents deadly venom. 200

Exit Don JUAN

CARLOS: How I envy him! I want to see
The beauty he exalts, that work of art,
The woman left unnamed, the one I will
Pretend loves me. I learned her note by heart. 205
My envy stole it from his lips because
Of jealousy without good cause. Forewarned,
I will observe his steps, his every act;
Their meaning will be clear and I will know
If he has told the truth or only dreamed 210
About the perfect beauty found in her.

ELISA and LEONOR come out on the balcony

ELISA: Watch to see if Don Juan comes this way.

LEONOR: You seem to want to give him every chance.

ELISA: Why not? If he has had every chance
Before? Leonor, I hope my love provides 215
More chances than my father tries to kill.
But if Don Juan does not see them and fails
To take the chance, will he not think that I
Have changed my mind and never know the truth?
My father wants to keep us both apart. 220

LEONOR: Your cousin is there right next door; she might
Be on the balcony where she can hear
And what she thought was just her mere suspicion
Could burn her now with uncontested truth.

ELISA: I wrote to him to come and use his wits 225
To keep such dangers far away from us.
He could not think to do it on his own.
It seems that I must think for both of us.

LEONOR: He did not understand. When men are sure

We love them, nothing can disturb their sleep 230
Nor make them see the dangers which are there.
If your Don Juan just had a rival, then...

ELISA: Well, does he not have one?

LEONOR: And you...a father
Who will not tolerate the slightest move
Against his will. 235

***Doña ANA comes out on the balcony next door; ELISA and
LEONOR are on theirs***

ANA: (See how right I was! The cold night air **Aside**
Does not disturb her nor the risk she might
Be heard confiding thoughts to her balcony.
I want to hear my cousin speak; I bet
My doubts will be confirmed by her own words.) 240

LEONOR: The wolf is in the garden! Go inside!
I see that Doña Ana came up for air!
Do not create a scene!

ELISA: As long as you
Will stay to tell Don Juan what happened here.
I think that his precautions go too far. 245
No man in love should be so slow to act!

Exit ELISA

LEONOR: I will.... But what if I am Ana's friend
As well? A double spy for the sake of love.
Should I deny her chance for happiness?
But here comes Don Juan now. I will not get 250
Involved in this. May the best man win!

Exit LEONOR. Enter Don JUAN and CORAL on the plaza below

CORAL: Everything I said about her father
And me did happen, and just as I told you.

JUAN: And so...Don Pedro did arrive at last?

CORAL: They say that he is staying there for now. 255
You know the house; its owner loves you so...

JUAN: If this is not a dream, I am going mad!

CORAL: The thought of a son-in-law has made her father
Waste no time.

JUAN: Was Elisa there?

CORAL: Her pure white innocence turned rose red 260
Like the dawn which blooms in joy on holidays.
My being there did not deter her smiles.

JUAN: She is a woman, after all. Good Lord!

CORAL: It seems she could not keep you off her mind.
I think that Doña Ana lives right here. 265
Come back where you belong, lost lamb. Since you,
The count...Don Pedro, too...all want to read
Elisa's book, her style and substance would be,
It seems, a pleasant lesson for anyone.

ELISA and LEONOR return to their balcony

ELISA: I heard him in the street; my father sleeps. 270
If I do nothing now, I will lose him,
That is certain.

LEONOR: Hurry! Go and speak
To him right now. But hurry up!

ELISA: Leonor!
I am frightened! I am afraid of Doña Ana.

ANA: Is that Don Juan? Why, this is nothing new. 275
(But love is always new for her; to change
Is all my cousin understands.) I mean
It is nothing new to see Don Juan come here
Each day at dawn.

ELISA: Doña Ana, if
She sees me speak to him, will know her worst 280
Suspicion is the truth and that her jealousy,
Based on doubts, is not so groundless after all.

LEONOR: It is best if you go in for now, because
If your father awakens, he will catch us here,
And well you know how angry he can get! 285

ELISA: Will nothing go my way? It is so unfair!
Tomorrow, promise, you will tell him how
We were surprised by someone right next door
And if our love can not foresee the way,

These interruptions will be the end of us!

290

LEONOR: I will.

ELISA: Oh, these delays are much too long,
Eternal for those in such a rush to die.

Elisa and Leonor exit from their balcony. Doña Ana stays on hers.

Don Juan and Coral are on the street below

JUAN: Did she go in?

CORAL: Elisa did and slammed
The window in our face.

JUAN: Well, I will look...

CORAL: You are mad!

295

Don JUAN tries to enter the house and CORAL stops him

JUAN: I have to know if they reward...

ANA: Well! Here is that Don Juan who thinks he owes
Me nothing. By the guest I welcomed in,
The one who takes the love which should be yours,
By the love I kept so safe for only you,
By your ingratitude for all the schemes
I tried for you, by how you pay me back,
I swear, if disabuse of all false hopes
Cures love, let me be your physician when
You lie awake.

300

To Don JUAN

CORAL: Go ahead! Make Elisa jealous!
That's the cure for wimpering faithlessness.
Pretend you love our Ana, here. There is
No greater motivation than a rival!
Just make her suffer; make her mad; just make
Her taste the gall!

305

ANA: Sweet Don Juan, is your anger
Still so strong--I will beat you in this as well--
That you forget your manners and will not speak?

310

JUAN: In some things you are absolutely right,

But not about the reason I am here.
 If you, in anger, think that I have come
 Because your neighbor interests me, you are wrong. 315
 My love for you has brought me here, ashamed.
 I feel that I lost favor in your eyes
 Because of something I have done. My shame
 Cannot find words to speak, nor should I try.
 Especially when I might amend the wrong 320
 By keeping silent. Since love is but a child,
 A child whose blindness keeps him ignorant
 Of scorn, he often feels quite ill at ease
 In places where in fact they welcome him.

 ANA: Just how can one be sure about a child 325
 Who leaves in favor and returns transformed
 By customs no one can accept at home?
 For one must fear a child who brings us pain.
 Moreover, there is danger in compassion,
 And I feel great compassion when I see 330
 That you have come to love me so completely.
 My soul responds with sympathy to pain.
 But the first mistakes a young man makes deserve,
 Just once, to be forgiven. Getting back
 To our concern, important things for now: 335
 You know, of course, Don Pedro is my guest
 And he shall wed my cousin, as Don Alonso,
 My uncle, insists. Besides, Elisa is pleased.
 She likes what she has heard of him and asks
 To have him come from Talavera. I know 340
 She wrote to tell him that everything she learned
 Of him from friends has won him favor here.
 I assure you, Don Juan. I fought on your behalf.
 She only says that she must always try
 To please her father. 345

JUAN: That ungrateful girl
 Is so untrue, not only to the Count,
 But to Don Pedro, too...,

He tries to go inside and says under his breath

...to me!...to you!!
 How could she do this? What is going on?

ANA: Don Juan! Tell me where you are going now.
No sooner do you ask to be forgiven 350
Than you start to show you are jealous of her!

CORAL: (Watch out! Say no to everything the wench **Aside**
Might ask. You really got her worked up now!
Don't wait! Tell her that you are sorry now
And throw some onions in the stew! More salt! 355

ANA: Am I not standing right in front of you?
No more, Don Juan. Just be on your way.

She turns to leave

JUAN: Now Ana, Ana! You who are my life,
My soul, my everything! Just how could wrath
Approach those lips? Just let its fever pass. 360
Control yourself. Are you not calmer now?
I cannot believe those words!

CORAL: You lost her there.
You both have said what cannot be taken back.
She told us to get out.

JUAN: Shut up, you fool!

To Ana

Your anger only makes me want you more. 365

ELISA enters her balcony; the others remain where they were

ELISA: Don Juan...Don Juan...Now get away from here!

She goes back inside

CORAL: (Just listen to her ladyship!) **Aside**
Pretend
You did not hear. Go on about your business.

To ANA

JUAN: So now I see all that I lost because
I WAS A FOOL TO TRUST YOU: faith, belief
In others' loyalty and self control... 370

You are unique, a rare form of Phoenix:
You appear in a different form each time
You seem undone. You think that no one can
Esteem the prize he has unless he tries
To compare it to another. If you persist
In anger, after all the trust I put...

375

ELISA enters the balcony again

ELISA: Don Juan, you still do not quite understand!
You do not know who said to go away?

LEONOR, looking through the window

LEONOR: ...who said her father can hear every word
You say and is a deadly threat to you?

380

ELISA: What threat? What could happen now?

LEONOR: Come in.

ELISA: And this to you, you fickle, wretched man!

Leonor and Elisa leave the balcony

JUAN: Where have they gone?

CORAL: To the dogs.

JUAN: Farewell, Doña Ana.

ANA: Now wait!

JUAN: All jealousy is foolishness
And when it strikes, we all do make mistakes.
I do not want you, nor do I love you.
I am in love with Elisa, Ana. There.

385

Exit Don JUAN

ANA: Coral...Coral!..Coral!

CORAL: I don't have time.

ANA Why don't you call him back?

CORAL: But why should I?

ANA: Oh Lord, everything I tried to do....

390

Love, love is not a god but madness!

CORAL: The two of you should throw yourselves right off

THE BALCONY ONTO THE STREET: a horse

And cart together in a tangled wreck.

Exit CORAL. Enter ELISA and LEONOR at the door to their house

ELISA: Leonor, please let me stay out here a while.

There is no chance that he will find us here.

395

LEONOR: Oh, no? In the doorway to the street?

ELISA: Oh, me.

I do not know what I am going to do.

Go see if Juan is still there with that woman.

LEONOR: Let me take care of this and I will bring

Him back to you. Go inside and rest.

400

ELISA: If you succeed...

LEONOR: His jealousy keeps him

From thinking clearly. After all, he found

A stranger here who almost claimed your house

And almost won your beauty; how can you

Be so surprised that he now burns with rage?

405

He thinks that you have brought his rival here!

But I will make quite sure he knows the truth.

ELISA: Well, I suspect that he has gone away.

LEONOR: That does not matter since I now know where

He lives. Dawn has stretched its wings and soon

410

Will look out from the east and bring you hope

With the day. Go inside and I will watch

The door.

ELISA: Leonor, if you can bring him back,

You will have made my sleepless nights worthwhile.

LEONOR: Well, jealousy, like the late evening light,

415

Prefers to walk well-cloaked in shifting doubts.

The sun will shine for both of you, I am sure.

The light that kills deceit is said to be

As lovely as the sun.

ELISA: Well, I must leave.

