

A Comic Opera in Three Acts entitled
The Lucky Star

Founded on and adapted from the French original of Leterrier and Vanloo,
and an American version thereof by Cheever Goodwin and Woolson Morse
(by arrangement with Mr. Francis Wilson)

Some New Dialogue by Charles H.E. Brookfield
New Lyrics by Adrian Ross and by Adrian Hopwood
The whole revised and put together by H.L.
The music by Ivan Caryll

First produced at the Savoy Theatre on Saturday, January 7th, 1899,
under the management of Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte

Dramatis Personæ

KING OUF THE FIRST	Mr. Walter Passmore
THE BARON TABASCO (<i>Ambassador-Extraordinary from King Mataquin</i>)	Mr. Henry A. Lytton
SIROCO (<i>the Astrologer Royal</i>)	Mr. Fred Wright, Jun.
TAPIOCA (<i>Private Secretary to BARON TABASCO</i>)	Mr. Robert Evett
CANCAN (<i>a Citizen</i>)	Mr. Leonard Russell
PRINCESS LAOULA (<i>Daughter of King Mataquin</i>)	Miss Ruth Vincent
ALOËS (<i>Daughter of Tabasco and Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess</i>)	Miss Isabel Jay
<i>Maids of Honour:</i>	
OASIS	Miss Jessie Rose
ASPHODEL	Miss Madge Moyse
ZINNIA	Miss Mildred Baker
ADZA (<i>the Court Dancer</i>)	Miss Katie Vesey
LAZULI (<i>a Travelling Painter</i>)	Miss Emmie Owen
Citizens, Guards, Courtiers, and Ladies-in-Waiting.	

Act I. — A Public Square (T.E. Ryan)
Act II. — Throne Room in the King's Palace (W. Harford)
Act III. — A Summer-Room in the Palace (W. Harford)

Produced under the stage direction of Mr. R. Barker
Musical Director, Mr. François Cellier

The costumes designed by Mr. Percy Anderson, and executed by Miss Fisher, Messrs. B.J. Simmons and Co., and Madame Léon. The properties by Mr. Edward Siedle, of New York, and Mr. Skelly, of London. Stage Machinist, Mr. P. White. Electrician, Mr. Lyons. Stage Manager, Mr. W.H. Seymour. Acting Manager, Mr. J.W. Beckwith. The dances by Mr. W. Warde (by kind permission of Mr. George Edwardes).

ACT I.

SCENE. — *A public square R.I.E. Set observatory with practicable balcony on which mounted telescope stands. Front profile of observatory only on the stage. Sign over door, reading, "Siroco, Astronomer Royal. Your fortune told while you wait." L.I.E. profile front of Inn. Sign of a red dragon over door. Practicable balcony to Inn also. Set tree R.C. banked up with grass mats. Profile houses R. and L.H. Back drop landscape with water effect. At rise of curtain day is just breaking, and as the scene progresses sunrise effect and change to broad daylight. Citizens are discovered.*

CHORUS.

[words by Adrian Ross]

MEN. Night is done, but it is not day,
Only a twilight, quiet and grey,
Brightening slowly, far away —
Far away.
Light winds rustle in the bough and brake,
Little ripples run up the lake —
Waken, day of May, awake!
Now awake!

(Sunrise effect, girls coming in bearing garlands and baskets of flowers.)

GIRLS. Spring's in the air,
Winter is ended;
Blossoms uncloset,
Golden and rose!
Blossoms we bear,
Scented and splendid,
Worthy to bring
Unto our King!

ALL. Hail to the day
Festal and famous,
Day when he smiled
First as a child!
Loyalty may
Rightly inflame us,
Bidding us sing,
"Hail to our King!"

CANCAN *enters L., from Inn.*

CANCAN. Now the king that we are under, with a fal la la!
With a skill at which we wonder, with a fal la la!

ALL. Has provided recreation for the yearly jubilation,
 Singing fal lal, fal lal, lirra lirra lay!
 CANCAN. There are conjuror and tumbler, with a fal la la!
 And some actors for the humbler, with a fal la la!
 But the special institution is the yearly execution,
 ALL. With a fal lal, fal lal, lirra lirra lay!
 CANCAN. So we celebrate the season of the year,
 When our monarch condescended to appear,
 Gaily voicing our rejoicing
 Thus, in thorough-going thunderous cheer!
 ALL. So we celebrate the season of the year, etc.

CANCAN. There are fountains fair and cunning, with a fal la la!
 In a rosy rillet running, with a fal la la!
 Where the poet from the garret quaffs a thinner dinner claret,
 ALL. Singing fal lal, fal lal, lirra lirra lay!
 CANCAN. There are gardens and pavilions, with a fal la la!
 Lit with fairy lamps in millions, with a fal la la!
 And we drain the public pockets for illimitable rockets,
 ALL. Singing fal lal, fal lal, lirra lirra lay!
 CANCAN. So we give three hips succeeded by "Hooray!"
 For the monarch whom we cheerfully obey;
 Praise him proudly, laud him loudly,
 Wishing him numberless returns of the day!
 ALL. So we give three hips succeeded by "Hooray!" etc.

DANCE.

(After which exeunt all R. and L. KEDAS has entered L.U.E. at commencement of dance. He wears a long cloak and slouch hat, like a conspirator.)

