

# LIFE IS A DREAM

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for a reading produced by Philadelphia Artist's Collective

## ACT ONE

### *MUSIC*

*A noise off. ROSAURA falls onto the stage. She is dressed as a man.*

ROSAURA.

Abandon me! Leave me here, desperate, alone  
As I struggle randomly through the tangled hair  
On the head of this giant mountain.  
Whose furrowed ridges frown at the sun.  
And this is Poland! You, vile country!  
Viciously greeting this stranger  
Writing your greeting in letters of blood.  
I've hardly arrived. Such a hard arrival.  
Where can I find pity in my pitiless fate  
Arriving in anguish. Greeted with hate.

Enter CLARIN

CLARIN.

Wait a minute. 'Where can I find pity?'  
What about me? Why not 'Where can we...'  
Where can we find pity? That's a better line.  
After all, it was the two of us left home,  
Looking for adventure, us two,  
Sadly and madly reaching this god forsaken place.

ROSAURA.

Listen, Clarin, I didn't mention you in my speech  
Because I didn't want to deprive you of your opportunity  
To make your own. To lament your misfortune,  
Find consolation in your grief. Remember the philosopher  
Who said that to complain was such a pleasure  
That misfortunes should be looked for, like a moral treasure.

CLARIN.

Lady, your philosopher's an idiot and I wish he was here  
So I could kick his head in.  
Only then I'd have to hear him  
Complaining about my utterly amazing skill in kicking.

ROSAURA.

Is there anyone who's ever seen anything  
So utterly extraordinary and strange?  
And it could be my eyes are deceiving me  
Or my imagination's playing tricks on my fearful mind  
But in the faint cold light of the dying day  
I think I can see a building.

CLARIN.

That's what I want to see  
And if it turns out not to be actually there  
I'll destroy the scenery.

ROSAURA.

The mountains are so high  
And the building is so low  
It's as if the sun's hardly able to see it.  
Its construction is so crude  
It could be one of the rocks that surround it  
Rocks casting such fierce shadows  
It's as if they hurt the sunlight.

CLARIN.

Lady, I think we're talking too much here,  
Why don't we get a little closer  
So that the kind people who live round here  
Can welcome us with food and wine?

ROSAURA.

The door --no. I could put that better--  
this black mouth...  
Its sinister jaws yawn open, and the dark night within  
Engenders a deeper darkness.

*Chains sound inside.*

CLARIN.

Good grief what's that?

ROSAURA.

I cannot move. I'm a block of fire and ice.  
Burning with curiosity. Frozen with fear.

CLARIN.

It's just someone been to the loo  
And is pulling at the chain

SEGISMUNDO (within)

All I know of life is pain!

ROSAURA.

What sadness in that voice. What desperation!  
I'm left struggling with new grief and pain.  
Clarín!  
Let's run from the terrors  
Of this evil and enchanted tower.

CLARIN.

Lady, when it comes down to it,  
I'm too petrified to even run.

ROSAURA.

Is that a light, that feeble exhalation,  
That pale and trembling star,  
That pulse so weakly beating  
In so obscure and dubious a dwelling  
That, far from lightening,  
Appears to darken it.  
In its dim light I can barely see  
A dark prison lit by a single flame  
The burial place of a living corpse.

*SEGISMUNDO is discovered. He is dressed in animal skins,  
with a chain on his leg, in such a way that he can get up and walk when his cue comes.  
He speaks the whole speech sitting on the ground.*

SEGISMUNDO.

All I know of life is pain  
And I don't understand

Why I must live like this.  
What crime did I commit?  
The worst thing I do is to exist.  
When I think of that I understand  
A human's greatest crime is to be born!  
But there's still something to be explained  
The bitter dregs left to be drained.  
And I still don't really understand  
I must have done something else  
For life to treat me like this.  
Aren't other beings born?  
What privilege is it they possess?  
And what is it I so badly lack?  
When a bird is born, it is so beautiful  
Its feathers like the petals of a flower  
It can barely fly before it leaves  
The kind safety of its parents nest  
And then it's gliding, freely gliding  
Through the vast halls of the empty sky.  
I have more soul than a bird  
When a fish is born, it does not breathe,  
It's an abortion of mud and slime.  
It can barely swim before it glides  
Like a ship of fins and scales  
And then it's sailing in immensity  
Through the vast cold heart of the endless sea.  
I have more freewill than a fish  
Why should I have less liberty?  
And when I reach this moment  
My heart burns like a volcano.  
I want to tear it from my chest  
And rip it into pieces!  
How can it be justified  
And how can it be right  
For God to give freedom  
—Sweet and beautiful freedom—  
To give it to a stream, a fish,  
A brute and a bird  
And deny it to a human being!

ROSAURA.

Your words fill me with pity and fear.

SEGISMUNDO.

Who was it heard me?  
Was it Clotaldo?

CLARIN.

Say yes.

ROSAURA.

No. It was a lonely cry of grief  
Lost in these cold vaults of stone  
Feeling for your sadness.

*SEGISMUNDO grabs her.*

SEGISMUNDO.

Then I'll kill you.  
I know you know my weakness.  
Just because you heard me weep  
These strong arms of mine  
Will tear you into pieces.

CLARIN.

I'm stone deaf. I never heard a word.

ROSAURA.

You were born a human being.  
It will be enough to touch your heart  
Enough to fall helpless at your feet  
For you to free me.

SEGISMUNDO.

Your voice could fill me with tenderness.  
Your presence could fill me with... what?  
I hesitate; I look at you with... awe.  
Who are you? I know so little of the world.  
This tower is my cradle and my grave.  
Since the day I was born,  
If this is really what it is to live,  
All I've known is this desert place,  
This bare mountain, where I live in misery  
Like a skeleton which walks  
Like a corpse which breathes.

There's only one man I've ever spoken to or seen.  
He feels for me in my misfortune.  
He brings me news of earth and heaven.  
Be amazed at me, call me a monster,  
I'm an animal, and I am a man.  
I am a man, and I'm an animal.  
Even though I've studied politics  
Just by observing the wild beasts  
And being taught by the flight of birds,  
And though I've measured the perfect circles  
Of the motions of the harmonious stars,  
I've never seen in anyone  
The perfect beauty that I see in you.  
What force and what authority  
Do you possess since you...  
You, you alone have caused to halt  
My fury at my wrongs  
And filled my ears with pity?  
Each time I look at you you amaze me more.  
The more I look at you  
The more I want to see you again and again.  
My eyes must have a kind of rabies  
For even when it's death to drink  
They want to drink in more and more  
And even though I understand  
That seeing is a kind of death  
I am still dying to see more.

ROSAURA.

It so moves me to hear you  
It amazes me to see you  
And I don't know what to say to you  
And I don't know what to ask you.  
All I'll say is that somehow fate  
Must have guided me here to find comfort,  
If anyone unhappy really can be comforted  
In seeing someone more unhappy still.  
I know a story of a wise philosopher  
Who was so deeply sunk in poverty  
That all he could find to eat  
Were wild herbs he picked off the roadside.  
Can there possibly be anyone, he wondered,  
Who's as poor and as wretched as me?

And then he looked back, and then he saw  
Another wise philosopher  
Eating the leaves that he had thrown away.  
And there I was, full of self-pity  
Wondering if there could be anyone  
So miserable and wretched as I.  
And you have given me your sad reply.  
For after listening to your story  
I find my griefs have disappeared.  
You have gathered them, and turned them into happiness.  
Perhaps my misfortunes can help relieve your pain.  
So I'll tell my story. Take from it  
All my superfluous grief. I am--

*MUSIC*

CLOTALDO.  
Guards of this tower,  
Are you cowards?  
Are you asleep?  
Two intruders  
Have broken into the tower'

ROSAURA.  
Now new confusion fills me.

CLOTALDO.  
Stir yourselves! Capture or kill them  
Before they can defend themselves!

CLARIN.  
Guards of the tower,  
Just remember he's offering you a choice  
You can capture us or kill us. Capturing is so much easier.

*Enter CLOTALDO and SOLDIERS.*

CLOTALDO.  
Hide your faces. No-one should know us.

CLARIN. Ooh it's a masked ball.

CLOTALDO.

Ignorant fools, you've trespassed  
On forbidden ground, broken the king's decree  
Which forbids anyone to view or see  
This dangerous monster imprisoned here.  
Surrender: or this gun, like a metal cobra,  
Will spit two balls of poisoned fire  
Through the terrified and frozen air.

SEGISMUNDO.

You monster of injustice,  
I'll die before I see you touch  
Or harm them, I'll tear myself to pieces  
With these chains, these rocks,  
With my own teeth before I consent  
To their suffering or weep for their pain!

CLOTALDO.

God decreed, Segismundo, you should die  
Before you were even born. That's how monstrous  
Are your misfortunes. You know that.  
And you also know you need these chains  
To hold back the proud fury of your rage.  
So why make idle boasts? Take him back  
To his cell: lock him in. Hide him From our sight.

SEGISMUNDO.

God in heaven  
How wise you are to deprive me  
Of my freedom! For otherwise  
I'd tear down the mountains  
To build a ladder of stone.  
I'd climb up to attack the sky!  
I'd be a giant and destroy the sun  
And I'd smash heaven's crystal spheres!

*They overpower SEGISMUNDO and lock him back in his cell.*

*MUSIC ENDS*

CLOTALDO.

Perhaps it's to prevent you  
That you suffer such misfortune.

ROSAURA.

Obviously pride offends you. I'll try humility,  
Fall at your feet, and beg for my life.  
It would be remarkable cruelty  
If humbleness offended you as much as pride.

CLARIN.

I don't expect you to be impressed by either.  
Humility and pride are both unbelievably dull,  
So I won't be humble, and I won't be proud.  
I'm kind of in between the two  
And ask you nicely to be kind.

CLOTALDO.

You!

GUARD. My lord!

CLOTALDO.

Take their weapons and blindfold their eyes.

ROSAURA.

This is my sword. It can only be given to you,  
For you are the noblest here, and it will refuse  
To be taken by anyone of less nobility.

CLARIN.

My sword isn't fussy. Any shit can have it.  
You take it.