Exit ELISA

LEONOR: My! This is going to be a prosperous year! 420
I always try to make things difficult.
And since this is the first day of the year,
I must begin to complicate their lives:
Not even the sharpest woman will understand
Just what I did and what is going on. 425

Enter Don JUAN and CORAL

CORAL: Must we start the same old tale again?
Do you recall the last time that we slept?

JUAN: I know impatience got the best of me.
Now I must start my search where it began.
If here the flame that will not rest caught fire, 430
Then here the peace I search for must be found.

LEONOR: Don Juan, two final thoughts and then farewell.

JUAN: If you would help me end my suffering
Leonor, and speak to her for me, this pain
Would be great joy. 435

LEONOR: But I must speak for her;
I am not to blame. Do you know that?
Young men like you, for whom a change of heart
Made quickly ends the pain that will not let
You rest, never suffer jealousy---
For long. My lady, then, would have you know 440
That she does not deserve your love. She says
Her only duty lies in honoring him
Who gave her life. Since her father has chosen
The men we are to marry, the papers will
Be signed today without delay. She thinks 445
She sees in you the qualities one finds
Among those who respect a family's pride.
She thinks you can forget the favors she
Has shown to you since they were compliments,
No more than flowers which in time will fade. 450
She knows that you will understand how pleased
She is to give her hand to him, the one
They chose for her. Now do you understand?
And finally, she says she must obey

Her father. His hopes do agree with hers. 455
 Now regarding him, the man she is to wed:
 She begs you, Sir, and hopes that you will swear
 Never to try to keep her from the joy
 This opportunity has given her.
 She hopes you understand that Ana acts 460
 According to her will, as it was before.
 She hopes that you recall how beautiful
 And how discreet our Doña Ana is.
 Do not refuse to do what you now know
 Is right and make unhappy wives of her 465
 And Doña Ana. This means good-bye. This door
 Is closed to you. You must accept that fact.

Exit LEONOR

CORAL: She means what she says. She locked the door.
 JUAN: This news has brought me to my senses, Coral.
 One time, I felt that I had been defeated. 470
 But now I pray to God that if I ever
 See her, or walk along this street again,
 Or ever even think of her again,
 That He will strike me down with lightning, dead.
 Now I can breathe and live without a care. 475

CORAL: I see that jealousy is not the best
 Of surgeons, as I thought. He is rather clumsy
 And his patients breathe through open wounds.

Exeunt. Elisa and Leonor enter, opening the door to the street

LEONOR: You did not hear us?
 ELISA: No, because I stood
 Too far away. 480
 LEONOR: Well, my lady, know
 Our lover has decided to respect
 An obligation made some time ago.
 There is no way to make him change his mind.
 I know I saw him leave your cousin's house.
 I tried to talk to him but nothing worked. 485
 I tried to tell him what his duty is,
 But he says he is Don Pedro's dearest friend.

I reminded him how much he owes you,
But he said that he asked for Ana's hand
With Don Pedro standing there in front of them. 490
I told him that you must obey your father.
And that you love the one whom Heaven sent,
That the love you two had had was just illusion,
A chimaera made by fantasy and dreams.
He did not wait for me to say it all 495
But left me with the words still on my lips.

***Don JUAN and CORAL arrive very agitated. ELISA and LEONOR
leave soon afterwards***

CORAL: Again? Back here?

JUAN: I might just kill someone.
Today we will see if it is right to treat
An honest man like this!

CORAL: Where are you going?

JUAN: I said I am going to kill someone or die. 500

CORAL: You must not go in there!

JUAN: Who will stop me?
You? Good God!

CORAL: Now and forever.

JUAN: You are going to make me draw my knife.

CORAL: And they will think you simply lost your mind.

JUAN: Do not make me do this. Move away. 505

CORAL: It is you who are making trouble.

To ELISA

JUAN: Good evening, Ma'am.

ELISA: Good God...! And what are you doing here?
I was distracted by so many thoughts
Because of something I was told...You must
Forgive me. 510

JUAN: It is the soul which rules our senses.
Your soul has won that deserving, happy man.
Is there any reason I should find it strange

Your soul compels you to obey its desire?
 Or that it will not let me see you again?
 I am concerned for you since we are neighbors 515
 And also family. (Are you surprised?
 When Doña Ana and I marry, then
 We will be joined through her family line.)
 I come to offer you my congratulations
 Hoping that what you wish will soon come true, 520
 And that when it does your happiness will last
 For many peaceful years which quickly fly.

ELISA: And you, Don Juan, must live eternally
 In such felicity with cousin Ana
 That I as well will have the chance to wish 525
 You every happiness, again and again...
 Since as you say we are one family...
 A thought which gives me nothing less than joy.

CORAL: (She has a wicked way of being sweet.) **Aside**

JUAN: The other reason I am here today, 530
 Aside from wishing you the best in life,
 Is just to ask your kindest understanding
 And forgiveness for the many troubles
 I know I must have caused you until now.
 You must still think there are some ashes left, 535
 A sign of the fire which smoldered until now.
 Elisa, there are none. Do not, therefore,
 Refuse the offer Talavera makes,
 An offer which has not come just by chance.
 By willingly surrendering my freedom, 540
 I now know what true liberty can be.
 Once I said good-bye to independence
 Liberty and freedom found their source:
 They searched for me last night and found my heart
 And there your cousin Ana chanced to take them. 545
 Since faithful servants leave warm memories
 With those they served, it was not hard for us
 To erase hurt feelings nor to reconcile
 Ourselves to one another once again.
 Although she has not improved her lot at all, 550
 She is quite pleased with me and hopes you know
 That if you are lacking happiness
 She has enough for two and will share with you.

ELISA: How is it that your very soul can change
So easily, the soul that gives you life? 555
Does it grows old and tired in just two days
And think it wrong to stay in just one place?
A man who changes jobs each month will not
Construct a castle even if he works
With alabaster and with fine Dutch tiles. 560

CORAL: I think she cornered us with that

ELISA: I have no sympathy for you; it is
Your nature to be fickle and untrue.
I do feel sorry for Doña Ana,
For she must try to reconcile the joy 565
Of hearing people say how glad they are
You two are back together with the grief
Of losing you. As far as faithfulness
And trust are a concern, your coming back
Is just as likely as the chance you will leave. 570

JUAN: I understand what you are trying to do:
In spite of the peace and calm which occupy
My soul, where you believe a hell is seething,
You would like to see my patience die
Giving birth to anger and to threats, 575
To the madness which jealousy and insults
Can cause and which have started killing me.
Since I am free, you must accept my word:
That if you could see deep into my soul,
Where you have never lived and never will, 580
Then you would run away quite mortified.
No longer do men think a woman lovely
Whose lovers lose all hope and then despair.

ELISA: Oh, I believe you. Do not worry there,
Although your haste to tell me this at dawn 585
And take back something which you never gave
Has made me doubt your words. Just think if what
You say were so, how things would really be.
For I have seen great books in parchment bound
Proclaim divinity and then reveal 590
They had disguised their plain humanity.

JUAN: Well let us, you and I, make this pact
So you will know that I have learned my lesson
And never will make the same mistake again.

May I be taken for a liar whose word 595
Will have no standing among men, whose truth
Be taken for a lie, whose place in others
Eyes be naught, a nobleman, that is,
Whose nobility is false. You swear the same.

ELISA: I swear, and gladly, too, with the same desire 600
That asks you to depart and leave me here
Alone. And so that you will see how much
I mean what I have said, I want to add
One more thing so that you will have no doubts.

JUAN: And what is that? 605

ELISA: That you will let me be
The maid of honor when you and Ana wed.

JUAN: Providing you comply with my request
And honor me, Elisa, as your man
When you come to church on your wedding day.

ELISA: Good God! I cannot think of anything 610
Which could please me more. My happiness
Is quite complete!

CORAL: (God's fire! Just see how they **Aside**
Are scorching everyone! But once the storm
Begins, there is no stopping it.

JUAN: Then we
Are quite agreed in this? 615

ELISA: Of course we are.

JUAN: Whoever even thinks about the other...

ELISA: ...Will lose their credibility and name.

JUAN: You realize that this is a lot to swear?

ELISA: For me? I swear by the life of the man I love.
And you, swear by my cousin's life. If you do, 620
You will have sworn by everything you have.

JUAN: And I see how that must be a torment to you.
Don Pedro's life does not mean much to you.

ELISA: Oh, no? Since he will be my husband soon...

JUAN: Until today you were completely free. 625
I know your soul conceals another man

Who matters more to you. If you would swear
By him, I might believe all you have said.

ELISA: And who is that? I really want to know.

JUAN: Swear by the life of him they call Don Juan. 630

ELISA: In the name of God. I now know you are mad.
I have not thought of him in such a while!
But don't you see that if I swear by him
That I would have to say his name and thus
Would lose the very wager we have made? 635
May God forgive him and show him all His Grace.

JUAN: Then swear by the life of all you hold most dear.
And by everything which you have ever valued.

ELISA: Well...now you are referring to Don Pedro.

JUAN: If you must swear by him, then so be it. 640

ELISA: Should I repeat what I already swore?

JUAN: How deceitful to refuse to swear again!
Then swear by Carlos's life, if you dare.

ELISA: What Carlos are you referring to? Martel
Of the "Song of Roland"? Or Charles of Spain? 645

JUAN: Well, that is right, Elisa, deny it all:
Refuse a count who risked it all for you
To get you where you are, who took my place
In your soul where at one and the same time
You kept three men hidden from the world: 650
Don Pedro, Carlos, me, and among us all
My liberty, which suffered most because
I loved you most of all.

ELISA: What Carlos? The count?
What risks? To get me where? Just where am I
Supposed to be, do you think? Are you in your 655
Right mind? Be sensible! I swear to God...

JUAN: You cannot stand to hear the truth, which since
It is the truth, and you a faithless liar,
It must be signed in blood, in mine...!

He tries to pull a knife but Elisa grabs his arm

ELISA: So you want

Your little knife? Do you not think that that
Is a little melodramatic and out of date?
It might just work, in some old Spanish play.

LEONOR: Your father, cousin, and Don Pedro are here.

ELISA: Don Juan. I do adore and love you so.
Stop playing childish games which cause real pain.
Let anger lead to peace. Go in that room
And hear what love will do for you.
Now hide in there and listen 'til you are called.

JUAN: An hour to me will seem to last forever.
If you forget...and agree to marry him...

ELISA: I swear by sunlight, father of us all
By the life your love has given me, I swear.
When I see your love expressed in jealous passion
I swear by you, who are so much, much more:
To die if I do not become your wife.