KEDAS. It's no use! I've spent the entire night trying to coax a treasonable speech or act out of some one, and failed completely. But a victim for His Majesty's annual *fête* must be had; and as, by our laws, treason is the only crime punishable by death, some one must be incited to commit treason. (SIROCO appears on balcony of observatory R.H.) Ah! there's Siroco! Perhaps he can give me an astral tip. (*Calling.*) Hi, there! Siroco!
 SIROCO. What can I do for His Majesty's Minister of Police?
 KEDAS. You can do a great deal for me, if you will.
 SIROCO. How?
 KEDAS. By uttering a few treasonable sentiments. I'm not particular. Revile the memory of the King's grandmother, or curse the income-tax. Anything will do.
 SIROCO. What should I do that for?
 KEDAS. To enable me to arrest you, of course. Don't you know that to-day is His Majesty's *fête* day, and that for seventeen years he has celebrated it by publicly executing some one, by a novel death method, annually invented by himself.
 SIROCO. Certainly.

KEDAS. As Minister of Police he looks to me to provide the victim.

SIROCO. Come into the house, and I'll cast your horoscope for you. The stars may extricate you from your trouble. (*Exit from balcony.*)

KEDAS. I hope they'll be lively about it. (*Exit into house R.I.E. Enter mysteriously R.B.C.*)

TABASCO, TAPIOCA, LAOULA, and ALOËS. *All are in travelling costume, TAPIOCA, laden with all the impedimenta of a travelling party, struggles on last, nearly concealed by the articles he carries. He lets them fall with a crash. All four come down stage mysteriously.*)

QUARTET. — LAOULA, ALOËS, TABASCO, and TAPIOCA.

[words by Adrian Ross]

ALL.	Hush! hark! is anyone near? Hist! ha! can anyone hear? Hi! ho! does anyone see? Nobody know who we may be!
TABASCO.	I am the Plenipotentiary,
ALOËS.	I am the great ambassadress!
TAPIOCA.	I am their private secretary,
LAOULA.	I am a fair Princess!
ALL.	But none the mystery may unravel, Why thus in popular garb we go;
LAOULA.	There are reasons why we travel In a strict incognito! And I — Would die —
ALOËS.	Before I own, by word unwary,
TABASCO.	I am the Plenipotentiary!
ALL.	We are incognito.

All produce commercial travellers' bags of samples.

Take our bits of baggage and rummage 'em,
Toss them to and fro;
Look in mine and his and hers,
We're commercial travellers!
All our goods are genuine Brummagem,
Marked with prices low —
That is how we manage to journey incognito!

He is the Plenipotentiary, etc.
Incognito!

TABASCO. Tapioca!

TAPIOCA. Yes, Excellency.

TABASCO. Is all the luggage there?

TAPIOCA. Fourteen pieces, your Excellency.

TABASCO. Fourteen? (*Angrily.*) Miserable dolt that you are! There should be fifteen! What have you done with the other one, idiot?

ALOËS. You forget, Papa, No. 15 was the lunch, and we ate it on the way.

TABASCO. Then some one should have told me so. (*Exit TAPIOCA R.*) Another thing. How many times must I tell you not to call me “Papa”?

ALOËS. But you are!

TABASCO. By the laws of nature, I am. But by the requirements of diplomacy, I am nothing of the sort. Diplomatically you care the Princess Laoula, and the Princess here (*indicating LAOULA*) is my wife.

LAOULA. Diplomatically only.

TABASCO. Of course. Such ruses constitute the subtle art of diplomacy. It would be perfectly easy, for instance, for me to proclaim to every one, “I am the Baron Tabasco — King Mataquin’s special envoy and plenipotentiary. This is my daughter, Aloës — this is my private secretary, Tapioca.”

TAPIOCA. Yes, sir.

TABASCO. Don’t interrupt! “This young lady is the peerless Princess Laoula.” I could easily say all that. Nine asses out of ten *would* have said all that.

ALOËS. It would have saved a lot of complication.

TABASCO. Precisely. That’s why I didn’t say it. The day when politics are conducted straightforwardly and without circumlocution will be a cold day for ministers and office-holders.

ALOËS. But a sunny day for everybody else!

LAOULA. But why is all this make-believe necessary? Why must we conceal our proper rank, disguise ourselves as tradespeople, and travel on foot like this?

TABASCO. Because it’s diplomatic.

ALOËS (*to LAOULA*). I feel as if we were children again, playing with dolls.

LAOULA. I almost wish we were. We were happier then!

BALLAD. — LAOULA.

[adapted from the American version by Aubrey Hopwood]

When I was a child of three,
Heigh ho! Long ago!
Happy as a child could be,
Heigh ho! Long ago!
I’d a little doll, whose eyes
Shone as blue as summer skies;
Though she never spoke a word,
Yet I quite believe she heard
Every childish hope and fear
That I whispered in her ear;
All my griefs to her I told,
In those nursery days of old;
When I was a child of three,
Heigh ho! Long ago!

Even as the years went by,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!
 Faithful to my doll was I,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!
 Time has dulled her eyes of blue —
 Rosy cheeks have lost their hue,
 Shabby was her dainty dress —
 Yet I loved her none the less;
 For to me it always seemed
 That she dreamed the dreams I dreamed,
 And the secrets that I told
 As in nursery days of old,
 When I was a child of three,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!

Childish toys are thrown away,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!
 I have grown too old for play,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!
 Friends I have, both old and new,
 Some are false and some are true;
 Some who praise and some who blame,
 None who's ever quite the same
 As the friend I can't forget,
 As the doll I still regret,
 When my foolish fancy strays,
 To the dear old nursery days,
 When I was a child of three,
 Heigh ho! Long ago!

TAPIOCA (*re-entering, aside*). He's a cheerful diplomat!

TABASCO (*to TAPIOCA*). What was that? (*Angrily.*) What do you mean by mumbling? Don't you know that as my private secretary your first duty is to hold your tongue?