ROSAURA.

All I ask is that you take good care of it  
For the sake of the man who once wore it.

*When CLOTALDO takes ROSAURA's sword, he is disturbed.*

CLOTALDO (*aside*).

(God help me, I know this sword.  
Holding it fills my heart with pain.  
And it's hard to believe that this is true  
And not part of some appalling dream.)  
Who are you?

ROSAURA.

A foreigner.

CLOTALDO.

Obviously, since you did not know  
This place was forbidden you.

ROSAURA.

Even if I had known it, there was nothing I could do.  
This mad horse of mine tried to be some kind of bird,  
Threw me of its back and left me stranded in misfortune.

CLOTALDO.

Where you from?

ROSAURA.

Moscow.

CLOTALDO.

I have many ties  
With that nation. Why have you come?

ROSAURA.

I have been insulted. I lost my self-respect.  
I have come to seek revenge.

CLOTALDO.

(Oh God  
Each new moment adds to my unhappiness.)

ROSAURA.

And so I beg you, keep this sword safe; for if  
By any freak of chance I am spared this sentence  
And allowed to live, then this sword will regain  
My honor; for although I do not understand  
What secret this sword contains, I know  
It holds one. Though it could well be  
That I deceive myself, and only value it  
Because it is the only object I possess  
That was once my father's.

CLOTALDO.

Who was he?

ROSAURA.  
I never knew him.

CLOTALDO.  
How do you know  
This sword contains a secret?

ROSAURA.  
The one who gave it me said: 'Go to Poland  
Be secret, careful, skilful, and make sure  
The leaders there see you with this sword.  
For I know that one of them will show you favour  
And will safeguard you. Or will, if he still lives.  
But for now, in case he's dead, I'll hide his name in silence.'

CLOTALDO.  
(I gave this sword to my lover,  
The beautiful Violante, and I told her  
Anyone who wore it would find me  
A kind and loving father to my own son.  
But I don't know what favor or help  
I can give him, when I'm supposed to drive  
The sword's point into his chest.  
What can I do? What can I do?  
If I take him to the king  
I am taking him to die.  
But that is what my duty commands.  
My hands are tied by duty,  
My heart is driven by love.  
But I should be in no doubt.  
They say that loyalty to the king  
Matters more than honor, more  
Than life itself. So let duty live,  
Let love die. *(Pause)*  
What else can anyone do?  
He is my son, his boldness proves it.  
What can I do? Take courage!  
The best thing is to take him to the king,  
Tell him he's my son and should be killed.  
Perhaps the extreme loyalty I'll show him  
Will oblige him to show mercy;  
if not, If the king is constant in his cruelty, then the boy  
Will die without knowing he is my son.)

Foreigners, come this way, and don't imagine  
You're alone in your misfortunes.  
In dilemmas like these it's hard to tell  
Which is the greater misfortune: to die or live.

*Exit.*

*A sound of trumpets and drums.*

*MUSIC.*

*Enter; on one side, ASTOLFO accompanied by SOLDIERS, and ESTRELLA on the other accompanied by WOMEN.*

ASTOLFO.

Your eyes are like comets, madam.  
They announce the death of kings.  
Your exquisite beauty inspires these trumpets.  
To greet you they become metal birds.  
Their mouthpieces sprout feathers  
And fly through the air. Cannons salute you  
As empress; the palace fountains greet you  
As the goddess of spring; the trumpets  
Greet you as the goddess of war, and the birds  
Greet you as the goddess of dawn.  
Day has come to send the night to exile  
But you are more radiant still  
In joyfulness you are the dawn  
In beauty you are the spring  
In anger you are war itself  
And you are the ruler of my soul.

ESTRELLA.

Don't flatter me in such courteous terms  
When your words are so plainly contradicted  
By your obvious preparations for war.  
The flatteries I hear do not correspond  
To the hostility I see before me. Remember,  
Prince, how vile it is to flatter with the tongue,  
But kill with the intention.

ASTOLFO.

Estrella you are ill-informed

If you doubt that I'm sincere  
In praising you. I beg you listen.  
When the last king of Poland died  
He left two daughters and his son  
Basilio to inherit the throne.  
Your mother was the eldest daughter,  
Mine the youngest. She married in Moscow,  
Of whose state I am now Prince.  
As for Basilio, he is the victim  
Of advancing old age; and he has always cared  
More for his studies than for women or vice.  
Since he is childless, we are both entitled to inherit:  
You as the offspring of the elder child,  
And myself because I am a man.  
We told our uncle of our competing claims  
And he promised to meet us here, today,  
And satisfy us both. That is why I left Moscow,  
That is why I came here; not to make war on you  
But so you could lay loving siege to my heart.  
Dear princess, I pray the god of love be wise  
And that the common people, the only true astrologer,  
May bless this union and crown you queen  
—Queen, that is, of my tender heart.

ESTRELLA. Such extraordinary courtesy is exactly  
What my high rank deserves, and of course  
It would be the most enormous pleasure  
For me to gain the imperial crown,  
Solely to hand it over to you.  
But I know you have come here to deceive me  
Because the flattery of your words  
Is undermined by the girl  
Whose portrait you wear round your neck.

*A drum beats.*

*MUSIC*

ASTOLFO.  
How greatly I regret that sound  
For it prevents me explaining  
And proclaims the arrival of the King!

*Drums beat.*

*MUSIC*

*Enter KING BASILIO, an old man, and his court.*

ESTRELLA.

Allow me to tenderly embrace

ASTOLFO.

Allow me to tenderly entwine

ESTRELLA.

My arms around your feet in humble coils.

ASTOLFO.

My arms like ivy round your majestic trunk.

BASILIO.

Nephew, niece, embrace me. I know you  
love me,  
Because you have faithfully obeyed  
My loving request with such kind words  
And I want to leave neither unsatisfied  
And both of you on equal terms.  
You know my knowledge has earned me  
The title of Basilio the wise.  
The sciences I love the most  
Are those which foretell the future,  
Which steal the function of passing time  
To tell us what happens with each day that comes.  
But I wish to God that my own life  
Had been the first target of the heaven's anger,  
Long before I learnt to interpret its messages  
And learnt to understand its signs.  
For when a man is unfortunate  
Even his gifts slab him in the back  
And a man whose knowledge harms him  
Murders his own self!

*(Pause)*

Clorilene my wife gave birth to a son.  
The omens of his birth were so many, and so dreadful  
They exhausted the skies. While the baby still lay  
In the womb's living grave, far from the beautiful light  
Of day, she dreamt again and again of her belly torn open  
By a monster in the shape of a man.

And on the day that he was born, the sun itself  
Engaged in blood-soaked battle with the moon  
With the earth as the battlefield. This was the worst eclipse  
The world has suffered since weeping for the death of Christ.  
And it was under this sign  
My son Segismundo was born.  
He foretold his future in the manner of his birth,  
For in being born he killed his mother  
And so boasted with male ferocity:  
'Look: I am human and this how  
We humans repay those who do us good.  
I ran to my books, and in them I read  
Segismundo would be the most brutal man,  
The cruelest prince, the most vicious monarch.  
That under him his kingdom would become  
Divided, split, torn by civil wars:  
I saw him inspired by fury.  
I saw him driven on by rage.  
I saw him defeat and overcome me.  
I saw me lying vanquished at his feet.  
I saw me humiliated, helpless,  
And forced to be his wretched slave.  
His feet –and how it shames me to confess it –  
Would make a carpet out of my white hairs.  
We know that evil is far more likely to occur than good  
And good endings are never as plausible as bad.  
I had to believe such frightening predictions  
I had to see if wisdom can help a human overcome the stars.  
So I prepared a tower, hidden in the mountains,  
Where the daylight scarcely dares enter.  
I forbade anyone to enter  
And I had it announced that the prince was born dead.  
There Segismundo lives, chained like a beast,  
Only Clotaldo has spoken to him and seen him;  
And been the only witness of his unhappy life.

Three things must be considered here. The first  
That I love my country, and I must do all I can  
To rescue it from the prospect of a cruel vindictive king.  
The second is that we are talking of my son.  
He has the right to freedom, he has the right to rule.  
To deprive him of these rights would be a crime,  
A crime I cannot justify,

Even if what I intend is the good of all.  
The third is that we know we should not too easily believe  
That what is predicted will unavoidably occur.  
Even the most evil omen, even the worst horoscope  
Can only incline the will. It cannot force it.  
And so my friends you must imagine me  
Struggling for many months with these dilemmas  
Until today, when I have finally found  
A solution that will utterly amaze you.  
Tomorrow I will place my son on the throne  
I will not tell him that he is my son, or that he is your king  
But he will govern you, and you will swear obedience.  
Now think what that this achieves.  
It resolves the three issues I have set before you.  
One: I love my country, and if I give you a king  
Who rules with justice, wisdom and goodwill  
Then the stars' predictions are defeated, and you enjoy  
The government of your rightful king.  
Second: I will not commit a crime  
Because if he acts unjustly, cruelly,  
Gives free rein to viciousness and vice  
Then I can depose him and imprison him again  
And that will not be cruelty but just punishment.  
Third, if the horoscope is right it can all still be remedied  
If I marry Estrella to Astolfo, set them on the throne  
And give you rulers who will be worthy of the task.  
This I command you as your king  
This I ask you as a father,  
This I request you as a philosopher  
And if what Seneca said is really true,  
And the king really is the slave of his own kingdom  
Then this I humbly beg you as your slave.

ASTOLFO.

It is my duty to reply to this  
As the one whose interests are most at stake  
In the name of all I say:  
Bring us Segismundo, for he is your son.  
And that is enough for all of us.

ALL.

Give us our Prince for we ask him to be our king!

BASILIO.

Vassals, I respect and thank you  
For this generous act. Accompany  
These two pillars of the state to their rooms  
For tomorrow you will see him.

ALL.

Long live the great king Basilio!

*Exit all. Before the KING exits, CLOTALDO enters with ROSAURA and CLARIN and stops the KING*

CLOTALDO.

Can I speak to you?

BASILIO.

Oh Clotaldo, you are most welcome!

CLOTALDO.

Coming into your presence, majesty,  
Always fills me with joy, but today  
An angry twist of vicious destiny  
Has robbed a law of its privilege  
And a custom of its joy.

BASILIO.

What troubles you?

CLOTALDO.

A misfortune, your majesty, has occurred;  
Although it should have been a source of joy.

BASILIO.

Go on.

CLOTALDO.

This young man, your majesty,  
And it is hard to repress my tears  
He entered the tower, and saw the prince.  
And he is--

BASILIO.

Do not trouble yourself Clotaldo.

Even if this happened through carelessness  
You have no need to excuse it  
I have just revealed the secret  
And it does not matter he should know it.  
See me afterwards, because I have much to tell you  
And there is much for you to do for me;  
For I must tell you you are to be the instrument  
Of the most amazing event the world has ever seen.  
As for these prisoners, so that you know  
I do not punish in them your carelessness  
I forgive them. Let them go.

*Exit BASILIO .*

CLOTALDO.  
Great king, may you live a thousand centuries!  
(My poor heart, the first ordeal is over.  
Now let the next ordeal begin.)  
Foreign travelers, you are free.

ROSAURA.  
I kiss your feet a thousand times.

CLARIN.  
I'll make do with a couple of hundred.  
A few kisses more or less  
Won't matter between friends.

ROSAURA.  
My lord, you have given me my life.  
I will for ever be your grateful slave.

CLOTALDO.  
You're wrong. I never gave you life.

ROSAURA. Why not!

CLOTALDO.  
A man of noble birth who's been dishonored  
Does not truly live. And since you have come  
To avenge an insult, that obviously applies to you.  
I could not have given you life  
For living in dishonor is no life at all.

(I hope that I encourage him to speak.)

ROSAURA.

I admit for now I have no proper life  
But when I take my revenge I will regain my self-respect.  
My life then without any doubt at all  
Will seem like a gift from you.

CLOTALDO.

Don't go without a weapon.  
Take this sword you brought  
For I know it will suffice for your revenge  
And will be stained with your enemy's blood;  
For this blade will know how to revenge you  
I know, for it once was mine –or rather,  
Mine for this instant, for this brief time  
I have held it in my power.

ROSAURA.

And so for the second time in your name  
I put on this sword and swear to obtain revenge  
However powerful my enemy may be.

CLOTALDO.

And is he?

ROSAURA.

So powerful, I will not disclose his name;  
For I would not wish to lose your friendship.

CLOTALDO.

But if you were to tell me  
It would strengthen my concern for you,  
For it would make it impossible  
For me to help your enemy.  
(Oh I wish I knew who it was.)

ROSAURA.

So you do not think I place a low value on the trust  
You place in me, you must know my enemy  
I no less than Astolfo, the duke of Moscow.

CLOTALDO.

(It's hard not to be overcome by grief.  
The affair is far worse than I imagined.  
Let's investigate a little further.)  
If you were born a Muscovite  
Then your natural lord could not insult you  
Even if (anxiety will drive me mad!)  
He called you a liar in public.

ROSAURA.  
I know that even though he was my prince  
He could still offend me.

CLOTALDO.  
He could not, even though he slapped you in the face.  
(My God!)

ROSAURA.  
What I suffered was far worse!

CLOTALDO.  
Then tell it now, because you cannot say more  
Than what I already imagine.

ROSAURA.  
I look at you with a respect I do not  
understand.  
And I hold you in such great esteem,  
That I hardly dare tell you  
That how I appear is a disguise,  
That I am not whom I appear to be.  
Be alert; reflect; If I am not who I seem  
And Astolfo came here to marry Estrella,  
Think how he could offend me.  
I have already said too much.

*Exit ROSAURA and CLARIN.*

CLOTALDO.  
Stop wait come back!  
What tangled labyrinth is this  
Where reason cannot find the thread?  
My honor is offended;  
The enemy is powerful;

I am his vassal; she is my daughter.  
May heaven find some solution  
Although I doubt it can  
In so deep a pit of confusion  
The whole sky is an omen  
The whole world a prodigious portent.

*Exit.*

*End of Act One.*

## ACT TWO

CLOTALDO.

Everything you ordered  
Has been accomplished.

BASILIO.

Tell me what happened.

CLOTALDO.

This is how it was.  
You ordered me to make a tranquillizing drink,  
A drink made of herbs whose secret power  
Is to deprive a man of reason, to rob  
And dispossess him of awareness and of conscious will.  
In short: transform him to a living corpse.

*(Pause)*

I went down to Segismundo with the drink  
In which were mixed opium, henbane and belladonna,  
And there, in his small cell, I spoke to him  
Of the human knowledge taught him by dumb nature,  
Nature his mother, who in these learned solitudes  
Has taught him the politics of the beasts and birds.  
When I saw how this occupied his mind  
I toasted him with the potion, and hardly  
Had the liquid passed from glass to stomach  
When he surrendered his strength to the power of sleep.  
A cold sweat ran down through his veins and limbs,  
So cold, that if I had not known this was pretended death,  
I would have feared for his life.  
At that moment the people came

In whom you have entrusted  
The secret of this experiment.  
They carried him to a coach, and then to your room  
Where is prepared the greatness and majesty  
Merited by his position. There they put him to bed  
And there, once the drowsiness has lost its power,  
There they will serve him as they would serve you,  
Just as you ordered. And if having obeyed you in every respect  
Makes me worthy of any slight reward  
Then all I would ask you  
—forgive my indiscretion—  
Is that you tell me what you intend  
In bringing Segismundo here to the palace.

BASILIO.

Clotaldo, that is a very good question  
And to you alone will I answer it in full.  
You already know that the influence of the stars  
On my son Segismundo threatens us all  
With endless misfortunes and tragic events.  
But I want to examine whether it is possible  
For the heaven to relent a little or mitigate their harshness  
Or to see whether with boldness and prudence  
They can be contradicted, whether human beings  
Have power over their own destiny.  
This is what I want to investigate,  
And this is why I have brought him here:  
So he may be told he is my son,  
And to have his ability put to the test.  
If he has the greatness of spirit to overcome himself,  
Then he will be king; but if he shows himself to be cruel,  
Or indulges in the abuse of power,  
I'll return him to his chains.  
Now you're going to ask, why, to determine this,  
Was it necessary to drug him first?  
I want to satisfy you in every respect.  
If he knew now today that he was my son,  
And then tomorrow saw himself reduced again  
To prison and to misery, it is certain that he would  
Despair in his condition. For having known who he really is  
What consolation could he possibly find?  
I wanted to leave him a remedy for future misery  
By telling him that everything he saw

Was no more than a dream. So this achieves two ends:  
Firstly his disposition, since while he is awake  
He behaves exactly as he imagines and thinks.  
Secondly his consolation, because even though he sees himself  
Obeyed now and then returned to his chains,  
He could still believe he dreamt it all  
And that will be a good understanding for him to have,  
Because in this world, Clotaldo,  
Everyone who lives is dreaming.

CLOTALDO.

And he is coming this way.

BASILIO.

I shall withdraw; you are his tutor,  
You go up to him. His mind will be full of confusion.  
So tell him the truth.

CLOTALDO.

You mean tell him who he is?

BASILIO.

Yes; for it could be if he knows it  
He will recognize his danger  
And be more inclined to overcome himself.

*Exit* BASILIO.

## INTERMISSION

*Enter* CLARIN.

CLARIN.

Getting in here isn't cheap is it?  
This man standing at the door  
Wanted to see my ticket. I said  
You won't catch me buying one of those.  
The price they are nowadays  
Do you think I'm stupid?  
I don't need a ticket. I've got' my eyes.  
Keep them wide open  
And you can see anything.

CLOTALDO.

Clarín, what's new?

CLARÍN.

What's new, sir, is that your enormous kindness  
Always so ready to avenge Rosaura's wrongs,  
Has advised her to dress as her own sex.

CLOTALDO.

Of course. So as not to cause a scandal.

CLARÍN.

And what's also new sir is that she's changed her name,  
And is now known as your niece.

CLOTALDO.

I'm taking responsibility for her reputation.  
What else?

CLARÍN.

Now she's a lady in waiting for the  
Extraordinary Estrella, and she's waiting for you  
To find the time and place to achieve her revenge.

CLOTALDO.

That's as it should be. For all these things  
Will be set right in time.

CLARÍN.

And the other thing, sir, is that she is living  
In luxury, she is being treated like a queen  
And is the favorite of the princess,  
Whereas I, her faithful companion and friend  
Am dying of hunger, and everyone forgets me  
And forgets that I'm Clarín, and that Clarín  
—For the benefit of the ignorant —means trumpet.  
It's from the Latin. Clarínus. Or clarion.  
As in call. Clarion call. And I could call  
The king, Astolfo, and Estrella, to tell them  
Just what is going on and just who your niece  
Really is and what she's hoping to do here.

CLOTALDO.

I think I understand you, and I'm sure  
That we'll get on. You work for me,  
And here's an advance on your wages.

CLARIN.  
And here comes Segismundo.

*MUSIC.* Enter as many as can be afforded, dressing SEGISMUNDO, who is now wearing beautiful clothes. He is amazed by everything, and walks around while the MUSICIANS sing.

SEGISMUNDO.  
God help me! What do I see?  
What do I touch!  
Me in this beautiful palace!  
Me wearing satin and silk!  
Me surrounded by all these  
Elegant looking servants!  
I can't be. I'm dreaming;  
I know I'm awake.  
Aren't I still Segismundo?  
What could have happened  
To me while I was fast asleep?  
What is it that I'm seeing now?  
Well, whatever it is, why should  
That bother me? Why worry?  
I'll just let myself be waited on  
And then just see what happens.

SERVANT 1.  
He's so preoccupied.

SERVANT 2.  
After what's happened to him  
Who wouldn't 't be?

CLARIN. I wouldn't be.  
I'd be jumping for joy.

SERVANT 2. Should they sing again?

SEGISMUNDO.

No. I don't want any more singing.

SERVANT 2. I just wanted to entertain you. You seem so preoccupied.

SEGISMUNDO.

No, I don't think music helps me, really.  
All I like are brass bands.

CLOTALDO.

Your Highness, Great Lord,  
Allow me to kiss your hand.  
I will be honored to be the first  
To swear obedience to you as Lord.

SEGISMUNDO. (That's Clotaldo. What's he doing?  
Why's he being so polite? When I was in prison he treated me like a pig.  
What is happening to me?)

CLOTALDO.

Your life has so suddenly changed  
And your heart and mind will be filled  
With confusion and doubts.  
And if I can, I want to help you understand.

*He becomes grave.*

You are Prince of Poland.  
You will inherit the throne.  
You've been hidden in a tower  
Because the stars foretold  
A most terrible tragedy  
Would occur when you were crowned.  
But if he makes use of the power  
Of reason a good-hearted man  
Can overcome the stars  
We must trust that truth.  
And that is why, while you were sleeping  
You were taken from the tower  
And brought to this palace.

SEGISMUNDO.

You wicked foul betrayer  
I've got pride now, I've got power

And I know you betrayed your country  
Because you hid me and you denied me  
My rightful place in the world!

CLOTALDO. (Oh no!)

SEGISMUNDO.

You broke the law, you lied to the king  
And you were cruel to me. And so  
We all agree, the king, the law, and me  
That you're condemned to death.  
And I'm going to kill with these hands.

SERVANT 1.

My lord!!

SEGISMUNDO.

Don't try to protect him. Don't waste your time  
And listen, you, I swear to God,  
If you get in my way  
I'll chuck you out the window.

SERVANT 2.

Clotaldo run!

CLOTALDO.

You sad deluded fool, so savage in your pride  
Without understanding that you're dreaming!

*Exit CLOTALDO.*

SERVANT 2.

Just take note—

SEGISMUNDO. You keep out of this!

SERVANT 2. He was only obeying orders.

SEGISMUNDO. You shouldn't obey orders when they're wrong.

SERVANT 2.

But it wasn't up to him to think  
He just did what he was told.

SEGISMUNDO.

So why don't you do the same?  
Instead of answering me back all the time!

CLARIN.

Everything the Prince says is completely right  
And everything you say is completely wrong!

SERVANT 2.

Who said you could speak like this?

CLARIN.

I did.

SEGISMUNDO.

Who are you?

CLARIN.

I poke my nose into palaces.  
I step on official's toes.

SEGISMUNDO.

In this strange new world  
You're the only one I like.

CLARIN.

My lord, I'm the greatest Segismundo-pleaser  
In the whole wide world.

*Enter ASTOLFO.*

ASTOLFO.

Happy a thousand times this august day  
Dear prince, when you arrive to fill the world  
From west to east with joy and gladness.  
You rise like the sun from behind the savage mountains  
Rise then; and although the laurel wreath

*He puts on his hat.*

Is crowning your Imperial self a little late  
May its freshness be as late in fading.



SEGISMUNDO.

You there,  
Come here, tell me, who is that?  
That gorgeous woman, that divine beauty  
Even the sun itself must bow down  
To kiss her amazingly beautiful feet.

CLARIN.

That's your cousin, lord. Her name's Estrella.  
That means star.

ESTRELLA.

We are all of us eager to greet you, Highness,  
And accept you as our king; and we hope  
That in spite of difficulties, you are King  
Not simply for years but for many centuries.

SEGISMUNDO.

I thank you for making me welcome  
But the best thing that's happened to me  
Has been seeing you. I could forgive my father  
If I'd had you in the mountain with me.  
What could possibly be more cruel  
Than deny a man the joy of seeing a woman?  
Especially of seeing you, Estrella, you star  
Whose rising puts the sun in the shade.

ESTRELLA. I think you should show a little more tact.

ASTOLFO.

(If he says he loves her, then I am done for.)

SERVANT 2.

My lord, you shouldn't say Estrella  
Pleases you, because she's to marry Astolfo—

SEGISMUNDO. Didn't I tell you to keep out my way?

SERVANT 2.

Yes, but—

SEGISMUNDO.

That's enough!

SERVANT 2.

All I'm saying is what I know is right—

SEGISMUNDO.

It can't be right if I don't like it!

SERVANT 2. But I thought I heard you tell me—

SEGISMUNDO.

I thought I also told you  
That anyone who angered me  
Would be chucked out the nearest window!

SERVANT 2.

But you can't do that to people like me.

SEGISMUNDO.

Oh can't I? Let's find out!

*He picks him up and exits with him, returning soon after.*

SEGISMUNDO.

Thank you God it could be done.  
He fell from the balcony into the sea.

ASTOLFO.

Nonetheless you should take more care  
And think before committing a cruelty.  
A mountain is not the same as a palace.  
A human is not the same as a beast.

SEGISMUNDO.

Perhaps you should take more care as well  
Or you'll find you don't have a head to put a hat on.

*Exit ASTOLFO and ESTRELLA.*

*Enter the KING.*

BASILIO.

What's happened?

SEGISMUNDO.

Nothing. Someone made me angry.  
I chucked him out the window.

CLARIN.

Careful. This is the king.

SEGISMUNDO.

So what?

BASILIO.

On your first day you kill a man!

SEGISMUNDO.

He told me it couldn't be done.  
So I proved him wrong.

BASILIO.

It saddens me to see you  
Acting with such cruelty.  
I was hoping that you'd conquered destiny  
And would be standing like an enlightened man  
Triumphant over the prediction of the stars.  
How can I come and embrace you now  
When I know your hands are stained with blood  
Is there anyone here who wouldn't be afraid?  
It's like seeing a dagger that's carried out a murder.  
It's like seeing the spot where someone's been killed.  
It makes you shiver.  
I was going to embrace you,  
But now I turn my back, frightened and appalled.

SEGISMUNDO.

Why should I care if you don't embrace me?  
I've had to live without it up to now,  
With a father who brings me up with such cruelty  
And tries to have me killed. Your embraces really  
Do not count for much. What matters is  
You stopped me being human!

BASILIO.

I wish to God I'd never given you life

So I wouldn't have to hear your voice

SEGISMUNDO.

If you'd never given me life I wouldn't be complaining.  
But you gave me life and then took it away from me.

BASILIO.

You used to be a poor and helpless prisoner.  
Now you're a rich and powerful prince.  
Why don't you show some gratitude?

SEGISMUNDO.

What have I to be grateful for?  
You took away my freedom.  
And now you're old and tired and dying  
And all you're giving me is what is already mine.  
You're my father, you're my king,  
So although I'm now a prince  
That's nothing to do with you.  
That's the law of nature. I'm not  
In debt to you, you're in debt to me!  
You owe me all the years you took away from me  
Remember: You owe me. You be grateful.  
Be grateful I don't make you pay.

BASILIO.

You shameless barbarian. You proud, ignorant fool.  
You're everything the stars predicted.  
And even though you know who you are  
And find yourself preferred above all  
Remember this: you be humble, you be kind  
Perhaps you're dreaming, as you'll find  
When you wake up in your right mind.

*Exit BASILIO.*

*Enter ROSAURA, dressed as a woman.*

ROSAURA (*aside*).

(I've come in search of Estrella  
And I'm terrified of meeting Astolfo  
For Clotaldo wants him not to see me  
And not to know who I really am  
Clotaldo, to whom I owe this comfort,

This safety, this soft life.)

CLARIN.

Of all the things you've seen and admired  
What's the one that has pleased you most?

SEGISMUNDO.

Nothing has amazed me at all;  
For I was ready for everything  
But if there's one thing I admire in this world  
It has to be woman's beauty. I read once,  
In one of the books I was given,  
That in the whole creation the one thing  
God worked the hardest to make was man,  
Because man is the whole world in miniature.  
But I think he must have worked harder creating woman  
Because women are much more beautiful,  
Women are a replica of heaven.  
Especially when she's the woman I see now.

ROSAURA (*aside*).

(The prince is here; I must go back.)

SEGISMUNDO.

Wait woman, stop! Don't run away.  
Don't be sunrise and sunset both at once.  
Night shouldn't come as soon as the sun rises  
Or the days would be unbearably short.  
(But who is this?)

ROSAURA.

(I can't believe what I am seeing. Yet I must... )

SEGISMUNDO. (I have seen this beauty somewhere else.)

ROSAURA. (I have seen this power in chains.)

SEGISMUNDO.

(I have found my life.)  
Woman ... just to call you woman  
Is the greatest compliment I can pay you.  
Who are you, for I know  
I've never seen you before, and yet

I know that once you felt something  
For me, and I felt joy in seeing you?

ROSAURA.

(It's important I hide who I am.)  
I'm a sad lady, waiting on Estrella.

SEGISMUNDO.

Don't say that; Estrella's just a star,  
But you're the sun itself. She gets her light from you.  
When I looked at the beautiful kingdom of flowers  
I saw them governed by the beauty of the rose.  
When I looked at the academy of stones  
I saw them led by the brilliance of the diamond.  
When I looked at the unquiet republic of stars  
I found Venus to be the brightest of planets.  
And when I looked at the harmony of planetary spheres  
I saw the sun was the most beautiful of all.  
So when I look at you, I just don't understand  
How you, amidst flowers, amidst stars  
Amidst spinning planets and precious stones  
Could be serving someone of less beauty,  
When you are the most beautiful  
Diamond, sun, Venus, rose.

*Enter CLOTALDO.*

CLOTALDO (*aside*).

(I want to help Segismundo see reason.  
I brought him up. I feel responsible.  
But what's happening now?)

ROSAURA.

I'm moved by your compliments, but  
May silence make a speech for me.  
My reasoning feels clumsy, lord,  
And silence must be my best reply.

SEGISMUNDO.

No. Wait, you mustn't go away.  
Why do you want to leave me in darkness?

ROSAURA.

I ask permission to do so from your Highness.

SEGISMUNDO.

If you're going to ask permission  
You should wait for my reply.  
For leaving before I give it, isn't  
Asking permission, but taking it.

ROSAURA.

If you're not going to give permission  
Then I will take it.

SEGISMUNDO.

Then you'll make me change.  
Instead of being courteous, I'll be violent.  
Resistance is a poison kills my patience.

ROSAURA.

This poison may well destroy  
All patience and self-restraint,  
Charged with fury, inhumanity  
And rage. But it wouldn't dare  
Force my consent. Nor could it.

SEGISMUNDO.

Perhaps I could.  
I'm getting curious to see.  
You're making me  
Lose all respect and fear of your beauty.  
Besides, I love doing what they tell me  
Can't be done. And only today  
I threw a man out the window  
Because he told me I couldn't do it.  
And right now I feel most inclined  
To throw your honor out the window too.

CLOTALDO.

(The situation's getting worse.  
What can I do, for heaven's sake)

ROSAURA.

They were obviously right to prophesy your cruelty  
And say that if you ruled this poor kingdom, it would suffer

Betrayal, murder, treachery and civil war.  
But what else do you expect from a man  
Human only in name,  
So vicious, violent and unrestrained,  
A man born and bred among wild animals?

SEGISMUNDO.

I didn't want you to insult me like that.  
And I was trying to be courteous.  
I thought that might make you treat me better.  
But now you call me an animal  
And I didn't deserve that. But now,  
By Christ! I'll show you what it means.  
Get out. Leave us alone. Let no-one in. Bolt the door!

*Exit CLARIN.*

ROSAURA.

Listen.

SEGISMUNDO.

I'm an animal, remember? I'm not human any more.  
It's no use trying to make me change my mind.

CLOTALDO.

(What a dreadful situation. Even if he kills me,  
I must still prevent him.) My Lord, wait, think...

SEGISMUNDO.

You feeble mad old man  
You're provoking me again.  
Do you really think so little of my cruelty and rage?  
How did you get in here?

CLOTALDO.

This voice called me. That's what brought me here.  
I came to tell you not to be so proud  
Not to be so wild. If you want to be king,  
Rule peaceably. You may think you're the master here  
But don't be cruel. It may turn out to be a dream.

SEGISMUNDO.

When you talk of ending illusions,

When you talk of ending dreams,  
You touch a kind of light in me  
And it maddens me with rage!  
But I know how I'll find out if this is true.  
I'll find out by killing you.

*As he pulls out his dagger;  
CLOTALDO stops him and falls onto his knees.*

CLOTALDO.  
This is how I'll save myself.

SEGISMUNDO.  
Let go!

CLOTALDO.  
Until people come  
Who can restrain  
Your anger and rage  
I won't let go!

SEGISMUNDO.  
Let go, feeble mad old man  
Or I'll kill you.

*They struggle.*

ROSAURA.  
Quick, someone!  
The prince is killing Clotaldo!

*Exit ROSAURA.  
Enter ASTOLFO just as CLOTALDO falls at his feet. He stands between him and  
SEGISMUNDO.*

ASTOLFO.  
What are you doing, Prince?  
Staining your noble sword  
With an old man's cold blood?  
Put your sword away.

SEGISMUNDO.  
Only when I see it stained

With this man 's filthy blood.

ASTOLFO.

He's fallen at my feet.

He's asked for sanctuary.

I'll make sure it does him good.

SEGISMUNDO.

All it'll do is cause your death.

And I'll get my revenge

On the way that you insulted me.

ASTOLFO.

This isn't treason. This is self-defense.

*They draw their swords. Enter BASILIO and ESTRELLA.*

CLOTALDO.

Astolfo, don't attack him.

BASILIO.

Are these drawn swords?

What happened?

ASTOLFO.

Nothing, my lord, now you are here.

SEGISMUNDO. This isn't nothing, even if you are here.

I was trying to kill this old man . . .

BASILIO.

Have you no respect for his age?

SEGISMUNDO. You expect me to respect old age?

Don't waste your time. Even you, old fool

You could find yourself one day

Begging for mercy at my feet.

You brought me up so cruelly

One day I'll get revenge.

*Exit SEGISMUNDO.*

BASILIO.

Before that day comes

You'll go back to sleep  
And when you wake up  
You'll believe everything  
You've seen and felt  
Like all the world's good things  
Were just a dream.

*Exit BASILIO and CLOTALDO.  
ESTRELLA and ASTOLFO remain.*

ASTOLFO.  
My dear Estrella, how sad life is.  
When a horoscope predicts  
Misfortunes, it's generally correct:  
Any evil it predicts is certain:  
Any good it predicts is dubious.  
This can be absolutely proven  
In the case of Segismundo and myself,  
For the opposite was predicted for each.  
For him was foretold unpleasantness, misfortune  
Deaths. And we can see for ourselves  
How all of it is coming true.  
The prognosis was bad, its accuracy excellent.  
As for myself, I was predicted  
Good fortune, happiness, pleasure, glory.  
But one glance from your extraordinary eyes  
Whose brilliance dims the sun and makes even the sky  
A pale reflection of its former glory  
Make me understand, dear lady, all too well,  
The prognosis was excellent, but its accuracy dubious.

ESTRELLA.  
I'm absolutely sure these flatteries  
Are utterly and totally sincere  
But meant for someone else.  
Perhaps for the lady whose portrait  
You carried round your neck  
When you first came to see me.

*Enter ROSAURA, where the other characters cannot see her.*

ROSAURA (*aside*).

(My misfortunes have reached the  
absolute limit!  
And thank god for that, for any lover who sees this happen  
Has seen the worst and has nothing more to fear.)

ASTOLFO.

In the presence of an emerald  
A poison loses its venom  
And, confronted with the sun,  
A star loses its splendor.  
And so, my lady, that portrait  
When it came and saw you, lost  
All strength, power and loveliness  
Because your beauty conquered it.

ESTRELLA.

If I had really conquered it Astolfo ,  
It would run away when it saw me  
For the vanquished always run  
From the place where they are defeated.

ASTOLFO.

Then I will ensure it leaves this place  
And then, like a defeated slave,  
Kneels and kisses your delightful feet.  
(Beautiful Rosaura, forgive me  
For demeaning you. But for men and women  
Who are separated, this is faithfulness.)

*Exit ASTOLFO.*

ROSAURA (*aside*).

(I was so worried about being seen  
I never heard a thing!)

ESTRELLA.

Astrea.

ROSAURA.

My lady.

ESTRELLA.

I'm so pleased it is you.

For you are the only one  
To whom I dare entrust this secret.

ROSAURA.  
My lady, you honor me.  
Tell me your wish.

ESTRELLA.  
Well...  
To be brief... my cousin Astolfo...  
he is to marry me.  
Or at least he will if the world allows  
One piece of good fortune to remove  
So many other sources of grief.  
It hurt me to see hanging round his neck  
The portrait of another lady.  
I asked him for it courteously;  
He is polite and wishes well.  
He went to fetch it and will bring it here  
It will embarrass me if he comes here  
And gives it to me face to face.  
Please tell him to give it you, and...  
I'll say no more. You are beautiful  
And you are also discreet.  
You know what love is very well.

*Exit ESTRELLA.*

ROSAURA.  
And I wish I didn't know a thing about it!  
God help me!  
After the first misfortune  
There is no happening or event  
That isn't another source of grief.  
Someone said once that misfortunes  
Are cowards because you never see any  
On their own. I say they're brave.  
They always keep advancing  
And never turn their back.  
Clotaldo tells me to keep quiet,  
My shame tells me to wait.  
Estrella tells me to be a go-between,  
Love tells me to sort it out.

And I know jealousy's  
Something it's impossible to conceal.  
So what can I do to straighten out  
Such a tangled knotted mess!

*Enter ASTOLFO.*

ASTOLFO.  
This is the portrait, my lady. . .

ROSAURA.  
Why does your highness hesitate?  
Why does your highness stand amazed?

ASTOLFO.  
Amazed to see you, Rosaura, and to hear you speak.

ROSAURA.  
Why are you calling me Rosaura?  
Your Highness is mistaken, and takes me  
For some other lady. For I am Astrea,  
And in my humble state do not deserve  
The great happiness of seeing you so perturbed.

ASTOLFO.  
Rosaura, that's enough deception  
The soul never lies  
And although I see you as Astrea  
I love you as Rosaura.

ROSAURA.  
All I can tell you is that Estrella  
But perhaps I should call her Aphrodite!  
—Asked me to await you here  
And to tell you on her behalf  
To hand over that portrait  
Of the lady who once passed through your life.

ASTOLFO.  
However hard you try, Rosaura,  
How badly you pretend! Tell your eyes  
To harmonize their music with your voice;  
For it's an instrument that's out of tune,

Full of discord and dissonance,  
Trying in vain to conceal the gulf  
Between the falsehood that it speaks  
And the deep truth it feels.

ROSAURA.

All I can say to you is  
That I'm waiting for the portrait.

ASTOLFO.

Well if you wish to continue this deception  
I'll continue it in my reply.  
Astrea, you will tell the princess  
That I so greatly esteem her that  
When she asked me for a portrait  
It seemed to me so small a thing  
To send it on its own, and so,  
Because I esteem and value her,  
I'm sending the original.

ROSAURA.

I came for a portrait, and  
I refuse to leave without it.

ASTOLFO.

But how do you propose to take it  
If I don't intend to give it?

ROSAURA.

Like this.

*She tries to take it from him.*

I swear to God I'll never see it  
In that woman's hands!  
I'd rather die!

ASTOLFO.

You're frightening.

ROSAURA.

You're disgusting!

*Enter ESTRELLA.*

ESTRELLA.

Astrea, Astolfo, what is this?

ASTOLFO.

(Oh God, here comes Estrella!)

ROSAURA.

(God of love be kind. Give me cunning.)

If you want to know what's happening, my lady, I will tell you.

ASTOLFO.

(Now she's done for!)

ROSAURA.

You asked me to wait here

For Astolfo, and ask him for a miniature.

I was alone for a moment, and since in the mind

One thing leads to another so easily,

As you spoke of miniatures,

I remembered I had one of my own in this sleeve.

I wanted to see it for when one's alone.

It's always trivial things that pass the time.

It fell from my hand onto the floor.

Astolfo, coming to give you the other miniature,

Picked it up, and is so unwilling to give you

The thing you ask of him, that instead of giving

One picture, he wished to take another.

And when I asked him, and tried to persuade him

To return it me, he refused point blank.

I became angry and impatient

And tried to take it.

That's my portrait he holds in his hand;

ESTRELLA.

Astolfo, give me that picture!

*She takes it from him.*

ASTOLFO.

My lady!

ESTRELLA.  
It's flattering.

ROSAURA.  
Is it not mine?

ESTRELLA.  
What doubt could there possibly be?

ROSAURA.  
Well, since this picture's mine,  
Tell him to give you the other one.

ESTRELLA.  
Take your picture and be gone.

ROSAURA. (I've got my picture back; I don't care what happens now.)

*Exit ROSAURA.*

ESTRELLA.  
Now you give me the picture  
That I asked from you.

ASTOLFO.  
Lady, please take note.

ESTRELLA.  
There's nothing I have to note.  
You have to give me the picture.

ASTOLFO.  
(How can I get out of this?)  
Beautiful Estrella, I would dearly love  
To serve you and obey you, I still cannot  
Give you the portrait, because...

ESTRELLA.  
How gross! I don't want you to give it to me now  
I don't ever want you to remind me  
That I ever asked you for it.

*Exit ESTRELLA.*

ASTOLFO.

No stop, listen, wait!  
When, where and how, Rosaura,  
Have you managed to come here  
To destroy us both!

*Exit ASTOLFO.*

*SEGISMUNDO is discovered as at the beginning, dressed in skins, bound with chains,  
asleep on the ground.*

*Enter CLOTALDO*

CLOTALDO .

Look at him now returned  
To his old state of misery.  
He is restless.  
He's speaking in his sleep.

BASILIO.

What will he be dreaming of?  
Let's listen.

SEGISMUNDO (in his dreams).  
A good king should punish injustice.  
It's my duty to kill Clotaldo.  
I must make my father my slave.

CLOTALDO.

He wants to kill me.

BASILIO.

He wants me to be his slave.

SEGISMUNDO.

Returning to stage by popular demand,  
Featuring in the great theatre of the world  
The courageous prince Segismundo  
Who takes revenge on his wicked father!

*He wakes up.*



SEGISMUNDO.

Supposing that it was a dream  
I won't tell you what I dream, Clotaldo.  
I'll tell you what I saw.  
I woke up and found myself -  
And this was a lie, Clotaldo  
A cruel and flattering lie! Because  
I was in a bed so brightly colored  
It could have been a bed of flowers  
A thousand nobles bowed down to me,  
Called me their prince, and served me  
With perfumes, jewels, and fine clothes.  
My senses were in turmoil;  
You turned them into joy  
By telling me my good fortune.  
For even though this is how I am  
There I was a Prince of Poland.

CLOTALDO.

And did you reward me for this good news?

SEGISMUNDO.

No. Because you were a traitor  
I summoned up all my bold courage  
And I killed you twice.

CLOTALDO.

You hated me so much?

SEGISMUNDO.

I was lord of all  
And took my revenge on everyone.  
I only loved one woman  
And I think that Jove was true  
Because everything else ended.  
But that Jove goes on and on.

*Exit the KING.*

CLOTALDO.

(The king was moved by what he heard, and left.)  
It's because we spoke about

That eagle, you dreamt of empires;  
But even dreaming it's a good idea to treat me well  
Because I've done my best to bring you up  
And Segismundo, even when you're dreaming.  
The good you do is never lost.

*Exit.*

SEGISMUNDO.

What if he's right? What if we suppressed  
This ferocity, this ambition and this rage  
Just in case it is a dream.  
Yes, let's do that, for this life's so strange  
Living it is just a dream.  
Everyone who lives is only dreaming  
Who they are till they awake.  
The king dreams he is a king, and lives  
Governing under this deception,  
Making laws and ruling;  
And the applause, which he receives,  
He gets it as a loan, and it's written in the wind  
And death turns it all to ashes.  
And that's such a terrible thing!  
Is there anyone who'd want to rule  
Knowing that they must wake up  
Wake up in the sleep of death!  
The rich man dreams of his riches  
Which just offer him more cares.  
The poor man dreams he suffers  
His misery and poverty.  
The one who tries to get on in life is dreaming  
The one who ambitiously and obsessively strives  
The one who hurts, insults and offends  
And in this world, in the end,  
Everyone dreams they are who they are  
Although no-one understands this.  
I dream that I am here  
Bound down by these heavy chains  
And I dreamed that once I lived differently  
And was happy.  
What is life? A frenzy.  
Life's an illusion. Life's a shadow, a fiction,  
And the greatest good is worth nothing at all,

For the whole of life is just a dream  
And dreams . . . dreams are only dreams.

End of Act Two.

### ACT THREE

*Enter CLARIN, on his own, in the dark.*

CLARIN.  
Here I am. Locked up in a magic tower  
Imprisoned for what I know.  
So what about what I don't know?  
What'll they do to me for that?  
They'll kill me. They're killing me already.  
For someone as hungry as me  
Is slowly but surely dying.  
I feel sorry for myself.  
I know you're all going to think '  
Well I'm not at all surprised'  
And you're right. It's all terribly predictable.  
It's terrible to have a name like Clarin  
And be silent. Clarin. You know. From the Latin.  
And I'm all alone with no-one to talk to  
But spiders and rats. And their conversation  
Leaves a lot to be desired.  
And my poor head's full of dreams.  
I keep dreaming of trumpets.  
And people whipping themselves  
In processions, and other people  
Watching them and fainting.  
And some go up and some go down  
And I just stay in the same place  
Fainting for lack of food.  
I'm on a starvation diet  
And it's worse than the diet of Worms.  
If I were a philosopher,  
I'd be in the anorexic school of thought.  
And I don't get any holidays or feast days  
Or anydays but hungry days.

*There's a sound of drums within, and shouting.*

SOLDIER 2.

Here he is. This is the tower.

Kick in the door!

Come on in.

CLARIN.

Christ they must be looking for me.

They've just said here I am.

What do they want me for?

Are these people looking for me?

*Enter as many SOLDIERS as possible.*

SOLDIER 1. Come on!

SOLDIER 2. Here he is!

CLARIN. No he isn't.

ALL. Your majesty!

CLARIN. Are they drunk?

SOLDIER 2.

You are our Prince

For we don't want and we won't accept

Anyone except our own real prince

And we don't want any foreigner.

ALL. Long live our great prince!

CLARIN.

I think they really mean it!

Maybe in this kingdom it's the custom

Maybe they take someone every day, make him prince

And then lock him up again?

They did it yesterday. I saw them.

So this is them doing it today.

I'd better play the part.

SOLDIERS.

Allow us to kiss your feet.

CLARIN.

No I can't do that, I haven't washed them.  
Anyway they're my feet and I like them.  
Don't want anyone fooling around with them  
Footling around with them.  
It would be footless. Fruitless.  
But thank you anyway.

SOLDIER 2.

We all went to your father and we told him  
You're the only prince we'll recognize  
And not that foreigner from Moscow.

CLARIN.

Are you telling me you were rude to my dad?  
You're a lot of rotten shits.

SOLDIER 1.

We only did it out of loyalty.

CLARIN.

Oh well if it was loyally, I forgive you

SOLDIER 2.

Come out and restore your Empire!  
Long live Segismundo!

ALL. Long live Segismundo!

CLARIN.

Are they calling me Segismundo?  
Oh well. Obviously they call all their fake princes Segismundo.

*Enter SEGISMUNDO.*

SEGISMUNDO.

Who calls for me?

CLARIN.

That's the end of me as prince.  
Now I'm the artist formerly known as Blank.

SOLDIER 2.

So who is Segismundo?

SEGISMUNDO. Me

SOLDIER 2.

So what were you doing, you stupid, rash fool  
Calling yourself Segismundo?

CLARIN.

How dare you. I never did. Call myself Segismundo . . .  
You were the ones who were Segismundo-ing me.  
So you're the ones who's stupid and rash.

SOLDIER 1.

Great prince Segismundo  
Your father, king Basilio, was afraid  
Of some prophecy which said  
He would find himself helpless at your feet.  
He wants to take away from you your power  
And your right to rule  
And give it all to Astolfo, Duke of Moscow.  
That's what he told his court, and the people got to know of this  
And once we knew we have a real king  
We don't want to be ruled by a foreigner.  
And so we've come to find you  
Where they're keeping you prisoner.  
We bring you weapons and an army  
So you can lead a revolution  
To depose a tyrant and restore yourself  
As rightful ruler. Come then:  
For out in this wasteland a huge army  
Is waiting to acclaim you.  
Freedom awaits you Prince:  
Hear its shouts.

VOICES (within).

Long live Segismundo!

SEGISMUNDO.

Yet again am I supposed to dream  
Another vision of greatness and power

Which will be destroyed by time?  
Yet again am I supposed to feel  
The pain of disillusionment and loss  
That all human power is subject to  
And must humbly live and already watch for?  
I won't do it. I won't. I won't!  
Go away you figments! You illusions  
I don't want false power.  
I don't want false majesty!  
You're like the blossom on the almond tree  
Who flowers so foolishly soon  
And then withers, fades, and loses  
From its rosy buds all beauty,  
All delight, all ornament,  
Blown away by the first breath of winter wind.  
You see I know you now  
Now there's no way I can be deceived  
My eyes are opened, I have no illusions  
And I know life is just a dream.

SOLDIER 2.

You think we're fooling you  
And it just isn't true. Turn your eyes  
And look up at that proud mountain.  
You'll see there's a crowd of people there  
Waiting to do whatever you tell them.

SEGISMUNDO.

I saw all that before, and it looked  
As clear and as distinct  
As everything that I see now  
And it was all a dream.

SOLDIER I.

When great things happen, lord, they always come with premonitions  
And that's what that was, if you dreamed it first.

SEGISMUNDO.

You're right; it was a premonition  
(And so just in case it is true  
And since life is a dream, Let's dream, my soul,  
Let's dream again but this time with attention  
And bearing in mind that at some fine time

We're going to wake up from this pleasure.  
So, taking this precaution,  
And knowing that all power is on loan  
Let's dare to do everything.)  
Friends, I appreciate your loyalty. You'll find in me  
Someone clever enough and brave enough  
To free you from foreign rule.  
Call to arms! Prepare to march!  
I will fight my own father and defeat him!  
I will make the prophecy come true!  
And he will be lying helpless at my feet!  
(But if before this I wake up  
wouldn't it be better not to say it  
since I'm not going to do it?)

ALL.  
Long live Segismundo! Long live freedom'

Enter CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO.  
What is this?

SEGISMUNDO.  
Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO.  
My lord!  
(I expect I'll be the first target of his cruelty.)

CLARIN.  
(I bet he throws him off the mountain.)

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

SEGISMUNDO.  
Father, get up, don't stay on your knees.  
I want you to guide me  
In what I have to do. I know I owe my upbringing  
To your love and loyalty. Embrace me.

CLOTALDO.

What are you saying?

SEGISMUNDO.

I am dreaming and I want to do good.  
For the good you do is never lost,  
Not even in dreams.

CLOTALDO.

Well, my lord, if doing good  
Is what you now intend, then obviously  
It won't offend you if I try to do the same.  
You are about to make war on your father;  
I can't advise you in a war against my king  
Or be of any use to you.  
Here I am at your feet: kill me.

SEGISMUNDO.

You peasant, you wretch, you traitor,  
(God I need to control myself!  
I'm not even sure if I'm awake!  
It's like putting a brake on all my rage  
This thought that I'm going to wake up  
And find myself without this power!)

SOLDIER 2.

All this loyalty's a waste of time.  
What you're really doing is ignoring the common good.  
We're the ones that are loyal because we're making sure  
That it's our real prince who governs us.

CLOTALDO.

That would be fine once the king was dead  
But the king is still alive and must be obeyed

SOLDIER 2.

Well we'll soon see Clotaldo  
How much this loyalty is worth.

SEGISMUNDO.

That's enough!

Clotaldo, I envy you your bravery  
And I'm grateful for it. Go and serve the king.  
We'll meet on the battlefield. But let's not argue  
Whether it's a good thing or a bad.  
We all have our sense of honor.

CLOTALDO.

I won't forget my gratitude.

*Exit.*

SEGISMUNDO.

You, beat the drum for war  
And march in good order.  
Head for the king's palace!

ALL.

Long live our great prince!

SEGISMUNDO.

Fortune, we're going to be king.  
Don't wake me up, if I'm dreaming;  
If it's real, then don't send me back to sleep.

*MUSIC. They exit. Drums beat.*

*Enter BASILIO and ASTOLFO.*

BASILIO.

When a horse goes mad and starts to run  
Is there anyone strong enough to halt it?  
Can anyone stop a raging river on a slope  
Tumbling wildly down jagged rocks to the sea?  
All these things would be easier to control  
Than the fierce energy of the common people.  
All we see and hear attests this truth.  
The shouts of opposing factions echo across the valleys.  
Some call out 'Segismundo' some 'Astolfo'.  
The throne room has become a side show  
A dismal theatre, an empty auditorium  
Where fortune mounts tragedies no-one wants to see.

ASTOLFO.

All rejoicing has to be post-poned,  
All applause brought to a sudden halt

For if Poland –which I hope to rule-  
Now resists the obedience it owes me  
It is simply so I can earn the right to it.  
Bring me a horse, and, full of pride,  
I'll boast like thunder and descend  
Like a bolt of lightning.

*Exit ASTOLFO.*

BASILIO.  
Nothing can be done against the infallibly true.  
There is great danger in tampering with the foreseen.  
If something has to happen, nothing can prevent it,  
And the more you try to stop it  
The more you make it actually occur.  
How harsh a law. How terrifying a fact. How cruel a universe.  
Anyone who thinks they are avoiding a risk  
Is in fact walking right into it. Trying to save myself,  
I have dug my own grave.  
I tried to save my country  
And I have destroyed it.

*Enter CLOTALDO.*

BASILIO.  
Clotaldo! What news of Segismundo?

CLOTALDO.  
For the second time, he finds himself honored  
And treated like a king, and has sworn  
To dethrone you, fiercely declaring  
That he will make heaven's prophecies come true.

BASILIO.  
Then bring me a horse, and my weary old age  
Will ride out to subdue a rebellious son.  
And when it comes to defending my throne,  
Perhaps where science failed, violence will prevail.

*Exit BASILIO and CLOTALDO.*  
*They beat the drum,*  
*and enter SEGISMUNDO, dressed in skins,*  
*with CLARIN and MARCHING SOLDIERS.*

SEGISMUNDO.

I wish the Roman Emperors could see me now  
Dressed like an animal, leading an army  
Ready for anything! I could defeat the sky!  
No. Wait, don't get too ambitious. Don't aim so high  
Don't make it all disappear, or this dream of greatness  
Will hurt me when I wake up and find it gone.  
The less I have to lose, the less I suffer when it disappears.

CLARIN.

There's a man with his eyes wide open  
But still living in the dark. It's madness.  
He can see everything, but can't make sense of it.  
And I'm as bad. Here 's me, seeing him,  
And not making sense of him at all.

*SOUND. A clarion call within. Drums.*

SEGISMUNDO. What's that?

CLARIN.

A swift horse. And, I'm sorry,  
But I have to describe it. It's my cue.  
It's a monster of fire, water, wind and earth,  
A piebald monster, dappled all over, bridled and spurred  
By the person who's riding her  
And who doesn't just gallop but flies  
Into your presence and is a woman

SEGISMUNDO.

Whose beauty blinds me.

CLARIN.

For goodness sake it's Rosaura!

*Exit CLARIN.*

SEGISMUNDO.

Fate has brought her back to me.  
Everything I dreamed of is coming true.

*Enter ROSAURA wearing a gorgeous dress, a sword and a dagger.*

ROSAURA.

Segismundo, noble prince,  
I am a woman in need of assistance.  
This is the third time you have seen and admired me.  
Yet the third time you do not know me  
For each time we meet I have appeared  
In a different shape, dress and form.  
The first time you saw me you were held in chains.  
You saw me in your prison and you thought me a man  
And you helped me through a time of dark misfortune.  
The second time you saw me you were treated as a king.  
I was dressed as a woman, you were admiring of my beauty  
In your illusory dream of power and majesty.  
Today is the third time and I'm a kind of monster  
Carrying man's weapons, but wearing women's clothes  
And so that you may now take pity  
And be spurred on the better to help me  
I must tell you my sad story.

They say beauty and misfortune go hand in hand.  
My mother was unfortunate enough  
To be most beautiful. She was a noble Muscovite;  
A man fell in love with her,  
A man I cannot name because I do not know it.  
And in my grief at the circumstance of my birth  
I would imagine him to be a kind of god,  
Those you find in the ancient stories  
And whose victims weep, like Danae, like Leda,  
Because gods, like men, forget the women  
Who once gave them pleasure.  
My mother was as beautiful as any  
And as unhappy as them all.  
It was a promise of marriage,  
That same old stupid story,  
Which took such a hold on her mind.  
The promise of marriage is like a knot  
That's been badly tied, it does not bind,  
It gives no shelter nor protection,  
But I was born from it. Born so like my mother  
If not in beauty, then at least

In how I lived and suffered  
And what I allowed happen to me.  
The man who wrecked my reputation  
And destroyed my self-respect  
Is...Astolfo. My face flares up,  
And the simple act of naming him  
Fills my heart with anger and with rage  
Which is exactly what you would expect  
When you name a vicious enemy.  
He betrayed me and left for Poland  
Aiming for another conquest,  
This time with the beautiful Estrella.  
He lied to me. He insulted me  
And left me drowning in madness and grief.  
I never spoke of this. Some griefs  
Are best spoken of in silence.  
Until one day alone with my mother,  
I broke down their prison door  
And they try all burst out at once.  
She took pity on me in my tears,  
Consoled me with her own and forgave me.  
Forgiveness is easy when you have also sinned.  
Learning is a lesson from her own life story  
So she thought it best that I follow Astolfo  
And having found him, force him to repay his debt.  
Brave Segismundo, now that fate  
Has set you free from your dark prison,  
Now you have the chance to take revenge.  
And seeing this, I have decided to join you,  
Wearing both the gorgeous dress of Aphrodite  
And the god of war's impenetrable steel.  
Both adorn me as we meet for this third time.  
And I've come both to oblige you and assist you  
To help you to regain your throne  
As a woman I come to inspire your pity,  
As a man I come to serve you with courage  
As a woman I come so you can rescue me  
In my insult and my dishonor  
And as a man I have come to fight for you  
With my sword and my fierce presence.  
And so it seems to me that today  
If I fall in love with you as a woman  
As a man I will die for you

Fiercely defending my honor.  
It matters to us both brave leader,  
That this arranged wedding does not take place.  
It matters to me so the man  
Who calls himself my husband does not marry;  
It matters to you because you need to prevent  
The union of their powers which may put in doubt  
Our own inevitable victory.  
As a woman, I come to persuade you,  
To take up arms in defense of my honor  
As a man I come to encourage you  
To recover your lost scepter.  
If you love me as a woman  
As a man I'll fight to the death  
To regain honor and self-respect,  
I'll be a woman and fill your heart with tenderness  
And I'll be a man to gain respect.

SEGISMUNDO.

God if it's true I'm dreaming  
Then stop me remembering  
For it's not possible for so many things  
All to fit into the one dream!  
God help me! Is there anyone  
Who could solve all those dilemmas  
Or else turn his back on all of them!  
All the things she said . . . !  
If I was really dreaming I was king  
Then how come that woman saw me  
And can tell me about it in such detail?  
So it has to have been true. It can't have been a dream.  
But if it was true, then it just makes  
Everything far more confusing.  
Because how come I think  
My life's a dream? I mean,  
Are wonderful experiences so like dreams  
That what's real can be utterly dreamlike  
And what's unreal can be taken to be true?  
Which means, which means it must be obvious  
That this dream is what life is  
And that this life is really just a dream.  
So if that's true, and all this greatness  
All this majesty, all this power,

If it's all going to disappear as if it never was  
The thing to do is make the most of what we've got.  
I've got Rosaura in my power  
And I love her incredible beauty  
So let's make the most of it.  
It's true she trusts me, she expects me to help her  
But I want her. And love and desire  
Break all rules of confidence and trust.  
If everything's just a dream,  
Then let's dream, my soul,  
Let's dream of happiness  
Because we know it will soon be grief.  
But I've just gone and made myself  
Change my mind. There has to be  
A kind of happiness that lasts for ever.  
And who'd want to destroy that  
Just for a moment's pleasure?  
Every past happiness is just a dream.  
Is there anyone here who hasn't  
Thought back to some happy time  
And thought: 'It all feels like  
It was just a dream? There's a thought  
That kills all illusion, there's a thought  
Makes every pleasure seem like a candle flame  
Easily blown out by the first breath of wind.  
I have to look for more than that  
I have to look for something that lasts for ever  
Some living, ever-burning flame  
Where happiness never ends  
And great things are not forgotten.  
And anyway, when I look at Rosaura.  
I'm more in love with her than ever,  
But I don't know... Her story's placed  
Some kind of poison in my soul.  
It's the thought her body's already been enjoyed  
By someone else. What a vile thing  
It must be in this world to love  
Someone another has forgotten, to love  
Someone another still enjoys! Besides,  
Rosaura has been dishonored.  
A good prince should not dishonor her more  
A good prince should give her honor back.  
For God's sake, that's what I should try to regain

That's more important than gaining power!  
But I'll have to turn my back on this opportunity  
Because it's just so very attractive . . .  
Sound to arms! We'll fight the battle today!  
To arms! To arms!

ROSAURA.

Why do you turn your back on me?  
Don't all my troubles even earn  
A single word? How can you bear  
To turn your back on me? Not to look at me or hear me?  
Won't you even turn a moment ç  
Won't you even give me a single glance?

SEGISMUNDO.

Rosaura, I want to show you pity  
So for now I must be cruel.  
I want to answer with my actions  
I dare not answer with my voice.  
I cannot look at you because  
In such uncertain, dangerous times  
Anyone who wants to think about your honor  
Cannot afford to gaze upon your beauty.

*Exit SEGISMUNDO and the SOLDIERS.*

ROSAURA.

Oh for god's sake! What's that supposed to be about!  
After all I've gone through  
And I've still got to cope  
With such incomprehensible replies?

*Enter CLARIN.*

CLARIN.

My lady, can I see you?

ROSAURA.

Oh Clarin! Where have you been?

CLARIN.

Locked up in a tower.

Playing cards with death.  
She almost played me a nasty trick  
And I was very nearly disappeared.

ROSAURA.  
Why?

CLARIN.  
Because I know the secret of who you are  
And your father is. And that is. . .

*MUSIC (SOUND). Drums beat within.*

But what is that appalling noise?

ROSAURA.  
What can it be?

CLARIN.  
Oh it's just an armed regiment coming out  
Of the besieged palace to try to beat  
The fearsome army of fierce Segismundo.

ROSAURA.  
Then what am I doing standing here like a coward?  
Why aren't I out there fighting beside him  
Scandalising the entire world  
When there's so much violence and cruelty  
Tearing the world apart without order and law?

*Exit.*

WITHIN SOME VOICES.  
Long live our King!

WITHIN SOME OTHER VOICES.  
Long live our freedom!

CLARIN.  
Long live our freedom! And long live the king!  
Let them both live very happily together  
Because nothing's going to bother me at all  
Just as long as I'm on the winning side at the end.

But just for now I think I'll make myself scarce.  
I don't fancy playing a soldier at all.  
I think I'll play Nero instead.  
I'll just buy a violin second hand  
And play fiddle while Poland burns.  
And I really won't care what happens  
Just as long as it all leaves me alone.  
There's a little snug crevice here  
In among these rocks.  
To hell with death. She'll never find me here.

*He hides. We hear the sound of clashing weapons, and then enter the KING, CLOTALDO  
and ASTOLFO, all running away.*

BASILIO.  
Was there ever a more unfortunate king?  
Was there ever a more mistreated father?

CLOTALDO.  
Your defeated army flees without order or discipline.

ASTOLFO.  
The battlefield belongs to the rebellious traitors.

BASILIO.  
In battles like these, Astolfo,  
The loyal subjects are those who win  
The rebellious traitors are those who lose.

*A shot within. CLARIN falls, wounded, from where he is.*

BASILIO.  
Who is it?

ASTOLFO.  
Who is this wretched soldier  
Falling at our feet  
Wounded and covered in blood?

CLARIN.  
I'm someone who wanted to run from death  
But all I did was find it...  
That's how it is; you run

From the thing you're afraid of  
And you run right into it.  
You try to avoid it, but  
Instead you make it happen.  
You're trying to escape death  
On the battlefield by running  
Deep into the deserted mountains  
But turn back. Turn back!  
You're safer among gunshots  
In less danger from sword thrusts  
Than in the remotest valley.  
There is nowhere safe, nowhere  
To escape the reach of death.  
Remember you're going to die  
If God says your hour has come.

*He falls within.*

BASILIO.

Remember that you're going to die  
If God says your hour has come.  
Oh God how well this speaking corpse  
How well this wounded bleeding mouth  
Persuades us of our ignorance and error.  
His trail of blood is like a tongue  
Teaching us that when we try to resist a higher power  
Everything we do is wasted effort.  
I tried to prevent my country suffering  
Rebellion bloodshed and civil war  
And all I've done is to create the very suffering  
I worked so hard to try to prevent.

CLOTALDO.

My lord, it's true that death knows every path  
But a good Christian does not despair  
And say there's no escaping evil destiny.  
It isn't true; the wise and prudent man  
Can control his destiny, can control his fate.  
At the moment you are not at all protected  
From danger and calamity; so you must take steps  
And find a place where you can be safe.

ASTOLFO.

Clotaldo, my lord, speaks to you  
As a prudent man of advancing age.  
I speak to you as a brave young man  
Who has kept a fast horse hidden in the mountain.  
It's a swift abortion of the dawn:  
Take it and ride away on it;  
For I will guard your back.

BASILIO.  
If God has decreed I die  
Or if death lies in wait for me  
I want to meet it here  
And meet death face to face

*Weapons clash; enter SEGISMUNDO and the whole COMPANY*

CLOTALDO.  
Your majesty, run!

BASILIO.  
Why?

ASTOLFO.  
What do you intend to do?

BASILIO.  
Get back Astolfo!  
CLOTALDO.  
What do you intend?

BASILIO.  
To do the thing I must to do.  
If it's me you're looking for  
Then here I am. I kneel before you.  
I lie on the ground and I'm helpless at your feet.  
Here I am. Use me as your slave.  
And after so many attempts to evade it  
Let will the fate be done  
Let the decree of heaven be fulfilled.

SEGISMUNDO.  
Famous court of Poland  
Witness of so many amazing events

Listen to me: I speak to you as your Prince.  
God writes our stories with letters of silver and gold  
On the beautiful azure of heaven's mysteries.  
God never lies; the man who lies,  
The man who deceives,  
Is the man who deciphers these mysteries  
And then makes wrong use of them.  
Look at my father, who feared my rage  
And then did everything to provoke it.  
He made me wild beast, a brute, when  
Everything in my heritage  
Predisposed me to be gentle and courteous.  
But because he treated me like an animal  
I became a savage beast.  
What kind of wisdom was that!  
If someone said to you:  
'Be careful of that animal. Its lucky it's sleeping  
Because it's savage and cruel  
And would certainly kill you  
If you wake it.' Would it be wise  
To take a sharpened stick and poke it?  
If someone said to you:  
'Be careful of that sword you're wearing  
Or its sharp blade will kill you'  
Would it be wise to unsheathe it  
And hold its naked point against your chest?  
My rage was that sleeping beast  
My fury that sheathed sword  
If life threatens you with evil,  
It cannot be overcome  
By acting with injustice and cruelty  
It can only be defeated  
By courage intelligence and strength,  
Daring to meet evil face to face.  
All of you: observe the downfall of this king  
Witness this extraordinary spectacle  
My father did everything he could  
To escape an evil that threatened him  
And failed. So how can I  
Not so old as he, not so brave and not so wise  
How can I do any better?  
Father please get up, don't lie there on the ground.  
Give me your hand, and now

Heaven and the world have shown you your mistakes  
I bow my head, I kneel at your feet  
And I place myself at your mercy.

BASILIO.

My son, in your nobility you are reborn.  
Your achievements give you victory.

ALL.

Long live Segismundo!

SEGISMUNDO.

There are more victories I need to win  
And they all require great courage.  
I'll start with the hardest: to overcome myself.  
I have decided to restore Rosaura's honor:  
So Astolfo you must marry her at once.

ASTOLFO.

Although it's true I owe her obligations  
I have to say her father is unknown.  
Clearly it would be baseness and infamy  
For me to marry such a woman.

CLOTALDO.

Stop. That's enough, don't go on.  
For Rosaura is as noble as you are,  
And my sword will defend her in a duel.  
She's my daughter. That's all that need be said.

ROSAURA.

In one day, I've found a double happiness.

SEGISMUNDO.

And so I need to marry Estrella  
To a Prince of equal rank and worth.  
I'll marry you myself. Give me your hand.

ESTRELLA.

I seem to have got myself a better husband.

SOLDIER I.

So if you're rewarding all these people

Who fought against you and did you harm  
What will you give me, who started this rebellion  
Set you free from the tower and made you king?

SEGISMUNDO.

The tower. And there you'll stay  
Chained up until you die.  
For once the moment of betrayal's past  
It's important to get rid of the traitor.

BASILIO. What statesmanship!

CLOTALDO. How much you've changed!

SEGISMUNDO.

Why are you all so amazed? I still live in dread  
I'm going to wake up and find myself in prison again.  
My teacher was a dream  
dream that destroys illusions  
And tells me life's just a sweet lie  
And when we wake up from it  
We find it's nothing. Empty air.  
It's how it is for an actor,  
One minute he's a king  
And the next he's at your mercy.  
When the play comes to its end  
He humbly begs your pardon  
And asks you to forgive mistakes.

End.