LEONOR: Sir! And Ma'am! They are already here!

ELISA: If Ana takes you from me, what will I do?

JUAN: Can the night outshine the splendor of the day?

ELISA: Well, aren't you two ever going to hide?

JUAN: You promise that you will keep your word.

Exeunt all but LEONOR and CORAL

CORAL: Leonor, burn a little oil for me.
If you leave me here alone and in the dark,
I'll cry all night like a cat caught in the walls.

LEONOR: There are no candles left.

CORAL: You would be a sweet
But mad young thing if you had not taken some.

LEONOR: And what are you?

CORAL: A splash of hot, red wax.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

*A sitting room in Don ALONSO's house. Count Don CARLOS and
Leonor*

CARLOS: I have a certain matter to discuss.

LEONOR: With me? Do tell. Well, that would be just fine
If I were someone else and you had said,
"I think I love you now, at least a little." 690

CARLOS: I admit that you are justified to feel
That way, but as you see I have no time
And if I do not use it well and talk
With you, I miss the opportunities
I think will help you reach your goals as well. 695
You know, the second half of that old line,
"I think I love you now," as you recall,
Is "But let me tell you afterwards."
And that for us inappropriate.

LEONOR: You could not chose a worse time if you tried. 700
I work for Don Alonso and he is there,
In the living room, beyond that wall,
Together with his daughter and Don Pedro.
And Pedro will become his son-in-law,
Though yesterday that seemed impossible. 705
They are drawing up their contract this very minute.
Don Alonso's niece is there as well,
And relatives from their two families.
They all have come to serve as witnesses.
As you can see, it now is twelve o'clock. 710
They arrived at ten today, two hours ago.

*CARLOS silently puts a purse of coins into the sleeve of
LEONOR's dress*

LEONOR: Well, my goodness! What is that sound in my
sleeve?

CARLOS: Now do be calm; although they weigh a lot,
They will not burden you or break your back.
Nor should they be a stumbling block for you. 715

LEONOR: What then?

CARLOS: A few doubloons to help you make
Some dreams come true. A lady should always do

Whatever is in her best interest. Agreed?

LEONOR: The currency has just been minted again
In copper coins. And you give gold doubloons! 720
By paving the way with gold, you will advance
Your cause with more success than Genoa
Has ever done in Spain. I see you know
How to get a girl to lend a hand,
Like all good men who are inclined to love. 725
I never thought that I would come to see
The end of any rainbows. You bring me hope,
Which should only come after the flood recedes.
A golden bough with golden fruit, a cypress
For the dead! Do you love Ana, or Elisa? 730

CARLOS: Before I tell you who it is I love,
I must be sure that you know who I am,
Since my success in love depends on you.
Have you heard them speak of Count Don Carlos?

Coyly

LEONOR: So you are Conde Claros of ballad fame. 735
Well, then your deeds must be just like your name,
So clear, so pure, that gold is not your gift,
But Heaven itself with its eternal stars.
I have heard some people praise a certain Carlos,
Sir, a neighbor who can conquer, or so they say, 740
Just like a Roman emperor and win
Men's hearts just like a king.

CARLOS: For you I will
Fulfill whatever hope you trust me with.
Do as I ask and if we do succeed
You need not worry about your future years 745
Or about a dowry, which you must desire.

LEONOR: I do not know how I can ever thank you.
Give me your hand. I will do what I can.

CARLOS: Then listen to what I have got to say.
Tonight, a friend of ours spoke wildly to me 750
About a lady he has come to love.
He raved about her beauty at such length
That I could not believe all that he said.
I was astounded. I was curious.

He was beside himself and when he left 755
 He had not even told me who she is.
 My envy completed the image I formed of her.
 Anything new gives birth to admiration,
 And admiration makes a way for desire.
 Imagine how desire took hold of me. 760
 Desire overcame my sense of loyalty
 And I obeyed its every cruel command.
 I had a servant dog his every step.
 He saw him come to Doña Ana's house.
 I thought of course that she was the one he loved. 765
 Her beauty almost won me 'til I learned
 Don Juan adores not Ana but Elisa:
 When he left Ana's house he was quite mad:
 He ranted at his servants for a while,
 About how women's change of heart, disdain, 770
 Forgetfulness and lack of gratitude
 In concert can almost bring a man to madness.
 His servant would not let him go inside;
 He recognized the peril and blocked his way.
 But his servant could not hold him back for long. 775
 I then saw how he drew his knife and walked
 Into the house about two hours ago.
 He has not come back out. And you can tell me
 Where he is since he confides in you.
 Before I knew for certain who I loved, 780
 Fierce jealousy had struck. I did not know
 If I should wait outside or enter in,
 To follow the command of my jealous rage
 Or to heed the advice of common courtesy.
 I realized how wrong it was to offend 785
 The peace of mind of the one I had come to love.
 Nor should I commit an outrage against don Miguel,
 Don Pedro's father, Ana, and other friends
 Who are there now to sign the wedding contract
 And to wish the bride and groom great happiness. 790
 I did go in by posing as a servant.
 I reached the rooms where Doña Elisa lives.
 I saw that Don Juan had not come even close
 To describing just how beautiful she is.
 Don Juan did not have the words to paint her well. 795
 Leonor, I think I am mad with love for her.
 As my chance for winning her grows less, it seems

My love for her increases. I must have her.
If I cannot, my life shall fade away
Just like a flower severed from its stem. 800
You can help me; you can keep my years
Stopped in their month of May as I am now.
Elisa would be better as a countess,
You will agree. She merits that title,
Leonor, far more than a mere ladyship. 805
If you will do one thing on my behalf
Then she will owe to you the honors I bring.
And I will owe you everything I love.

LEONOR: All you need to do is ask, Don Carlos.
By the Gospel of Saint John I swear to you, 810
The coins you placed here in this sleeve are as good
AS FERN SEED: I touched them and I loved you.

CARLOS: Five hundred coins are yours the day you wed.
NOW LISTEN: Don Pedro, Elisa and her father
Are signing an agreement, my death
I saw in Elisa's face how sad she is.
She never could conceal her feelings well. 815
I believe Don Juan is making her unhappy.
Before they sign the contracts and witness them,
Speak to them on my behalf and say
The wedding can not occur because you know
That Elisa promised me that she would marry. 820
She must not break a sacred vow
Just because she fears her father's wrath.
Say that if you do not speak, you, too,
Would break a promise you had made to God.
Do not allow them to complete their plans. 825
If you can stop them, you will give me hope,
The hope I need to try to live again.
What is more, you will win me as a friend.
And also spare Elisa sorrow and pain.

LEONOR: I see your gift of gold will cost a lot, 830
Much more than I had ever thought it could.
What if her father turns on me instead?
He will strike me down instead of killing her.
Who is going to help me if he does?

CARLOS: I will be there, close by, Leonor, 835
Wherever you can hide me, far from view.

I will be there as witness and as judge.

LEONOR: Words are not enough. I may need deeds.

Advice, when born of fear, is cowardice.

Hide in there, in my bedroom, and pay attention. 840

Your ears will tell you all you need to know.

(I think Don Juan is in that other room. **Aside**

This month, the plots have come to me in pairs!

I am a woman; Carlos is a count.

His gold bewitched my judgement and my will.) 845

Won't you go in?

CARLOS: I will...to make your fortune.

LEONOR: One final thing: pray that God be with me.

*Don ALONSO, Don PEDRO, Doña ANA, ELISA, guests. Later,
LEONOR*

ALONSO: Elisa, do not cast doubts on your reputation.

Your evasions will not do you any good.

I will not allow anything to disturb 850

That man who really loves you in good faith;

You willingly agreed you two would marry.

ANA: Cousin, if you really love Don Pedro,

And this is not a stubborn act of will,

Why must you delay another day? 855

They say that to give quickly is to give twice.

ELISA: You are not yet gray and yet you preach to me.

What do you gain if I marry against my will?

I know how good a match Don Pedro is.

I recognize also that he loves me. 860

But I have promised to our patron saint,

The Virgin of Atocha, a novena,

And that is why I ask for this delay.

ALONSO: Fulfill your promise after you are married!

When you are calm and there is less to do! 865

We all know that religious vows are sacred,

But youth is privileged to forget sometimes.

Do not persist in working on my patience

And sign the contract now or you will find

Your refusal takes you to a convent house 870

In Lerma where your aunts will quickly teach you

The meaning of the word cooperation.

ELISA: Since you have left the choice to me alone

I choose to live behind the convent gates,

And not as a slave to a man I do not love.

875

Granted, both are paths to subjugation,

But the nobler path is within the convent walls:

It is by far the better thing to do

To be a slave in God's eternal name.

And so that you believe all that I say,

880

That I accept the punishment you give,

I herewith tear this contract into pieces...

ELISA tears up the contract

For this is how to sign an adverse clause.

Enter LEONOR

ALONSO: Now stop right there! Do not be such a fool.

Or rage will tempt me to take you life like this.

885

He draws his knife

LEONOR: Please stop! Have you completely lost your mind?

This lady is a Christian. (Now is my chance.) **Aside**

Do all of you presume to make a fool

Of the husband she now has by marrying her

To another man as if all of you were Moors?

890

ALONSO: What are you saying?

PEDRO: What do you mean?

ELISA: Leonor,

Just what is going on?

LEONOR: I have not lost

My mind as you might think. Gentlemen:

Let me explain. My lady is a lady.

But in the truest meaning of the word.

895

A count has pledged his love to her as his wife,

She is our contessa since yesterday.

He offered her his hand most courteously

And I was there as witness and as priest.

LEONOR and ELISA speak aside

ELISA: What are you doing? Are you mad? 900

LEONOR: Just take

My lead so we can pull this off. Do not stop!

ELISA: How could you think that you are helping me?

Don Juan is listening to your lies right there

And he will think that what you say is true!

LEONOR: You can not stop me now. It's much too late. 905

LEONOR speaks to all

My conscience will not let me keep it back.

We know your husband is the Count Don Carlos.

To ELISA

Now take my lead and you will fool them all!

ALONSO: What Count? What foolishness is this? Speak up!

LEONOR: Know now that they were wed before my eyes. 910

Why should you be surprised? You know quite well

That there are many counts at court these days.

Just beyond these walls he swears to you

That he will win you favor with our king,

And thus improve the lives of all who live here. 915

Is it so strange that I would like to see

This family's fortune return to what it was?

ALONSO: You dare to speak like that in front of me?

It does not matter if you are mad or not,

I am going to see your filthy blood.... 920

He starts to strike her

LEONOR: Oh, Lord! Help me! Sir Count! Come help me! Now!

Count CARLOS enters

CARLOS: Gentlemen: Since Heaven made our will

To be free from the imposition of human law,

You have no right to try to force Elisa.

Elisa ...her beauty is the Elysian fields 925
 Since there is where delight and joy reside,
 While here, to love her is my very life.
 Elisa, as I say, accepted me
 ...Or my soul's respect with all due piety.
 Had I a thousand souls, they would be hers! 930
 One month ago, she brought the Prado life
 When like the Sun she rode along its paths
 And turned November into May again. She dressed
 In rose and green and shamed the sun.
 I told her how I loved her and would try 935
 To win her love as she had mine with words
 And actions those which love employs so well.
 She answered me most gently since she saw
 That I am a man who always keeps his word.
 On New Year's Eve, the wheel was spun again, 940
 And fate chose me to be the one she loves.
 Last night she agreed that I would be her husband
 And as we joined hands our souls became as one.
 She told me you had tried to force her will.
 GENTLEMEN: take note that she is mine,
 She truly is my wife. If you oppose us 945
 You know my duty is to die here fighting,
 To defend her and my actions and my name.
 ALONSO: Carlos, Sir. We all know generous men
 Who, to serve their peers, must bend the law
 And hide their face from the light of day. 950
 Elisa almost equals you in rank...
 And social standing. So, if just as you say,
 You love her and have done so for a month,
 Why, since you could come to ask her hand
 And be assured that I would not object, 955
 Did you come at night and disregard
 Those ancient customs all good men would keep?
 Tell me why you acted in such a way
 To make the hope of honest men seem vain?
 PEDRO: Let common men attempt to bring a title 960
 To their house through such villainous means.
 Among them such a deed could be forgiven.
 But for you to act less than nobly
 Is hateful and deserves a harsh reproof.

ALONSO: Don Pedro, this restraint, which you can see 965
In spite of your offense and my outrage,
An outrage justified in all men's eyes,
Let this restraint inspire your choice of a wife,
Of the woman who will live with you forever.
Do try to please the people gathered here. 970
Then if you ever regret the choice you made,
Your wife cannot complain of your disregard.

ELISA: What madness is this, gentlemen, which works
So patiently to destroy good men's minds?
Did I encourage you or accept your love? 975
Don Carlos, did you mention love to me?
I never saw you or ever heard you speak!

Aside to ELISA

LEONOR: You are going to ruin everything!
(Oh, dear!) The Count is trying to protect
You from your father and Don Pedro' threats! 980

To ANA

If you can act your part, Don Juan is yours!

To ELISA

Just tell them that the Count and you are married!

ELISA: (I think this illusion is too thinly veiled! **Aside**
They are going to see right through every effort.)

To ANA

LEONOR: Now, Doña Ana, you must help me here! 985
The only thing that matters here to you
Is that she marry Carlos!

To ELISA

Elisa, help!
(What Leonor suggests is simply perfect! **Aside**
Love, though you are blind, defend your cause!
If you can keep Elisa and Juan apart 990

Then I will watch while all my hopes come true.)

GENTLEMEN: not speaking now is wrong.

To oppose the will of Heaven, foolish pride,

For I as well as Leonor affirm

That all the Count has said was known to me.

He offered her his hand, she answered, "Yes."

995

Their stars gave them one chord to sing that night;

Let Pedro blame the fates for his misfortune;

Let this house accept that joy which comes

From welcoming a new and worthy head.

ALONSO: How could you turn my honor into shame!

1000

You ill-advised, silly, frivolous girl!

What do you have to say? Come! Answer me!

ELISA: That I can not conceal the light of truth.

I followed the advice of Doña Ana

But could not bring myself to love Don Pedro;

1005

The Count Don Carlos lives here in my heart.

***Don JUAN enters, opening the door with a bang. All the others
remain on stage***

JUAN: To listen any more would be an outrage.

To ELISA

I must now lift this weight from off my chest!

My words might spare another man this shame.

To think that grief can suffer silently

1010

Atrocious, anguished torment and not cry out

Is to try to stop the hurricane at the edge

Of an abyss. I accuse all of you.

I accuse everyone who has done me harm:

An old man blind with greed, a treacherous friend

1015

And most of all myself for having failed

To see what was about to happen here.

And Elisa, whom I allowed to touch my life,

Forgetting she can change just like the wind:

Shadows, flowers, feathers, dreams, illusion,

1020

These things and less comprise a woman's word.

An hour ago, she calmly swore to me

To overcome what seemed impossible:

Things disdained on my behalf as trifles;

A mere half hour ago, she also swore 1025
 To be as pure and flawless and as strong
 As any diamond. And just a moment ago,
 She destroyed my every hope. Just look how much
 A woman changes in an hour, how much
 In thirty minutes she forgets, how much 1030
 She can do in a moment. I am mad with pain.
 Since you persist in persecuting me,
 I have begun to hate. Do prove me wrong.
 I challenge you, if my words move you at all.
 Let any fool speak after me and say 1035
 That a man who loves is not in misery,
 That love does not his kingdom curse with lies,
 And that beauty keeps good faith with loving men.

Exit

PEDRO: Don Juan! You must hear what I have to say!
 There is a way for me to solve all this! 1040
 If I act in haste and not forgive you, I lose.
 I can tell you all you need to know.
 Then those who know of my offense can judge
 How I did wisely make amends for it
 Or whether I left you standing in the dark. 1045
 Elisa, your precautions were discreet,
 Without a doubt. You seem to have more suitors
 Than necessary! One in every room!
 Now surely you can choose among us three!
 This house need never fear a lack of men, 1050
 A lack so many houses suffer from
 While on the verge of ruin just because
 No men are there to live in them. But three!
 How could you hide so many secret guests?
 Your will is something I have never seen. 1055
 How could you find there room enough for three!
 Though I have heard your call, do not choose me!
 You know that I have lived in Talavera;
 You will find me there should you have need of me.
 But remember... there, like here, crockery 1060
 And women break exactly the same way! (Exit.)
 CARLOS: Ma'am, I now must stop from happening
 The very thing I wanted to occur.
 I, for one, doubt the implications

Of the insult we just heard, but still... 1065

Don Juan... here, in your house, at this late hour?

The rights all men concede to those in love

Have been exceeded. I do not blame you

But I do fear what other men think and say.

Exit

LEONOR: (Well, now, I am afraid and ought to leave. **Aside** 1070

Because someone will have to pay for this

And without a doubt it will be me.

I took this chance for Carlos. I will go

For help to him. And if that does not work,

I need not be afraid. I know the game. 1075

I have a well-known trade, as you might say.

One that lets me earn my daily bread.

Exit

ANA: Well, cousin, I did try to help you marry

A count, to see you bring your family honor.

But luck appears to rule the game of love. 1080

And you were just unlucky or could not play.

Since your Don Juan was the angriest of the three,

It seems that he had almost made you fall!

We do get nothing when we want it all!

*Exit. Enter ELISA and Don ALONSO, who is so disturbed that he
can hardly speak. All the guests stand looking on in astonished
silence*

ELISA What is my father going to do to me? 1085

He is angry and can not decide if he

Will punish or forgive what I have done.

His restless indecision destroys my hopes.

What a storm of jealousy we had!

I only hope that fortune keeps the waves 1090

So high, the storm will shelter me from view

And that my ship, if swamped by them, will sink

... unless Don Juan makes safe my voyage home

Like Saint Anselm with his fatuous nighttime fire.

Exeunt. Enter Doña ANA and LEONOR

LEONOR: And that is everything that happened there. 1095

ANA: Oh, really. You are the one who hid Don Carlos?

LEONOR: I hid him in your house just for you.
And now, for you, I have to get away.

ANA: As long as I can place my trust in you
Your rights here are the same as I enjoy. 1100
And if Don Juan still cares what others think
And loves me with a love as true as mine,
I will owe my happiness to you and the fruits
Of our deception.

LEONOR: Rest assured, no one
In all Madrid could make you more unhappy. 1105
They hitched the mules they use for longer trips
And stationed them at his front door. I assume
Her father has decided it is time
To take her secretly away from here.

ANA: Love keep me from the storm and bring me joy! 1110

Enter Don JUAN

JUAN: I am sorry I have not found you alone.
Leonor, go inside.

LEONOR: (I do not like **Aside**
The way he is looking at the nag at all.
The love he had has taken a different turn.
There is something strange I do not understand.) 1115

Exit. Enter Doña ANA and Don JUAN

JUAN: I need your help and your advice, Ana.
I left Don Carlos wounded in the street!
His crimes had caught him by surprise outside
Where I was waiting for him to leave his house.
Since I was in the right, I had more steel 1120
Than necessary to get the best of him.
But he is a strong and powerful enemy.
And my being there at all was dangerous.
If I can get away from so much power...
There is no choice for me but to run away. 1125
I am grateful for everything you did

And I admit that I am in your debt.
But what has happened will not, for a while
Allow me to show my gratitude to you.
The danger I am in means I must leave. 1130
Elisa's lies have made me come to hate her.

ANA: The stars must not want me to lose you, Juan.
All I can say is Heaven is angry with me,
Made happy then so sad on the same day.
As soon as I have won you back, you leave. 1135
The Count will never find where you are hiding.
As long as you remain here in my house
Until this storm has finally blown over.
There is a way you can escape his violence.
This room and balcony must be your prison. 1140
Since I love you so much more than you do me,
I will use the rooms on the floor above.

JUAN: Where kindness reigns and courtesy has triumphed
And where the warden is so beautiful,
What you have called a prison will be freedom. 1145
But I suspect Leonor saw me come in.

ANA: Do not concern yourself with her because
She thinks she owes me many, many favors.
Besides, Leonor will make your love come true.

JUAN: You have taken care of everything so well 1150
That I am yours twice over, Ana, dear.
I see that you have planned my future well.

ANA: Here are books to keep you entertained
And all you need to write poems to Elisa.
Leonor will make your bed and bring your meals. 1155

JUAN: Dawn has spilled its seed pearls on the lawns.
It is too late to rest.

ANA: There is nothing to do.
All men in prison sleep throughout the day.

JUAN: Love keeps men awake and I am in love.

ANA: I am afraid that you will run away. 1160
I have to lock the door.

JUAN: Trust Coral
If he should come to look for me. He is loyal.

ANA: Although you are my captive, only speak
And I obey. Good-bye for now, Don Juan.

She exits while looking at him

JUAN: For love, I have to take an awful chance
Then happily I will live near the one who died.

1165

To LEONOR who is within

CORAL: Give me the key and go about your work,
Did you ever do the good Lord's work, Leonor?

JUAN: Coral! How glad I am to see you here!

CORAL: Coral I am, and here I am for you;
I come to put an end to your sad thoughts.
Now let me lock the door. Let's go in...

1170

He locks it

Where no one else will hear what we might say.

Right after you ran out into the ring

They wounded you with the lance of jealousy,

1175

--If not exactly like a bull, just like

A calf who knocks about because he is wild,

A red-faced, curly haired and awkward calf.

I envied what they wrote there on the walls.

I wanted to become those very words,

1180

Knowing I would be a fool's notebook,

Composed to mock my reader, a mindless farce.

Well, after you had left, your rivals tried

As best they could to give your girl the slip.

They were beside themselves with jealous rage.

1185

Your lady and her father were left there.

You should have seen how they reacted then!

Just like a mouse between a cat's sharp claws!

Elisa told them that she loved just you.

That your courtesy and valour had no peer;

1190

And that your love was a pure and honest love

But that jealousy had ruled your every passion,

That her concern with honor, what her guests

Might think, prompted her to hide you and at once;

That she hated Pedro more the owls hate light,

1195

Than greed a generous man, than thieves the law.
 She swore as loudly as a Catalanian
 That she did not know who had hidden the Count;
 A man she did not know or think about,
 A man who never saw her look his way; 1200
 But Doña Ana, who said she was your friend
 And with a trick that she had just devised
 Could set you free from all these difficulties,
 Persuaded her to give her trick a chance,
 At the risk of her life to make the deception work. 1205
 Elisa's father heard her testify
 In defense of what she did and then he said
 That he would take her to Lerma before dawn,
 Before the sun enflamed the eastern sky.
 Elisa went inside to prepare to go. 1210
 Her father told two men to prepare the coach.
 Now listen to the best thing ever heard
 Or ever written for posterity.
 Were I a playwright, this one device would make
 More than one director rich for life 1215
 And I would not have to steal my plots!
 As I was just about to say...meanwhile,
 Alonso sent for a relative he trusted,
 For one who cared about their family name;
 When he had come he said straight out to him, 1220
 "I am determined, Alvaro, to honor
 My heirs with the royal blood of a count, at least.
 So we must try to make Elisa change
 Her love for Don Juan into indifference...
 ...One might as well attempt to stop the May 1225
 From bursting into flower every spring....
 But time with wise delays can change our hearts.
 I have pretended that I will take Elisa
 To Lerma where a convent waits to teach her
 Just what rebellion means and change her ways, 1230
 And so become a little more cooperative.
 Alvarado, Dorotea, and I,
 Are going to take her far away from here
 And not discuss or tell a soul we are leaving,
 Or even let the sun see us leave. 1235
 The curtains of the coach will all be closed,
 And the people of the town will never know.
 We expect to arrive at one or two o'clock,

Then rest a while at the inn in Torrejon.
 Her to room will be away from all the rest 1240
 And the night will cloak the world in horror.
 Then to carry out our lie, I will say to her
 As we make our way back home again to Madrid:
 I will try to make her think I am resolved
 To have her live in hiding in Illescas, 1245
 The town where you will be expecting her.
 The two of you shall live there for a while
 Until everyone forgets what has transpired,
 And our family name will be free of all dishonor.
 Our pace will be quite slow. When we arrive, 1250
 The town will be so still she will not suspect
 How I have tricked her and brought her to Madrid.
 And you, Don Alvaro, my trusted friend,
 Must strip this room of everthing I bought:
 Of paintings, desks and chairs, of tapestries, 1255
 Of tables, beds, the dais, all furniture
 So no one can recognize this room again.
 Then you will ask my agent, Luis de Toledo,
 To decorate it all so beautifully,
 And change it so I will not know it either. 1260
 Elisa will remain locked here inside.
 The skylight will be her only light.
 She will never think that she is here at court
 Since she will not see anyone but you.
 Don Juan will try to steal her love away. 1265
 And the Count thought the worst with her refusal!
 But I will have him learn that she is pure,
 Through a go-between whom he respects a lot.
 If he still loves her, I will succeed."
 And that is what in fear I overheard, 1270
 While listening at the keyhole to her door.
 Don Alvaro did promise to comply
 And left Alonso there to start the work.
 I crept along the hall and down the stairs
 And went out to the patio; from there 1275
 I found the corral and jumped down from the wall.
 It was then I learned the count received a wound.
 My loyalty told me that you were here.
 And then Doña Ana let me in.
 Elisa returns to her room tomorrow night... 1280
 ...to the room next door...if your love is strong...

A wall between you, Pyramus and Thisbe.
 But instead of window grates, balconies!
 You can speak to one another in good conscience.
 God forbid it otherwise! My plan 1285
 Will make me an architect of balconies!
 And will surprise surprise itself. You know I can.
 My wit loves deceptions, and I love you both.
 You must not think. Just let your mind o'ercome
 Its indecision. Sleep and then decide. 1290
 Just leave it up to me to make it work.

 JUAN: Coral, you tell me things, important news,
 Which have a strange effect on me, I swear.

From within

ANA: All the rest are there on stage, you see.
 I know that Leonor will soon be here; 1295
 But our Don Juan must have his dinner now.

 JUAN: Open the door right now, Coral.

He opens. ANA enters

ANA: Well, sir!
 Tell me how life in jail is treating you.

 JUAN: I will dine with you, Ana; is it too late
 For us to have our dinner? 1300

 ANA: This is lunch.
 First eat and then just sleep all day.

To CORAL

JUAN: Oh, no.
 For I would rather talk about Elisa!

 CORAL: Leave it to me and do not be concerned.

 JUAN: If you can make my love for her come true
 All I will ever own belongs to you. 1305

END OF ACT II

ACT III

*Don ALVARO, Don ALONSO, LEONOR and ELISA who is
carried on stage in a chair by two men*

ALONSO: It was really a clever move to make her think
That she is in Illescas when in fact
We are keeping her right here in her own room.

ALVARO: I met Leonor in the street then we came.

ALONSO: Don Juan had better simply give it up. 1310

ALVARO: He ought to if he knew what was going on.

To ELISA

ALONSO: And you had better change your ways. Persist
And I forget my duty to you and you
Will stay right here as long as I shall live
...which should not be too long a time, I think, 1315
When I consider what you did to me.
Everyone thinks that you have gone to Lerma.
But that is just a lie to put them off,
To keep you far from those who want to help.
How you can still resist amazes me. 1320
You are not pleased with Pedro or with Carlos?
I promise, Juan will never marry you.
Do not dare to speak to me of him again.
If you are still inclined to oppose my will,
Then you deserve this punishment. 1325
If you do not want to make it worse,
Just think it over and make your choice. Let's go.
But lock your door because I have to leave.

ALVARO: Remember, ma'am, that I will carry out
And execute his orders. Watch what you do. 1330

Exeunt ALVARO and ALONSO; they lock the door as they leave

ELISA: I do not know what bothers me the most:
To have you here with me, or, left alone,
To have to think about their tyranny.

LEONOR: Well, that is the way it is for those like you

Who always fail at everything they do. 1335
 They give offense when they most want to please.
 Their courtesy produces indignation.
 Doña Ana did deceive me, yes,
 When she accepted Carlos's clever plan.
 But you should thank me and forgive me, ma'am, 1340
 Because I can tell you now. Don Juan is here.

ELISA: That can not be! What are you saying now?

LEONOR: Don Juan is right here in Illescas, yes!
 You are the star which guides his wanderings.
 Yes. Doña Ana hid him in her house. 1345
 But when I tried to come to let you know,
 He caught me in the doorway to the street.

ELISA: Do not tell me anymore, Leonor.

LEONOR: All I ask is that you tell the truth:
 Could you see the road they carried you along? 1350

ELISA: Why, no, how could I since my father kept
 The very light of day from shining in?
 Because he is was angry he forbade
 The men to light the coach along its way.
 I could only sit there next to him 1355
 And ride along all night in total silence.
 We passed the days at inns in secrecy.
 And I was not allowed to see the guests.
 When we at last had come into the town,
 He brought a chair and made me get inside. 1360
 It was so dark that I could barely see
 The steps I had to climb to take my seat.

LEONOR: Your uncle brought me here so secretly
 That I could not tell either where I was.
 Of course they blamed me for everything, 1365
 The Count who thinks that I somehow will gain
 Defended me and said that I should try
 Convincing you he lives for you alone.
 Doña Ana defended me as well,
 But only to make me do whatever I could 1370
 To see that you forget Don Juan; they both
 Have promised me a hope chest and a dowry,
 Provided you become Don Carlos's wife.
 But you and I grew up together so

I know you better than any one of them. 1375
Heaven has decreed and I know, too,
That you will marry no one but the man
Who deserves your hand the most, Don Juan.
With time as my witness I swear in all good faith
That I would even die for you. Oh my! 1380
Is this the bed your host has made for you?

ELISA: It does not matter; I can not sleep now.
I am just too upset. You know it is true.
Anyone who sleeps a lot is not
In love. Well, I will say my prayers a while 1385
And then come help me get undressed, alright?

LEONOR: How can you say your prayers and be in love?

ELISA: I do not catch your meaning.

LEONOR: I will wait.

Exit ELISA

LEONOR: Coral's tricks are really going well.
Since he confided everything to me 1390
I think I like him...well, perhaps a little.

She looks at a key ring with many keys

The only thing I have to do is try
To see if one of these old keys will work
And that way spoil the old man's scheme to make
His house into a jail. Because a key, 1395
When the balcony does not face the street,

MEANS CERTAIN DEATH: It does not matter how
Love tries to lock the world outside its door.
I think that this must be the master key.
While Elisa prays I will put it to the test.
Now, my friendly brother balcony, 1400
Do give some light and let it magic be.

Exit. Enter Don JUAN and CORAL

CORAL Well, now we are really sailing before the wind
Along the path of those born on their feet!
Good fortune moves you right ahead as planned!

You know that your Elisa is at home 1405
 And living in her rooms in her own house?
 In spite of all her father and his friend
 Have tried to do to make her think she is not,
 But rather in Illescas where they hope
 To make her marry Carlos. Just last night 1410
 I heard her father plot it out with care.
 He has become an old man wracked with greed.
 Doña Ana is no longer there
 Since that old buzzard we call death destroyed
 The health her aunt enjoyed and so our Ana 1415
 Is not expected back until the sun
 Has turned her aunt's sea-worthy coffin
 To a golden cradle. In the meantime
 I have stowed the bridge away, the one 1420
 Which we will use to get across the void.
 And you, if you play your cards just right this time,
 No matter how her father tries again
 To keep her locked away, you can slip right over.

 JUAN: The walls are high. There are people in the street.
 The neighbors are nosey. Honour is at stake. 1425

 CORAL: Good Lord, man! Since when are you a coward?
 The sky has donned its widow's weeds again
 And leaves no trace of blue; the world now sleeps.
 The moon has fallen in the southern sea,
 And now? Your love begins to quake and tremble! 1430
 The Moors are not attacking! Come on, man!
 Go and and you will see how hard I worked.

Exeunt. Enter LEONOR

LEONOR: I see this key has magic properties
 No door can ever resist. It opened the door
 To the balcony at once and look, it fits 1435
 The living room which now is open, too.
 Don Juan is going to owe a lot to me,
 Well, to my craftiness. My skills awoke
 His thirst for love, no easy task, you know.

Enter CORAL

CORAL: Well! Now he has done it! Like old Archimedes, 1440

If there was such a man, by three to one!

LEONOR: Oh no! Good Lord! You frightened me to death!

CORAL: They say old witches such as you suck blood,
Babies' blood, because you are always cold.

LEONOR: Just tell me how you got in here, alright? 1445

CORAL: Well, you will have to ask a wooden plank!
A bridge for a balcony which stretches across,
Just like a spring-hook; first it's long and then
It's short. But best of all I made it so
That it will fit right in so tight that a widow 1450
Wearing three-inch heels could walk across...
You remember the widow I brought up here for lace?

LEONOR: Alright, Coral. But what will keep the town
From seeing people cross between the rooms?
There is no way to stop their wagging tongues. 1455

CORAL: Oh, come on! You are really hopeless.
I told you that no one could see it clearly
Because if either sunlight or the moon
Should shine on it, we will pull it back.
And it becomes invisible like slats 1460
On writing desks, hidden in compartments.

Enter ELISA

ELISA: Leonor, what is taking you so long?
Are you in here talking to the paintings?
Coral! What are you doing here?

CORAL: Love's refinements slip right through old locks. 1465
Love, the unclad god, goes everywhere.

ELISA: Well, yes, but when the doors are closed and locked...

CORAL: For love, there are no locks that hold for long.
Love's father was a blacksmith who taught him how
To use a block and tackle if need be. 1470

ELISA: Who told you that I was in Illescas?

CORAL: Like the owl which must avoid the sun's bright light
My love pursued you to your rooms through the dark.
You did not know that you are in your room?
Held captive through no fault of your own? 1475

That you are in Illescas and Madrid?
To prove to you that what I say is true,
Open your balcony and see the way
The windows are designed, the floor plan, too.
You are captive in your very own room. 1480
It feels to me that we are in an oven!
Those dormers are not used much in Illescas.
These doors and walls are easy to make over.
They are disguised, like dancers wearing masks.
I came in here across the balcony, 1485
Across a drawbridge which you, too, can use,
A drawbridge which all travellers must cross.
Don Juan is waiting in the room next door.
And you can trust your cousin even more.
There is nothing left to stand in your way. 1490

Enter ALONSO and the others. ALONSO speaks from outside

ALONSO: Don Carlos, Sir! Wait for me right here.

ELISA: I think I hear my father.

CORAL: Yes. He is here.

And as for me, I think I will wait outside.

Exit

ELISA: And I am going to hide behind that door.

LEONOR: There must be some way we can fool them all. 1495

ALONSO: Hello in there! Open this door right now!

LEONOR: Who is it, please?

They enter

ALONSO: If I already locked
The door, why did you lock yourselves inside?

LEONOR: So no one would disturb our privacy.

ALONSO: (I think I know a way to spoil their plan.) **Aside** 1500
Go! Call Elisa now! I insist!

ELISA enters

ELISA Well, Sir! What new way have you found today
To add to my unhappiness? Have you
Forgotten anything? I have watched
Your progress from two miles away and want
To know why you came back to torment me. 1505

ALONSO: There is no longer time for foolishness.
The only reason I wanted you to think
That you were in Illescas was because
I felt Don Juan was making you uneasy. 1510
But he is not a problem for us now.
You realize that you are still in Madrid?
In your own house and in your very own room?

ELISA: What?! Where?!

ALONSO: In your very own home.

LEONOR: My God!
This is certainly confusing to me! 1515

ELISA: Then where did all this furniture come from?

ALONSO: A little effort, and money, of course, can find
All this, and more, at court. Let's continue.
Let's not waste time on pettiness.
Don Juan, consumed by jealousy, wounded 1520
Don Carlos late last night and thinking him dead
Got Doña Clara to hide him in her house.
Because she is the heir to Doña Ana,
Who is her aunt. The two of them agreed
That Don Juan would have to leave Madrid at once... 1525
Or as soon as they were married. The Count found out
How much Don Juan now owes to Doña Ana.
When Don Pedro learned about this whole affair
He became quite envious...because he saw
How you did not accept his offers of love. 1530
But he managed to forget the past and turn
His heart around and place his hopes in your cousin.
Don Carlos, then, who loves you very much,
Both generously and wisely thought that once
Don Juan and Doña Ana were married, then, 1535
He could find the means to win your love.
And placing his desire above all vengeance,
He went tonight to see Don Juan who fast
Became his friend. It is true!! It was not hard

For him to persuade Don Juan and Doña Ana 1540
To marry happily, and right then and there!
They called me to be their witness and to help
Write out their terms. I went to Doña Clara's
After I saw their declaration of love.
What courtesy! Tomorrow, I assume, 1545
They are getting married. For you alone
The Count has risked his life. He is here.
We are in his debt. Show gratitude.

LEONOR: (Good Lord! How quickly he can make up lies!

Aside

I hope this trick will work for you, old man.) 1550

ELISA: The things you tell me would resemble dreams
Were it not true that you have merit my trust.
How could so much occur in just one day?
How could Don Juan have changed so much, so fast?
How could his love have been so small, so weak? 1555
But stop. My love will not let me despair.
My love can keep pace with the times and build
With exemplary acts what men's deceit destroys:
I accept the offer Don Carlos makes.

ALONSO: How like the ivy green which climbs the oak 1560
My heavy years embrace your lovely neck.
I think I feel my youth return. He is here!
He is here and I am going to call him now!
What wonderful news I bring to him this time!

ELISA: It is much too late! Tomorrow is time enough 1565
For him to come. Then calmly, predisposed
In heart and mind he will agree with you.

ALONSO: Well, that is fine. I do not want to rush you.
Be sure you do not make a liar of me!!

He leaves and locks her in

LEONOR: What have you done? 1570

ELISA: Leonor, I do not know.
Just what can you expect someone to do
After overhearing a doubtful truth
Among so many lies? Don Juan loved Ana!
He believed Don Carlos destroyed our love

While hidden in my house, then wounded him 1575
And ran away, then hid in Clara's house?
If he entered as her guest then he will leave
As the master. Unlock the door. Give me my coat.

LEONOR: First explain what you are going to do.

ELISA: The two of us...or I will go alone 1580
Which might be best, while you remain right here.
If I should find Don Juan is at my cousin's,
I will know that fear has blinded me.
But if he is not there, then what I feared
Is true. 1585

LEONOR: And has it not occurred to you
Her servants know you now?

ELISA: They are asleep.
And there are many families in that building.
The main door to the street will still be open.
Don Juan is living like a prisoner upstairs.
If I pretend that I am Doña Ana, 1590
He will let me in and we shall see
How we can put my fears to rest.

LEONOR: You are mad!

ELISA: I am beside myself, to coin a phrase.

LEONOR: But first we have to find a cape for you.
You did not bring one with you in the chair? 1595

ELISA: There are capes in the chest in my room.

LEONOR: You know, there is no cure for jealousy.
You might as well ask blood from a turnip.

ELISA: Tell me at once if you should hear my father.

LEONOR: Me? And where am I supposed to hide? 1600

ELISA: Coral will put the board between the windows
And you can call me from the balcony.

LEONOR: I see you think his foolish trick will work.

ELISA: Do I have a choice? I must believe it or else.

*Exeunt. Enter Don ALONSO, Don PEDRO, and Don CARLOS
with his arm in a sling*

CARLOS: While hidden there and listening carefully 1605

I HEARD HER LOVELY THOUGHTS: that she discreetly

Offered to be mine if only Ana

Accepted Pedro and forgot Don Juan.

Since we now know Don Juan has left Madrid

To travel to Valencia, it looks

As if there is nothing left to stop us now. 1610

ALONSO: Don Pedro's choice of Ana obliges us

To see if we can help him in some way.

PEDRO: I am most pleased with such pure loveliness;

Ever since I stayed there as her guest,

I am happy to adore and worship her. 1615

ALONSO: My niece will follow my advice because

She sees me as her father and besides,

Not only should I tell her everything,

My purpose is to have her tell her cousin

That she should start to plan her wedding day, 1620

Her marriage to Don Juan. If she does that,

She will be happy marrying Don Carlos.

PEDRO: Exaggerate a lot, since you must say,

How much I plan to do to make her happy.

ALONSO: I am pleased to make her come to accept 1625

Her unexpected fortune which awaits.

I would do so anyway, for myself.

Your involvement really does not matter.

Even though she still must be asleep,

She will thank me if I wake her when she hears. 1630

***Exeunt. A living room in Doña Ana's house. ELISA, completely
covered by her cape. Enter Don JUAN and CORAL***

ELISA: This only proves how far someone will go

When plagued by doubts. But having found you here

Has freed my mind of all uncertainty.

JUAN: Although you may not be uncertain while

Good fortune tries to scatter these savage squalls 1635

Across the sea we know as love, remember:

Storms grow fierce as they decrease in size

And hide all hope behind their lowering clouds.

But they will never run my dreams aground,

Because your beauty like St. Elmo's fire 1640
Brings hope. Sit down so we can chart our course
Over treacherous seas. In spite of wind and lightning,
In spite of terror, we can vanquish fear.

ELISA: Guard yourself against my father's wrath.
It knows no bounds; arm yourself with patience, 1645
Because I have to leave you here alone.

JUAN: I am filled with joy because you came.
Since it is late, why are you afraid?

ELISA: I think my father like Argos never sleeps.
He watches me. He sees my every move. 1650

JUAN: You could escape across the balconies.

CORAL: And I will make it safe for you while dawn
Begins to plate the sapphire sky in silver.

Exit CORAL

JUAN: Let me have this time with you alone
If only for a minute. 1655

ELISA: Why has fate
Declared this war against my peace of mind?

***ELISA and Don JUAN sit down with their backs to the door
through which Don ALONSO enters. Don JUAN stands up while
ELISA remains seated, her face covered by her cape***

ALONSO: Heavens! What is this? I heard Elisa.
The lights are on and the door is opened wide!
My niece has risen earlier today!

ELISA: (My father! **Aside**
How did he know that I had left the house?) 1660

To Don JUAN

Now what?

JUAN: Keep covered. Do not show your fear.

ALONSO: Don Juan!

JUAN: Did you need me to help you, Sir?

ALONSO: Tell me what has brought you to this house.

JUAN: The knowledge that its owner is a man
Who merits all men's honest praise; and more, 1665
The kindness he showed me has brought me here.

ALONSO: But I had heard that you were in Valencia.

JUAN: A little wound is not sufficient cause
For me to be away for very long,
Especially when I was the one insulted. 1670

ALONSO: Then where is Doña Ana?

JUAN: Her aunt fell ill
And she just had to go to read the will
Since she is one of the heirs.

ALONSO: Who is that?

JUAN: You tell me. What is wrong?

ALONSO: Elisa?!
Tell me why you are here so late. Right now! 1675
Is this the way to treat our family's name?
Is this the way you spoil your reputation?
Is this the way you ruin our family line?

JUAN: Just what are you implying? Are you mad?

ALONSO: How dare you speak that way to me, Don Juan. 1680
If I have not completely lost my mind
I should avenge my honor, here and now,
By killing you. And no one would assume
That I had acted wrongly or in haste.
I think you used some magic kind of key 1685
Evilly designed to open the door
Which guards our peace of mind and find a way
To ply your evil schemes.

JUAN: Don Alonso! Sir!
Try to keep those wild thoughts in control.
Why, it is always such a shame to see 1690
A man whose years earn him good men's respect
Act imprudently. Two nights ago
You took your daughter from Madrid.
It seems our love offends you very much.
If she is still in Lerma, why are you mad? 1695
You imagine everyone disgraces you.

Who has made you see those visions of disgrace?
 Now, look. This lady found me here in jail.
 Doña Ana went to see her aunt...
 She is gravely ill, you know. This lady here 1700
 Knows how much I do respect her love for me.
 I keep good faith with her most generous love,
 And she has found the cure for my distress:
 Her presence here. And she would like to stay.
 She trusts her honour to my courtesy 1705
 And that is when you entered. Overlook
 Appearances. You need the right perspective.
 The worries that are plaguing you convince
 You every girl you see is your Elisa.
 Don Carlos blessed Ana's love for Pedro. 1710
 They plan to marry, hoping you consent.
 Your ingrate daughter is not in Madrid.
 Then why do you forbid what you desire?

ALONSO: Go ahead and try to make me think
 That I am mad so you can carry off 1715
 Your trick more easily. I may be old...
 But you should know that my blood is not cold.

JUAN: Calm down.

ALONSO: Malicious tricks do not deserve
 A calm reply until that very moment
 They come face to face with punishment. 1720
 How dare you hide this evidence from me!
 When I came up, I heard that voice and saw
 That cape, that hair, that lovely figure there.
 Her hair, her voice, her shape, I know them well.

JUAN: Are there not in Madrid a thousand girls 1725
 Who wear the same attire?

ALONSO: I can prove
 How you have tried to trick me. Let me have
 Her cape. I will not wait any more.

He tries to uncover her face but Don JUAN stops him

JUAN: A man should never try to prove his doubts
 Are true, ignoring common decency, 1730
 Especially when he might offend a woman.
 So be a gentleman. Remove your hand.

Or else my hand will have no other choice
But to disregard the respect I owe your age,
That veneration your silver brows deserve.

1735

ALONSO: So you will not let me see her face?

He lifts the tapestries and strikes the walls

Had I that blade of steel the years retired!
How dare you forge the keys which vice invents!
But let my years examine and confirm
That everything I thought was true is so.
Just stay here as you were while I return
To my own house. And if Elisa has gone,
Although it means I risk her reputation,
I have no choice. I have to trust the courts
To do what I cannot do for myself.
The courts defend what rights the old retain.
But you forgot this key! You won't escape!

1740

1745

He removes the key, leaves, and locks them both in. CORAL enters

ELISA: Hurry, Coral! It is dangerous to delay!

CORAL: Our drawbridge is quite safe. Go on across!

JUAN: Good-bye, my love, my all. I will not sleep.
My soul will watch like Argos through my eyes
Eluding that disdain which threatens love.

1750

Exeunt. Enter LEONOR and then ELISA

LEONOR: This game has made me mad! Unlike me,
She felt no fear at all.

ELISA enters hurriedly, removing her cape

ELISA: Help, Leonor!
Help me remove this cape and hide it! Now!

1755

LEONOR: Your father.... Is he here?

ELISA: What to do?!

Folding the cape

LEONOR: And do you think he saw you with Don Juan?

ELISA: He did. And I will tell you things which are
Too terrible to think about...but later.

He caught us both together unaware. 1760

LEONOR: Good God! And did he recognize you then?

ELISA: Well, yes and no. But that is all for now.
So hurry. Hide the cape. Get rid of it.
If he should see it, I am lost for sure!

LEONOR: But where in blazes am I going to hide it? 1765

ELISA: In the bed between the mattresses.
But no! He is sure to look there first.
Throw it out the window into the street.
But he will see it then for sure because
He is about to come across the street. 1770

LEONOR: Decide at once! What are we going to do?

ELISA: Now wait. Let's take it down to our own room.

LEONOR: That is even worse because I hear
Your father coming up the stairs right now!

ELISA: Then hide it in the sleeves of your dress! 1775

LEONOR: That is the worst idea you had today!
I saw some play where they did that. My father
Sees them all.

ELISA: Then what are we to do?
He's here!

LEONOR: I have a trick I know will work!
Let's hide it in my hair! 1780

*The cape should be of some fine white material. LEONOR takes
down her hair and opens the cage which holds it in place and puts
the cape inside. ELISA then helps her put her hair back up*

ELISA: Now that is clever.

LEONOR: The very best! Now help me fix the part.

ELISA: Those who cry will never learn to laugh.

LEONOR: I'll be bound if he can find it now.
Now stop! No need to try to make it perfect.

From within

ALONSO: Leonor, unlock this door right now, I said!

1785

Enter Don ALONSO and the others

ELISA: Why, Sir! Have you come back again? What's wrong?

ALONSO: Oh, my God! I must be getting senile.

He looks around the room and touches all the walls and looks into the bedroom

Now how could you have found your way back here?

ELISA: I do not understand what you are saying.

Did you expect to find something in here

1790

Behind the drapes? Or hidden under the bed?

ALONSO: Did you really think you would succeed?

Where did you put the cape you wore today?

ELISA: What cape? And when? You are imagining things.

ALONSO: When you were with Don Juan.

1795

LEONOR: What do you mean?

Oh, Sir. Have you completely lost your mind?

ELISA: And why would I be caught with him?

ALONSO: Foolish,

Silly girl. I know how far you would go;

Turn out your sleeves, the two of you. That's right.

He inspects the contents of their sleeves

Now let me see what you have in your pockets.

1800

LEONOR: Either you have lost your mind for sure

Or you just want to see what you can get.

ELISA: Oh, father, you are the man I most respect,

What has come over you? Oh Lord! What is wrong?

I think something has killed him!

1805

LEONOR: That cannot be.

He is either suffering from some malady

Brought on by all those years or Carlos has had

A witch cast a spell on him.

ELISA: Dear Father!
Please tell me what is wrong!

ALONSO: Go ahead
And cry. Try to fool me with your lies. 1810
Could you have put it in the bed?

He goes into the bedroom

ELISA: Why do you
Insist so, Father? I would never do
Any thing to anger you. You are frightening me.
I know I will pay for whatever you imagine
To be wrong. 1815

LEONOR: (Why is love always cruel?) **Aside**

ALONSO: Elisa, try not to be so upset.
I went inside to find your cousin. There
I found Don Juan and seated next to him
A lady who, although she wore a veil,
I know was worthy of respect; her dress 1820
Her bearing, her way of moving deceived me so
That trusting in my first impression I
Am sure that I offended them. I locked
Them both inside the room and now I must
Go back to let them out and try to ask 1825
Their pardon. What can one expect? I am old!
And where there are gray heads, we always find
Suspicion, envy, every evil thought.

ELISA: I am not sure I understand your meaning.

LEONOR: (Well, that is certainly a clever trick!) **Aside** 1830

ALONSO: Should I succeed in marrying you to the count,
I will allow you both, as the prize for all
The joy you will have given me, the right
To make a fool of me, if you so choose.
It is only fair that you should right the wrong 1835
My relentlessness has caused you both. Now rest.
You should not be up so late. It is almost dawn.
When you are married, these sorrows will be your joy.
Do you love the count a lot?

ELISA: Well,...not a lot,
But I will learn to love him ...gradually. 1840

LEONOR: That is how it usually is. It does
Not often take us by surprise.

ALONSO: I hear
You say things to him tenderly. Remember:
He is to come with me tonight at ten.
I must release Don Juan! And you must find 1845
A way to pardon an old man's foolishness.
And then you both must go to bed. Right now!

He exits, closing the door

ELISA: Leonor, give me the cape and tell Coral
To put the bridge between the balconies.

LEONOR: But why? 1850

ELISA: Don't you know? Why have I
Gone through this? To be with my Don Juan.

LEONOR: But I think it would be so much the better
For me to go instead and not be seen
By anyone, don't you? And if I wear
The cape, he will be totally confused. 1855

ELISA: And what if he should recognize you? Well?
This cape was the cause of all our trouble.

LEONOR: Enough! Just help me with your dress and cape.

Removing them

ELISA: Alright.

Putting on ELISA's dress

LEONOR: This game is getting complicated. 1860

ELISA: Now the cape.

She puts it on

LEONOR: I am going to call the boatswain.
Ahoy mate! Send the launch ashore for us!

I think I saw the first light of the dawn.

ELISA: There never has been love without intrigue.

LEONOR: With enough finesse, I know I will succeed, 1865
And Madrid will long remember all our tricks:
The cape, your hair and these two balconies.

Exeunt. A room in Doña Ana's house. Don JUAN is alone

JUAN: Oh, child-like deity, do you not know
Your very honor is at stake if you
Can not escape the labyrinth where you lost 1870
Your way so blindly? Calmly, bring your fires
To light our way through tempests of confusion
And bring us safely home through these wild seas.

Enter LEONOR with a cape covering her face

CORAL: Now go on in and I will raise the bridge.
You will be like Leander, not at sea, 1875
But through the air, swimming on the wind.

Exit

JUAN: Tell me, my love, everything that happened.

LEONOR: These tricks and these deceptions cannot help
Our cause any longer since the count
Convinced and won my father to his cause. 1880
Those two have overtaken me and I...
...it seems so after all...am to marry!

JUAN: But that just cannot be!

LEONOR: Oh, dear, oh, dear!
Did you not say you wanted Anaxerete?
Calm down. Do you not recognize me now? 1885

She reveals her face

JUAN: You have again given me my life.
Explain what this is all about.

LEONOR: No time
To explain events of these last few days.

Sit down just as you were before we were
Surprised by Don Alonso and see a miracle. 1890

*Don ALONSO and Don ALVARO come to a side door; LEONOR,
her face covered again with the cape sits next to Don JUAN.
CORAL enters at the end of the scene*

ALONSO: This way I will find out the truth, my friend.
Go now and see if Elisa is in her room.
Just take this key and go in quietly.
If I find the lady with the cape is here
And if you see my daughter there, I will know 1895
How truly mistaken I was after all.

JUAN: I am certain you will come back pleased.

ALONSO: No. I'll be ashamed. Forgive me, ma'am,
If I allowed myself to think the worst
Because of what you wore.... (Good Lord, the hair **Aside** 1900
The figure, everything! She is Elisa!)

ALVARO: I simply must know just what is going on.

ALONSO: But do so that no one will notice you.

Exit Don ALVARO

(May Heaven free me from these awful doubts; **Aside**
The cape, the dress...convince me I am right. 1905
But I just left her locked inside her room!

JUAN: Keep your doubts from getting the upper hand.
And let your fears lead to friendship, Sir.
Allow what you yourself have seen to make
A place for good will in your heart; and I, 1910
I will think of you and me as friends.

ALONSO: To prove
We are at peace at last, let these two arms
Offer my congratulations! You shall wed
The lady sitting next to you and make
Elisa even more content to be 1915
The bride of Count Don Carlos. Doña Ana,
In whose house you are, will marry Pedro.

JUAN: The god of Love shows the power of his realm
By making the impossible come true.

I wish all four four centuries of joy. 1920

ALONSO: May Heaven grant you, Juan, a thousand years
To live your life beside such loveliness.
Good-bye. Now take your key. It belongs to you.

Exit

LEONOR: Let's leave the cape right here because should he
Decide to search me there again, there is 1925
No place to hide it.

CORAL: Now come on. Let's go.

LEONOR: Let's go, Coral.

CORAL: Have a pleasant trip!

CORAL and LEONOR exeunt

JUAN: The dawn has spilled its seed pearls over the scarlet
Eastern sky. If only it would bless
My hope with joy before the swallows sing. 1930
I hear them talking on their balconies.
Elisa's father had best not harm her or
I will defend her, though it mean my death.

Exit. Enter Don ALONSO and the Count

ALONSO: How good it is to see you up so early.
I visited my niece today and know 1935
I will have her and Don Pedro married at once.

CARLOS: Since jealousy so seldom sleeps, its pain
Woke me in fear before the dawn lest I
Should lose my happiness because I slept.

ALONSO: Your sensibilities give you away. 1940
Elisa's love is now completely yours.

*ELISA and LEONOR are behind a curtain watching; Don
ALVARO, Don CARLOS and Don JUAN, and the others are all
now there*

LEONOR: "Well, now you are going to get it," said Agrajes.

ALONSO: Alvaro, you were here all along?

ALVARO: Yes, I was here, displeased and angry, too,
Because you did not trust her. So it seemed. 1945

ALONSO: Now that is quite enough. I was mistaken.

JUAN: Don Alonso, you must grant me this:
That it is only right to assure oneself
And overcome all difficulties while
I make our wedding plans. Since I found you 1950
Here with the count, without the need to search,
I want to clear all obstacles away.
Just because I praised Elisa's beauty...
...obviously an error which I never
Should have made...this man now steals her love, 1955
Forgetting friendship's customs and its laws.
There is now every reason to suspect
That once he learns to whom I give my love
That he will change again and leave Elisa.
And try to win away the love I won! 1960
I stand before you both to hear you swear
That this will not occur.

ALONSO: You need not fear.

JUAN: Both of you must hear me speak my mind.
If the jewel whom I adore considered you
Her father and wished to marry me, would you 1965
Agree?

ALONSO: You say she thinks of me as her father?

JUAN: She swears that it is so.

ALONSO: Who is she, then?

JUAN: The girl you found with me a while ago,
The girl who would not let you see her face.

ALONSO: Well, have you ever heard of such a thing? 1970
She claims to be a relative of mine?

JUAN: Because of you she says her blood is royal.

ALONSO: It must be Doña Ana; I am sure of that.

JUAN: That does not matter: Ana, or someone else,
What is your reply? 1975

ALONSO: If she had hurt you so
And now that pain has turned back into joy

May Heaven grant you both a hundred years
Of happiness together, and children, too,
To keep your love for life alive.

JUAN: Accept

My heartfelt thanks. And you, Don Carlos, agree
To all you have heard said here.

1980

CARLOS: Providing we

Can put an end to any bitterness
Which might remain between us, I agree.

JUAN: Then swear to it.

CARLOS: My word is all you need.

JUAN: Then nothing can be done but say good-bye.

1985

ALONSO: But, first, do tell us who your lady is!

JUAN: Trust me for now you must not know her name.
And gentlemen, do not forget your oath.

LEONOR: (Oh, now I understand what he has done!) **Aside**

ELISA and LEONOR withdraw

JUAN: Soon you will see me with the one I love.

1990

Exit

PEDRO: The subtlety of his ingenuity
Has reached the limit of the possible.

ALONSO: I am not sure that I quite understand.

PEDRO: I mean how love, together with men's wit,
Can make events transpire in such a way
That they appear absurd, ridiculous,
But to our dismay they are so sadly true.

1995

ALONSO: And what do you mean now by saying that?

PEDRO: Well, balconies are now a bridge to cross
Which people feared because they saw the void.
Come see what ingenuity can do!

2000

CARLOS: Would you explain yourself to me for once?

PEDRO: To understand you really must come see
How men can sail through inlets of the wind.

ALONSO: The night has worked her arts again, I say,
Confusing the best minds we have today.

2005

*Exeunt. A street outside Doña ANA's and Don ALONSO's houses.
The two balconies are joined by a wide board scaffold. Don JUAN,
CORAL, ELISA and LEONOR are on Doña ANA's balcony*

JUAN: More often, all decisions made with love
Are for the best. You need not fear, Elisa.

ELISA: Too late for fear or even thinking twice.

ELISA and Don JUAN walk out onto the scaffold

CORAL: Ladies and gentlemen: Do not quake or tremble.
For none of us would like to fall and crack
Like soft-boiled eggs.

2010

LEONOR: Coral. Do not let go!

*LEONOR walks carefully across. CORAL ventures across the
scaffold*

CORAL: Oh Saint Harlequin protect me now!
I think I heard the old man blow his nose!

*Don ALONSO looks out from his balcony together with Don
CARLOS and Don PEDRO. Don ALONSO and Don CARLOS are
on their balcony; ELISA, Don JUAN, CORAL, and LEONOR on
the scaffold*

ELISA: My father and the count are on the balcony!
We have to turn around and go back in!

2015

ALONSO: What I see cannot be happening!

JUAN: There is no choice: your freedom or I die.

*As Don JUAN and ELISA try to return to Doña ANA's balcony,
Doña ANA appears there with Don PEDRO*

ANA: A woman! Hidden in my house!!! Don Pedro,
The sorrows I have suffered now demand
You make amends somehow for such an outrage!

2020

PEDRO: If you have known great sorrow, just recall

How I have experienced sorrow, but in love.

ANA: Is this the way you pay your debts, Don Juan?
Remember how I put myself in danger?

2025

PEDRO: Traitor! Prepare to die by your own design;
The only way you will ever escape is this!

He draws his sword

CARLOS: And this sword, too, will clear the way for rage.
The sword is the only exit for rebellious souls.

CARLOS and ALONSO draw their swords

CORAL: This is not a bridge! It's a trap!
Men will call this the bridge of Mantible,
A bridge where we found giants standing guard.

2030

JUAN: This lady is the one you saw with me,
Her face was hidden by her cape; remember?
You swore she would become my wife because
She called you father. Carlos, you swore, too,
And noblemen must keep their word or die.

2035

ELISA: You cannot force another person's will.
Good Count, like every nobleman you must
First triumph o'er yourself; courtesy, then,
Be as great in generosity as in love.

2040

CARLOS: Her reasons and her eloquence deserve
Our respect. From this day on I will protect
Your love and call Don Juan my friend as well.
And if your father will have me as well,
I do believe that such a son-in-law
Would bring him happiness also, don't you?
Although I have not kept myself in check,
I swear that I will be the enemy
Of anyone who fails to respect Don Juan.

2045

2050

ALONSO: I have never seen such foolishness!

ELISA: But, father!

LEONOR: My dear, dear man!

ALONSO: Since all of you
Insist, and God has let it be, let Love

Make up the plot, since one old man cannot
Withstand so many joined as one together. 2055

JUAN: Your generosity humbles me. (He kneels.)

CARLOS: Then let us reunite our wills again
Although we were disturbed by rivalries,
And forge an ever-lasting peace, a bond
Which first appears as Doña Ana gives 2060
Her hand to our Don Pedro.

ANA: And I respect
This pact much more because it comes from you.

To CARLOS

CORAL: Well, since your pure and virgin title still
Remains beyond the bonds of marriage, we have
No other choice, both you and I, but to take 2065
Most holy vows and find our monastery.
Which one is most suitable to you?

LEONOR: Oh, no you don't! For you are mine alone!

CARLOS: Well, then, you mean that there is no escape?
Then with this night have ended all our sorrows. 2070
Confusion often ends at break of dawn.
The sun has risen once again and brings
Us peace and joy.

JUAN: So this is how Love has
His way with us and works his miracles!

LEONOR: So this is how I ply my trade, my friends! 2075

REMEMBER: in love, never trust a woman.

CORAL: "The Balconies of Madrid" has come to an end.
The poet asks me not to give his name.

THE END

. "The Balconies of Madrid." Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, 2026.
<https://www.comedias.org/obras/the-balconies-of-madrid/>