TAPIOCA. Oh, come, I say! I've stood quite enough of this. I resign.

ALOËS (*running to TAPIOCA*). No! No! Don't do that!

TAPIOCA (*to ALOËS, who is in dumb show trying to soothe him. LAOULA at the same time is arguing with TABASCO*). I can't help it. Do you think I've got cast-iron sensibilities?

ALOËS (*to TAPIOCA*). But for my sake, darling!

TAPIOCA (*to ALOËS*). Look out! He'll see us. All right, I'll try it once more.

ALOËS (*to TABASCO*). He withdraws his resignation. So there!

TABASCO (*aside*). That's the ninth time he's resigned in a week. (*Aloud.*) I'll overlook your offence this time, young man. But be careful! For some of these days I shall lose my temper. I warn you! (*Looking round him.*) Here's a decent-looking inn. We had better go in and tidy ourselves. (*Offers an arm to LAOULA.*) Tapioca! Bring my daughter and the luggage. (*Repetition of Quartet. All exeunt mysteriously into inn L.H; TAPIOCA last with*

luggage. When all are off LAZULI enters, dressed as a wandering painter, with easel, etc.)

LAZULI (*looking anxiously round*). No. I've missed them! Lost all trace of them! Well, it doesn't really matter. I couldn't have spoken to her. I know what I *will* do, I'll make a sketch of her sweet face while it's fresh in my memory. (*Erects his easel, spreads out his painting materials, and begins to paint.*) I wonder who they were? The men were commonplace enough. But the women! One was pretty, but the other was an angel! I had but a glimpse of her sweet face. She has vanished from my life, but she shall never leave my heart. (*Goes on painting. SIROCO and KEDAS enter from house R.I.E.*)

SIROCO. I hope you're satisfied?

KEDAS. Satisfied? I am simply surfeited with content. The stars promise a victim within an hour. My reputation as Minister of Police is saved. Siroco, I am your debtor for life. (*Shakes SIROCO's hand warmly and exit hastily L.H.*)

SIROCO. Debtor for life, eh? Well, if all my customers did business on that basis, where should I be?

LAZULI (*who has overheard last speeches, aside*). A fortune-teller! I wonder if he would reveal my idol's whereabouts! (*To SIROCO*). You cast horoscopes, don't you?

SIROCO. Occasionally.

LAZULI. All right. Cast mine. (*Extending hand.*) How's that for a hand?

SIROCO. It's like most hands I hold nowadays — not filled.

LAZULI. Oh, I see! (*Produces coin and extends hand again with coin displayed.*) How's that? Better?

SIROCO (*pocketing coin*). Decidedly so. (*Aside.*) He's the first cast customer I've had in a fortnight. (*To LAZULI.*) Remain here, young man, until I've prepared a chart.

LAZULI. I suppose your horoscopes are reliable?

SIROCO. Reliable! Young man, rather than tell an untruth I have lost customers innumerable. I will give you an instance or two:

SONG. — SIROCO.

Once a lady came to me, she was stout as stout could be,
And her age was the uncertain kind of age;
She considered acting nice, and upon her friends' advice,
Well, she really thought of going on the stage!
Did I think she'd win success? Well, I tried to answer "yes,"
But my conscience wouldn't bear the heavy strain;
It was awkward, but, forsooth, I was forced to tell the truth,
And she'll never want a horoscope again!
No, she'll never want a horoscope again!
From eclipsing Sarah Bernhardt she'll refrain;
When the stars revealed her age, she retired in a rage,
And she'll never want a horoscope again!
No, she'll never want a horoscope again, etc.

BOTH.

SIROCO. From the Transvaal, one fine day, I'd a client come my way,
And he wore a patriarchal sort of beard;

He's a most tenacious clutch, and he spoke in double-Dutch,
And a rather Boerish person he appeared!
He inquired if I thought that the armaments he bought
Over Britain an advantage would obtain?
It was awkward, but, forsooth, I was forced to tell the truth,
And he'll never want a horoscope again!
No, he'll never want a horoscope again!
He has purchased all those armaments in vain;
I just mentioned "Doctor Jim," and that seemed enough to him,
And he'll never want a horoscope again!
No, he'll never want a horoscope again, etc.

BOTH.

Once a party called on me, he was good as good could be,
You could tell that by his black and glossy clothes!
Then he wore a white cravat and a "go-to-meeting" hat,
And he murmured moral maxims through his nose!
Well, he told me, with a frown, we'd put Sunday music down,
Did I think that all his efforts would be vain?
It was awkward, but, forsooth, I was forced to tell the truth,
And he'll never want a horoscope again!
No, he'll never want a horoscope again!
When I told him all his efforts were in vain,
Well, he gave the door a slam and I think he murmured — Tut!
So he'll never want a horoscope again!
So he'll never want a horoscope again, etc.

BOTH.

Now one day I met a man and he came from the Soudan,
And he called himself a Mahdi, I believe;
He's a wicked-looking eye, seemed the kind of man who'd try
To conceal the ace of trumps within his sleeve!
Well, he called on me to learn if his luck would ever turn,
If a victory once more he would obtain?
It was awkward, but, forsooth, I was forced to tell the truth,
And he'll never want a horoscope again!
No, he'll never want a horoscope again!
He may struggle, but he'll struggle on in vain,
There's a Kitchener in use that will cook his little goose:
And he'll never want a horoscope again!
And he'll never want a horoscope again, etc.

BOTH.

Exit SIROCO hastily into house R.I.E.

LAZULI. What a fool I am! I've given him the last coin I had in the world, and haven't had my breakfast! Never mind — they say that a sound sleep is as good as a dinner! I'll try it, anyway. I wonder what the stars will have to say to me? (LAZULI *lies down on bank B.C., and falls asleep*. TABASCO and TAPIOCA *enter from inn L.I.E.*)

TABASCO. And now for the King! Tapioca!

TAPIOCA. Your Excellency?

TABASCO. You will accompany me at a respectful distance.

TAPIOCA. But the ladies, your Excellency —

TABASCO. The ladies? It isn't a question of ladies. It's a question of diplomacy. I am the bearer of an ultimatum.

TAPIOCA. What's that?

TABASCO. You'll know soon enough, and so will the King. Now then, for the Palace! (*Exit L.3.E. followed by TAPIOCA. ALOËS appears at door of inn, as if spying to see if the coast is clear. When TABASCO and TAPIOCA are off, ALOËS comes down from the inn and calls back.*)

ALOËS. Come along, Princess! They're gone.

LAOULA (*appearing at inn door, L.I.E.*). But he told us to stay in our room.

ALOËS. Who? Papa? I know he did; but you know diplomats never mean what they say.

LAOULA. I'm afraid!

ALOËS (*going to LAOULA*). Afraid of what, you goose? (*Half pushes, half pulls LAOULA from inn to C.*) Do you think any one is going to eat you? (*As she releases LAOULA, the latter discovers LAZULI.*)

LAOULA. Great heavens! (*Clings to ALOËS.*)

ALOËS (*also startled*). What is it? Oh dear, what is it?

LAOULA. It's — it's a man!

ALOËS. Is that all? I thought it was a mouse, or a caterpillar. Where is he?

LAOULA (*pointing out LAZULI*). There!

ALOËS (*looking at him*). So he is — and asleep. Rather a good-looking young man, too.

LAOULA. Extremely good-looking.

ALOËS. I feel as if I had seen him somewhere before.

LAOULA. Of course we have seen him before. It's the young man whom we passed just now on the road.

ALOËS. So it is. What a memory you have for faces! (*Examining easel.*) He's an artist. Look! I believe he was painting your portrait!

LAOULA (*looking at picture*). Was he? How sweet of him!

ALOËS. He soon got tired of it, though. (*Approaches LAZULI and looks at him.*)

LAOULA. Come away quickly! He might wake up.

ALOËS. I know it. For fear he might not, though, I'm going to assist him. (*Pulls some long straws or blades of grass from bank.*)

LAOULA. Aloës! Be careful! What are you going to do?

ALOËS. Wait a minute and you'll see. (*ALOËS begins to tickle LAZULI gently with a straw. He suddenly jumps up and catches each girl round the waist.*)

LAZULI (*to LAOULA*). I've caught you at last! Now then, who are you?

LAOULA. I — I don't know.

LAZULI. Don't know?

ALOËS (*coming to her rescue*). We're in business. We're from Swanbill and Headgear's.

LAOULA. We're travelling for the firm.

LAZULI. Who were those two men with you?

ALOËS. They were gentleman from behind the counter.

LAOULA. From Swanbill and Headgear's. They're travelling for the firm too.

LAZULI. *That's all right. (To LAOULA.)* What's your name?

LAOULA. Laoula.

LAZULI. Laoula, I love you with my whole being.

LAOULA. Already?

ALOËS. Well, you don't lose much time, young man, I must say. You only saw her this morning.

LAZULI. But think of all the years I lost before I saw her!

ALOËS (*aside*). That young man's a diplomat.

LAZULI. Now that happiness has come, let us lose no more time. (*Kisses LAOULA: she releases herself.*)

ALOËS (*aside*). It is almost time I interfered. (*Comes between them.*) And pray, sir, who are you?

LAZULI. I? (*Bowing.*) Lazuli, at your service. I pick up a kind of living by painting.

ALOËS. Portraits?

LAZULI (*unstrapping portfolio*). Portraits — landscapes — signboards — finger-posts — anything! Here are a few specimens. (*Showing them.*)

LAOULA. How pretty! (*Both girls, assisted by LAZULI, have their heads close together over the pictures examining them, with various ejaculations of delight, when TABASCO, followed by TAPIOCA, enters L.3.E. TABASCO is furious.*)

TABASCO. Thunder and furies! Not at the palace! Why in the name of all the furies wasn't he at the palace?

TAPIOCA. I don't know, your Excellency.

TABASCO. Of course you don't! If there is ever anything you do know, tell me, so that I can — (*Sees LAZULI and the girls.*) What do I see? The Princess and my daughter hobnobbing with a common painter! (*Going to them.*) What's the meaning of this? (*LAOULA and ALOËS, seeing him for the first time, scream with fright and drop pictures.*) So this is the way you follow my instructions not to go out? (*To LAZULI.*) As for you, young man, I'll have you basitnadoed to slow music if I ever catch you speaking to my wife again! (*Drawing LAOULA's arm through his.*)

LAZULI. His wife?

LAOULA. But I am not —

TABASCO (*interrupting, aside*). Silence, Princess, in the sacred name of diplomacy! Would you ruin my mission and bring your royal father's wrath upon us? Especially on me? We must retire at once! Tapioca!

TAPIOCA (*eagerly*). Yes, sir! (*Gives arm to ALOËS, who exits with him into the inn L.I.E.*)

TABASCO. Come, my love. (*Starts to enter inn with LAOULA.*)

LAOULA (*aside, observing LAZULI, who is standing mournfully, his head sunk on his easel*). Poor fellow! How crushed he seems! My heart aches for him. (*Kisses her hand to LAZULI, then exit into inn with Tabasco.*)

LAZULI. His wife! She's married then! And I was so sure of happiness! The sooner I go and drown myself the better. (*Exit gloomily L.R. Enter the whole Court, preceding the KING.*)

CHORUS.

Bring on our King,
In a stately and solemn procession,
Cheer him and clap,
With three "Hips" and a crowning "Hooray!"

Loyally sing,
 To the time of our tramping progression,
 Here's many hap —
 Many happy returns of the day!
Hail to our Prince —
 He was born for some excellent reason
 When springtime burns
 Into bloom for the month of May;
And, ever since,
 We have wished, at this beautiful season,
 Happy returns,
 Many happy returns of the day!
Bring on our King, etc.

Enter KING (in Palanquin).

SONG. — KING.
[adapted from the American version]

I'm a King in everything,
 I am glorious, great, and good;
And I sit my throne with a stiff backbone,
 As a first-class monarch should.
I can turn exceedingly stern,
 But I can, when I like, be gay;
And I may unbend, with a lowly friend,
 In my condescending way!
Simple folk, who can't see a joke,
 I hang them up by the heels;
Then I twist a joint to explain the point,
 And I ask them how it feels?
Courtiers say this coaxing way
 Has a quicker effect than a frown;
There's a special style in my royal smile,
 When you see it upside down!
That is so, as you know!

CHORUS.

He's a King in everything,
 He is glorious, great, and good;
And he sits his throne with a stiff backbone,
 As a first-class monarch should.
He's a King with a capital K!

DANCE.

KING. Clear out, all of you! (KING *comes down*.) I never saw such a state of unanimous contentment in my life. What's the good of being an autocratic monarch if you haven't

got even one subject patriotic enough to turn traitor! (*To crowd.*) Be off, I say! (*Exeunt crowd.*) It's the kind of thing that *only* happens to *me*! Some kings have all the luck! I don't want much — only just a grumble, a murmur from even the humblest of my subjects. It isn't much to ask; I know countries where they don't do anything else; but my confounded subjects are so ludicrously behind the times. You see to-day is my birthday. Well, every birthday, we have a little *fête*, and, as an extra turn, I give my subjects a *moral lesson* in an amusing shape — in the form of a public execution. It's astonishing how successful these executions are! Last year's one narrowly escaped an encore. Even the victim, as he mounted the scaffold, said he'd "never had such a day," and that he'd "like it to begin all over again." But this year I don't know what we shall do. We haven't a single criminal — not even a misdemeanor — to whom we could give the disadvantage of the doubt. (*Calling.*) Siroco! I never like to begin the day without a chat with my astrologer. It helps you to make your plans if you know beforehand what's going to happen to you. (*Calling.*) Siroco! (*SIROCO has entered during the above, and prostrated himself on the ground. The KING does not see him, and in going towards observatory, when calling SIROCO the second time, he stumbles over him.*)

SIROCO. I am at your feet, Sire.

KING. Have you fried out my daily horoscope this morning?

SIROCO. It's not quite done, Sire. I had a few small orders for horoscopes from private parties, so I took the liberty —

KING. You did, eh? What do you mean by letting small horoscopes for private parties interfere with mine? Is the royal horoscope so unimportant that you can let it get stone cold, while you brew some petty tradesman on a tip on the price of pigs?

SIROCO. I will hurry on it, Sire.

KING. There will be a very low thermometrical area developed in your neighbourhood, if you don't.

SIROCO. But your Majesty will remember that you gave me permission to accept outside commissions, to supplement my income.

KING. So I did. If I remember rightly, your annual stipend is not exactly stupendous.

SIROCO. Its smallness is very large!

KING. What is the extent of your weekly drain on the royal treasury at present?

SIROCO. Fifteen shillings, Sire.

KING. Fifteen shillings, eh? I don't think that's enough!

SIROCO. Your Majesty is too kind!

KING. A fifteen-shilling devotion strikes me as hardly robust enough for a monarch to pin his faith to. I must raise your salary.

SIROCO. Your Majesty overwhelms me.

KING. Henceforth you shall draw sixteen — but mind, don't let yourself fall into extravagance and make me repent my liberality.

SIROCO. I shall winter on the Riviera.

KING. Besides, I have adopted a more reliable method of ensuring your fidelity; for, between ourselves, you are mentioned in the royal will.

SIROCO. How can I ever thank your Majesty?

KING. You've got a nice little clause all to yourself, which provides that in the extent of our royal demise you are to have —

SIROCO. Yes, Sire? (*Anxiously.*)

KING. You are to have ten — let me see, was it ten? — No, I think I made it fifteen —

SIROCO (*falls on knees*). Oh, thanks, Sire!

KING. You are to have fifteen minutes for any last remarks you may feel called upon to make, and are then to be entombed in the royal sepulchre with me.

SIROCO (*astounded*). Oh, Sire!

KING. Never mind thanking me! There is a general tickled-to-death air about you that speaks for itself. And now that you're aware what the future has in store for you, and that we are not to be separated, even in death, perhaps when you interrogate the stars on my account, after this, you'll put a little more conscientiousness into your work. But, enough of this. I want you to find whether the stars are propitious for my union with the Princess Laoula.

SIROCO. Such a delicate commission will entail the most exhaustive research.

KING. I don't care if it entails the housemaid's knee, as long as you find out what I want to know.

SIROCO. What I meant was, Sire, that I fear my mechanical means are too limited to do justice to the matter. For ordinary skirmishing among the stars, our dioptrical telescope can be made to do; but for the intricate celestial gymnastics which your command necessitates, there will be an imperative need for a catatropical one, with convex lenses and a convoluted focus.

KING. If I had a vocabulary like that, I'd sell it and buy Consols.

SIROCO. Now if I know of a splendid Herschelian telescope — best made — with star-finder and rack adjustment.

KING. Well! tell them to send it along.

SIROCO. I fly, Sire. (*Aside.*) Sixteen shillings! I shall be a spendthrift soon! (*Exit into house R.I.E.*)

King. I must not let my *fête*-day drift into the commonplace. A victim must be found at any cost. (*Exit. Enter from Inn TAPIOCA, followed by ALOËS, who is trying to soothe him.*)

TAPIOCA. I can stand his temper no longer! Let us run away at once and get married.

ALOËS. Oh, I can't do that!

TAPIOCA. Why not? We're disguised, and nobody knows us — we shall never have such a chance again!

DUET. — ALOËS and TAPIOCA.

TAPIOCA.	Spring will bring Birds that sing, In a clamorous Concert amorous!
ALOËS.	Coming forth From the north, Bitter biting gales Stop the nightingales!
TAPIOCA.	In the gay Month of May, I'll reveal to you How I feel to you!
ALOËS.	That's too soon, Wait till June;

I'll confess to you,
 Saying "yes" to you!
 BOTH. Days of spring that dawn deliciously
 Change to chilly rain, capriciously!
 Cupid, clad in a bow and quiver,
 Cannot stay in the cold and shiver.
 March is windy, April showery,
 May is cold as oft as flowery;
 When the summer is blue above,
 That's the time for a maid/man to love!

TAPIOCA. Poets sweet
 Still repeat
 Love, eternally,
 Blossoms vernal!

ALOËS. Love is lost
 When the frost,
 Off the snowy tree,
 Nips the poetry!

TAPIOCA. Can't we dream,
 By the stream,
 With its flattering
 Murmur chattering?

ALOËS. We shall get
 Colds, my pet —
 Highly critical,
 Laryngitical!

BOTH. Lovers' walks, beginning pleasantly,
 End in influenza presently;
 Springtime's changeable suns and breezes
 Cause innumerable diseases!
 March is windy, April showery, etc.

Exeunt TAPIOCA and ALOËS into Inn. Re-enter KING.

KING. There's a young man following me who has evidently something wrong with him. I hope to goodness it's a grievance against the Government. (*Enter LAZULI L.R. despondently, not seeing KING.*)

LAZULI. There's but one thing to do. I must forget her — and to do that, I must die. After all, what is death?

KING. Quite right, young man. The sentiment does you credit.

LAZULI (*curtly*). Get out of the light!

KING. (*aside*). Hullo! That's promising! (*Aloud.*) I only wanted just to ask your opinion of the Government. Don't you think that existing —

LAZULI. Confound the Government!

KING (*aside*). By Jove! this looks healthy! (*Aloud.*) Look here, you know when you talk about the Government like that, you run the risk —

LAZULI. Look here! If you don't clear out, I'll punch your particularly ugly head.

KING (*overjoyed*). Oh, this is simply gorgeous! You don't really mean it?

LAZULI. Don't I? You'll jolly soon find out! Take that! (*Spars up and hits KING on chest.*)

KING (*delighted*). At last! A blow! Thank goodness! He might have played a bit lighter, but still — (*To LAZULI.*) I can't tell you, my young friend, how infinitely obliged I am to you for the service you have done me.

LAZULI (*hitting him again*). You'd much better have held your tongue.

KING (*still more delighted*). Two blows!

LAZULI (*astonished*). This fellow must be crazy!

KING. Not a bit of it! Simply revelling in a gigantic jag of joy! — that's all. Perhaps you'd like to hit me again?

LAZULI. A dozen times if you like.

KING. No, I won't trespass on your kindness to that extent. Once more will do, especially if it's before witnesses. You don't mind one or two witnesses, do you?

LAZULI. I don't mind anything.

KING. That's right. (*Calling*). What ho, there! Everybody! (*Enter from R. and L. Omnes. TABASCO, LAOULA, ALOËS, and TAPIOCA appear on balcony of Inn L.H. KEDAS enters with citizens, etc. All are on except SIROCO.*) (*To LAZULI.*) Now then, you needn't be too emphatic, you know. Just a love-tap, so to speak, will do the business.

LAZULI (*losing patience*). You will have it, will you? All right! There you are! (*Punches KING's head. Everybody is horrified.*)

KING. Thanks. My friends, I have the pleasure to announce that the *fête* is at complete liberty to proceed. A victim has been found.

ALL. Long live King Ouf!

FINALE.

[The Music of the first part of this Finale is by E. Chabrier.]

KING.	Young man, you have dared to strike the King!
CHORUS.	The wretch! He dared to strike the King!
LAZULI, LAOULA, ALOËS.	I/He dared to strike the King!
KING (<i>spoken</i>).	I repeat —
	Young man, you have dared to strike the King!
{ LAZULI.	Alas! I dared to strike the King!
{ CHORUS.	The wretch! He dared to strike the King!
KING.	You gave a blow to <i>me</i> , you know!
	Such an atrocious deed
	Requires that the doer shall bleed!
	So at once you are doomed to die!
LAZULI (<i>aside</i>).	To die! 'Tis well; I'd rather die
	Than live with love gone by!
KING.	My friends, you'll be glad when I say,
	That now you need not fear;
	For our festival day will be quite as gay

As that last year!
(very pleased and slightly mysterious.) Open your eyes!
 Now you will see how a criminal bravely dies!
 CHORUS. Now we shall see how a criminal bravely dies!
 KING. What ho! my varlets there!
 Bring forth the torture-chair!
 CHORUS. The chair, the chair, the chair, the chair!
 LAZULI. A grim affair, that kind of chair,
 KING. My good young friend, *I* do not care!

ENSEMBLE.

	MEN.		WOMEN.
	The chair! the chair!		Is a rare
	As you will notice presently		Sort of chair!
	Will pinch and tear —		Is a rare chair!
ALL.	And surely will treat you unpleasantly; It will flay you and slay you unpleasantly! The chair! the chair!		

SONG. — “THE CHAIR” — KING.

This chair, on a hasty view,
 From other chairs does not vary.
 But I hope I may prove to you
 Its virtues are extraordinary!
 There’s nothing much to strike the eyes,
 But if you sit you down a minute,
 Then you will own, with some surprise,
 That there is something novel in it!
 So take a seat,
 Pray take a seat,
 Do take a seat,
 To be polite to *me*,
 My dear young friend,
 My good young friend,
 And you will see what you *will* see!

CHORUS. So take a seat, etc.

KING. Observe me now — I touch a spring,
 And set a dozen knives in motion;
 Of all the humour of the thing,
 You haven’t yet the slightest notion!
 For when I press my finger-tips,
 Two pretty arms will seize and spike you,
 While razors cut you into chips; —

I hope you'll tell me how they strike you.

So take a seat, etc.

CHORUS.

So take a seat, etc.

(At end of Chorus to second verse of KING's song, SIROCO enters in the greatest excitement from house R.I.E. Music continues piano in orchestra through following dialogue.)

SIROCO *(interrupting)*. Stop! Stop!

KING. What's the matter?

SIROCO *(greatly excited)*. Thank goodness, I am not too late! Oh, your Majesty! if you only knew!

KING. If I only knew what — what is it?

SIROCO. Just now, as I was perfecting your horoscope, I made a most startling discovery!

KING. Well, go on. What was it?

SIROCO. This young man's star and yours are identical.

KING. What?

SIROCO. Your lives depend upon each other.

KING. What do you mean?

SIROCO. I mean that should one of you die, the other —

KING. Well, well, go on! The other?

SIROCO. The other will die exactly twenty-four hours later!

KING. Great Caesar's ghost! And to think I came so near committing suicide in the second degree. I feel weak in the knees to think of it! *(Is about to sit on chair, but remembers in time.)* Take that infernal thing away! *(Guards remove chair.)* *(To LAZULI.)* Young man, I've had a narrow escape. I mean, you've had a narrow escape!

SIROCO *(aside)* It strikes me there wasn't any very great width to *my* escape!

KING *(to LAZULI)*. I pardon you. *(Crowd begins to murmur.)* My friends, owing to circumstances over which I have no control, there will be no execution this year. *(Crowd again murmurs.)* But we'll make next year's a double event.

CROWD. Ah!

KING. And now, young man, I mustn't lose sight of you. Until further notice our Post-office address will be the Palace!

KING. You'll find there's naught about me mean,
Bring forth the royal palanquin!

CHORUS. What on earth does it mean?
Why should he ride in the palanquin?

(Attendants bring on the palanquin.)

KING *(to LAZULI)*. Pray take a seat,
Do take a seat,
Please take a seat,
You must be needing rest;
For I repeat,
Yes, I repeat

CHORUS. That I will treat
 You as a guest!
 Pray take the chair,
 Do take the chair,
Please take the chair,
 And do not make us wait;
 For we declare,
 Yes, we declare
 We mean to bear
 You home in state!

LAZULI. It appears quite strange,
 A complete quick change,
 And I don't know the why or the how!

ENSEMBLE.		
KING, SIROCO.	LAOULA.	ALOËS, TAPIOCA, TABASCO.
It is queer, no doubt,	As a prince, no doubt	He is safe, no doubt,
But you won't find out,	They will fit him out,	As it has turned out,
For we don't mean to tell it	And I hope I shall meet with	For they don't mean to torture
you now!	him now!	him now!

LAZULI (*as KING and SIROCO urge him to get into the chair*).
 Though I should like to go for a ride,
 Are you sure it is not spiky inside?

ENSEMBLE.	
KING , SIROCO.	LAOULA, ALOËS, TAPIOCA, TABASCO.
Can you suspect, most excellent man,	You needn't fear, most fortunate man,
We could think of such a horrible plan?	It is built on quite a different plan.

LAZULI *gets into palanquin.*

CHORUS. Then lift him aloft with loyal hand,
 It is our King's command!

KING *seats himself in palanquin with LAZULI. The crowd form procession.*

SOLOISTS. This is fitter
 Being a sitter
 Here in a litter
 Though in a bitter
 Pang to frizzle like a fritter
 In the torture chair!

ENSEMBLE.	
LAZULI.	ALL.

Then away I go,
 Like a circus show
 With a jockey aloft in a car!
 For a needy youth,
 I appear in truth
 To be under a fortunate star!
 With the shouting festive train
 I shall pass the palace portal.
 Favourite mortal, fortunate mortal,
 I shall eat and drink again!
 Hurrah, hip, hurrah!

Then away we/they go,
 Like a public show
 Or an idol aloft in a car,
 With the daring youth
 Who appears in truth
 To be under a fortunate star!
 Bear him on in festive train
 Through the golden palace portal.
 Hail to the mortal, fortunate mortal,
 That {I have to} {the King will} entertain!
 Hurrah, hip, hurrah!

All prepare to escort LAZULI to Palace. Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *The throne room of the KING's Palace. Large double windows at R.C., looking on lake, with low practicable balcony built as if over lake. R.2.E. concealed door in wall. Entrance L.3.E. Entrance R.1.E. and L.1.E. Platform with throne and canopy R.3.E. opposite main entrance. At rise of curtain, LAZULI, richly dressed, reclines on a cushion, surrounded by Maids of Honour.*

CHORUS. — GIRLS.
 [words by Adrian Ross]

Lolling in sinuous
 Feminine fashion,
 Over the downy divan,
 We, in continuous
 Rapture of passion
 Gaze at you *as* you lie,
 Beautiful Lazuli!
 Love is but loyalty,
 When we implore you,
 Winning a smile if we can;
 Chosen of royalty,
 All must adore you,
 Dangerous, darling young man!

OASIS.
 Admirable youth,
 Beauty's blooming blossom,
 Your refulgence blinds
 Ordinary minds!
 Not a man, in truth,
 (Though we've come across some)
 Ever seemed to view

Half so fair as you!
GIRLS (*offering wine*). Try a taste of this —
Drink a drop of that —
Nectar fashioned for your bliss
In the brimming vat!
While the beakers pass,
With their ruby store,
Sip a glass, and drain a glass,
And a bumper more!

ASPHODEL. Excellent young man,
Marvellously modest,
Won't you kindly try
Not to be so shy?
Not a Puritan
Of the very oddest
Would have strength to say,
"Ladies, go away!"

GIRLS. Touch a tress of one,
Hold another's hand;
People say that there are none
Like our lovely band!
Beauty's like the grass,
Ere its day is o'er;
Catch a lass and kiss a lass,
Once and maybe more!

LAZULI (*to OASIS*). You've the sweetest little lips that ever were made! Kiss me!

OASIS. No, certainly not!

LAZULI. That's a double negative which is equivalent to one affirmative. (*Kisses her.*) What's your name?

OASIS. Oasis!

LAZULI. Oasis. A very pretty name for a very pretty girl. Whose turn next?

ASPHODEL. I should never dream of allowing any man to take such a liberty with *me*.

LAZULI. Since you insist. (*Kisses her. Turns to ZINNIA.*) Now how about you?

ZINNIA. Oh yes, please.

LAZULI. That's better. (*Kisses her.*) You know you're all so perfect that I don't believe I'm still on earth. I'm in Paradise. I've been painlessly translated!

OASIS. Are you sorry?

LAZULI. On the contrary! I've never been so happy before. I adore pretty girls.

ASPHODEL. Dark? or fair?

LAZULI. Both! I'll tell you or a girl who was *both*!

SONG. — LAZULI.
[words by Adrian Ross]

There was a minstrel gay,
 Who, at the break of day,
 Noticed a maiden with her golden tresses streaming;
 Passing at set of sun,
 He saw a darker one,
 Under her raven curls romantically dreaming!
 Each of them pleased him well,
 So into love he fell,
 Singing at dawn and dark his rich rondel —
 CHORUS. “Tink-a-tink, tink-a-tonk! tink-a-tink, tink-a-tonk!”
 LAZULI. “Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk! tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk!”
 Maid of the marvellous locks!
 Thy head, my love, is rich above
 The wealth of the Klondyke rocks!
 Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk! tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk!”
 (This was his other affair.)
 “I’m caught in the net that’s blacker than jet,
 By the charm of my darling’s hair!”
 ALL. Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk, etc.

 LAZULI. Each of the maidens smiled
 Down on the Muse’s child;
 Yielding to him, without the slightest hesitation;
 When to their arms he came,
 Lo, they were both the same!
 He understood without a further explanation!
 Now, in a shop, his bride,
 Lives by the way she dyed,
 While her adorer sings his lay outside!
 CHORUS. “Tink-a-tink, tink-a-tonk! tink-a-tink, tink-a-tonk!”
 LAZULI. “Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk! tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk!”
 You, who would rival her locks,
 We only ask one crown a flask,
 Or half-a-crown a box!
 Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk! tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk!
 Every shade we prepare;
 From Orient blacks to golden or flax,
 We change any lady’s hair!”
 ALL. Tink-a-tink-a-tink tonk, etc.
 You, who would rival her locks, etc.

LAZULI *takes two of the girls round the waist and kisses them. Enter SIROCO* L.3.E.

SIROCO. What’s all this? What’s all this?

LAZULI. We’re only enjoying ourselves! We’re making love!

SIROCO. Making love, are you? You don't know much about it! I'll show you how we used to do it when *I* was young.

GIRLS. Oh, *do!*

SIROCO (*seizing ADZA*). There's a nice little girl.

DANCE. — ADZA and SIROCO.

Enter KING L.3.E.

KING. Now then! Now then! Now then!

ALL. The King! (*The girls break away; LAZULI comes down leisurely.*)

KING. I wish it distinctly understood that kissing the Maids of Honour devolves in me by law. What are you girls doing here?

OASIS. Siroco sent us, Sire, to keep Lazuli's spirits up.

KING. Did he? Well, my opinion is that what Lazuli needs is a two ton weight to keep his spirits down. (*To Girls.*) Outside, if you please.

OASIS. Oh, don't send us away, your Majesty! We were getting on so nicely.

ASPHODEL (*patting KING under chin*). Won't you please let us stay?

ZINNIA. Your darling Majesty! (*All the Girls surround KING.*)

KING. No, no, my dears, you are all very sweet. But this time it don't go, and you do. Business before pleasure. So skip!

OASIS. But may we come back later?

KING. