

A C T III.

S C E N E, *The Court of the Castle.**Enter DUNDORE and BARNARD.*

DUNDORE.

ART thou too fancy-struck? and from thy
 sleep
 Scar'd by a gossip's tale?

BARNARD.

Within these walls,
 Sleep ne'er will visit me, tho' age and toil
 Court his approach. The soul which feels the sting,
 Th' eternal sting of guilt, requires no ghost
 To trouble its repose.

DUNDORE.

What Monk is this,
 With solemn saws from musty parchments glean'd?
 Art thou the man whose daring spirit once
 Defy'd all guilt, all conscience, all remorse,
 Words void of meaning, framed by crafty priests,
 To fright the coward world?

BAR-

BARNARD.

I am that man;
 But age is weak, and mine, I fear, too weak,
 To hold unshaken thy intrepid counsels.
 Yet I must on,—down—downward plunging still:
 For in this gulf of ruin, where's the twig
 To grasp at? where the steps by which to mount
 The glorious heights of innocence again?
 Vain hope! I'll think no more on't. Tell me then,
 How thy designs advance? What vantage grows
 To thee from this same phantom? For your
 purpose
 To me seems hard and difficult.

DUNMORE.

Indeed!
 Mischief and wo, is it so hard to work,
 When the prime agent can be made a woman?
 Woman—unfinish'd work of nature, fickle,
 Stranger to resolution and firm purpose,
 Sport of each transitory accident,
 Slave to th' emotion of the present moment,
 Heedless of consequences—

BARNARD.

Why this heat?

DUNDORE.

Have I not cause? Mark me: 'twas but last
 night,

F 2

Thou

Thou saw'st Vimonda in her loveliest bloom,
 First of angelic forms; thou heard'st her speak,
 Nature's most sweet persuasive eloquence;
 Thou heard'st her sing—that boasted power I
 feel not,

Yet well I noted Melville tranced in rapture,
 And thou, all spent, and way-worn as thou wast,
 With fixt look hanging on the beauteous Syren—

BARNARD.

I own I thought it was no mortal sound.
 Oft in my hard captivity, I've seen,
 Among the happy groves of Araby,
 Forms most enchanting; and their strains I've
 heard,

So lulling, soft, that ev'n in slav'ry's grasp,
 They gave a touch of rapture. But last night
 I was in Paradise. From her first dawn,
 I've known Vimonda, ever thought her lovely,
 And now believe her matchless.

DUNDORE.

Yet, my friend,
 This idoliz'd; this lovely matchless woman,
 Is at the heart as light as summer clouds,
 And as inconstant as the winds that bear them.
 This Melville, whom she thought so brave, so
 noble,

So

So form'd to satisfy each female wish,
 To whom she fondly vow'd eternal love,
 Reeling in rapture to his ardent arms,
 Wilt thou believe it? ev'n this Melville now
 Is poison to her sight,—nor spotted adder,
 Nor crawling toad more loathsome.

BARNARD.

Whence that change?

DUNDORE.

Frighten'd, astonish'd at the ghost I found
 her;
 Burning for vengeance on the knew not whom;
 Her spirits all in arms; her love, her pity,
 And ev'n her reason, in their tumult lost.
 Instant I seiz'd that minute wish'd for long,
 And gave some hints, so shrewd and apposite,
 That she herself the dread conclusion drew,
 Her lover was the murderer.

BARNARD.

Hell itself
 Could not have match'd that stroke. How did
 she bear it?

DUNDORE.

With such wild horror, such ecstatic rage,
 That ev'n I, not oft deceiv'd by passion,
 By her inflamed, somewhat too suddenly,

Counsel'd

Counsel'd his death. 'Twas rash. I over-rated
Her thirst for vengeance, for she quickly cool'd.
But that I heed not. Tell me, canst thou yet
Prepare that subtle and most sudden poison,
Which once thou shew'dst me, brought from Asia?

BARNARD.

With ease I can.

DUNDORE.

'Tis well. Of that anon.

My project varies, but is no less certain.
His very honour and his love shall work
His sure perdition.—See Vimonda there:
Away with speed, and mix the draught of fate!

BARNARD.

It shall be done. Poison! O cruel slave!

[*Aside, and Exit.*]

Enter VIMONDA.

VIMONDA.

How soft and sweet the gentle morning dawns,
With youthful smiles investing heav'n and earth!
But this sad breast no dawn shall ever visit;
Clouds, gloom, and baleful storms surround and
chill it.
Dundore—O what a dreadful night I've past!
Scorpions were in my pillow.

DUNDORE.

Darest thou hope
For calm repose? Is Rothfay yet at rest?
Why glides he groaning yet around thy couch?
Perhaps, were Melville there,—it might appease
him.

VIMONDA.

Unfeeling man! prove but the crime suppos'd,
And in such terms as to the world will clear
My fame,—then freely chide my ling'ring ven-
geance.

DUNDORE.

'Tis hateful business; and I hold it needless.
When next you meet him, openly accuse him.
If he then hesitate, with feign'd surprise
Deriding thy solemnity, and scorning
This wand'ring spirit,—think him innocent,
If conscience will allow. Or call on me,
And grace me as thy Knight; I will appear
In arms, and to the death defy the traitor.
Yonder he walks. Remember what I've said.
Be just to Rothfay, to thyself, and me. [*Exit.*]

VIMONDA. [*sola.*]

Tho' hard the task, ev'n this I will attempt.
I'll stifle each fond wish—O foolish heart,
Still wilt thou flutter so at his approach?

He comes—but in his face I look in vain
For signs of guilt and fear. His port is such
As might become a God. O heav'nly pow'rs!
Can this man be a villain?

Enter MELVILLE.

MELVILLE.

Fair Vimonda,
Receive my heart's best wishes. Happiness
Attend thee ever!—'Tis but early day;
What hath so soon dispers'd thy downy slumbers?
Why go'st thou forth in pride of dazzling beauty,
To meet the rising sun with sweeter smiles
Than ever graced the morning?—Ha—in tears!
Vimonda—loveliest innocence—what cause
For these sad drops? O why that look of sorrow?

Enter VIMONDA.

Melville, my heart is breaking. I'm a wretch,
Severely destined to encounter horrors,
And ah! ill-form'd to bear them. Had I died
When Rothfay perish'd, I had been most happy.

MELVILLE.

So me thou ne'er hadst known. O cruel
change!
Few days have pass'd, since with an angel's smile,
Love-darting eyes, and blushes like the morn,
Thy trembling hand in mine, and thy dear head

Sunk

Sunk on my breast, thou toldst me, whisp'ring
soft,
That only since we met thy life began,
That all before was like an idle sleep,
Unfelt and unenjoy'd.

VIMONDA.

'Twas guilty raving,
Punish'd already by sharp anguish.

MELVILLE.

No;
'Twas nature, love, and truth. How like a dream,
Seem to me all my years of youthful glory!
The seas remote, cover'd with hostile fleets,
Where safe thro' storms and ruthless foes I pass;
The vales of Asia, where in bloody strife
Nations contended, and where fortune kind
With flatt'ring plumes oft hung my helm; all
sink,
Like golden clouds following the sun at ev'n:
Unequal all to one blest hour with thee.
Ev'n now, tho' tears bedim thy radiant eyes,
Tho' sad thy looks, and cold thy words appear,
To rule the subject globe I would not leave thee.
Here would I stay; dry up these precious drops;
Bid this dear, flutt'ring, frighten'd heart be calm;
And, folding thee thus with love's softest pressure,
Sooth ev'ry woe, and banish ev'ry fear.

G

VIMONDA.

VIMONDA.

I have no woe, no fear—they're all forgotten!
Thou, Melville, art my fate; thou canst dispense
Joy, or distraction to Vimonda's soul!
Sure we are happy now—I could ev'n smile,
To see thee look so tender.

MELVILLE.

Yes, Vimonda,
This is thy place of safety, where no ghost
Shall e'er affright thee.—

VIMONDA. [*Starting from him.*]

Ghost! ha! where? fond wretch,
What have I done?—Pardon, thou awful shade,
If now unseen thou mark'st thy daughter's mad-
ness!
What—smiling in the arms of him who kill'd
thee!
Didst thou not kill him?—quickly swear thou
didst not,
And save me from perdition! Dar'st thou swear it?

MELVILLE.

What means my love? what wouldst thou have
me swear?

VIMONDA.

That thou art innocent of Rothsay's death.

MEL-

MELVILLE.

Heavens, what a thought! As well thou might'st
demand me,
To swear the sun is bright, or thou art fair.

VIMONDA.

Thou shunn'st the question—oh!—then all is
done.
Farewel, farewel!—We meet in love no more.

[*Exit.*]MELVILLE. [*Solus.*]

We meet in love no more!—was this Vimonda?
Starting abhorrent from me! joining murder
With Melville's name!—Heavens!—what can it
mean?
Why—but a moment—since, she hung upon me
In melting fondness—and to leave me thus
Abrupt—with freezing look, and sad farewel!
I'll follow her——

Enter ALFREDA.

ALFREDA.

My Lord, I pray you pardon me:
I saw Vimonda now in anger leave you;
Tell me, and in your generous thoughts esteem it
A question forc'd by friendship most sincere:
What was the cause of quarrel?

G 2

MEL-

MELVILLE.

Gentle maid,
Thy friendly interference merits thanks:
Thy looks, thy words, are all above thy state,
And prove thee worthy of thy Lady's confidence.

Just now she talk'd to me in most strange sort,
I know not what—calling on me to swear
That I was guiltless of her father's death.
I fain would hold this for some heedless transport
Of terror, not her reason's calm opinion.

ALFREDA.

Be sure it is, my Lord; and yet, I fear,
Her very reason may be rous'd against thee.
Little thou know'st what plots are forming here;
Little thou canst suspect

MELVILLE.

Suspect, Alfreda!
I'd rather quit my life than live suspicious.
If unassuming courage and plain honesty
Cannot preserve me, cunning never shall.

ALFREDA.

One word, my Lord—Had you not some
attendant,
That dreadful night when you preserv'd Vi-
mondia?

MEL-

MELVILLE.

Only one boy; but that one boy so dear,
That ev'n Vionda's love has not effac'd
The scar poor Edwin's loss made in my heart.
He was torn from me in the darkling fight:
O, 'twas a charming boy! He sav'd my life;
Worn out with wounds and toil, I should have
died,

But for his care, on Syria's fatal shore.
How many nights he sat within my tent,
Tuning his lute, and warbling airs so sweet,
That pain was charm'd to rest, and how'ring
death

Revers'd his lifted dart, and flew away.

ALFREDA.

This boy, my Lord, could he be found again,
Might give most ample proof, should any doubt
Touching the sword of Rothfay be suggested.
I dare engage to bring him.

MELVILLE.

Do it quick,
Sweet friendly maid: there's nought thou canst
devise
For which I'd thank thee more. But not to
clear
The mists by malice and suspicion rais'd;
What I avouch for truth despises proof.

'Tis

'Tis granting I might possibly be false,
 To cast about in search of testimony.
 No—if an angel from the sky should come,
 And proffer me his aid in such a cause,
 I would, with humblest reverence, refuse it.
 Of this no more—conduct me to thy Lady.

[Exit.]

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END OF THE THIRD ACT.

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[Faint, illegible text]

ACT

[Faint, illegible text]

A C T IV.

SCENE, *The Inside of ROTHSAÏ's Monument.*

Enter ALFREDA.

ALFREDA.

THIS glow so warm, this beating of the bosom,
 These pulses flutt'ring, these delicious tremors,
 That rush o'er all my frame, when he is near me,
 What do they mean? Alas!—I fear, I fear,
 I love him more than I confess'd to Rothsay,
 Yea more than to myself I dare confess.
 O Melville! had it been my happy fate,
 To charm thy noble heart like yon sad wand'rer,
 I would—O heavens! what would I not have done,
 To make each hour, each minute of thy life,
 Pass as in Paradise! Yet ev'n the bliss,
 I must not share myself, shall be my work:
 That once completed, and Vimonda thine,
 My task is finish'd.

Enter VIMONDA.

VIMONDA.

Where is my Alfreda?
 She knows not to deceive. Give me thine arm;
 And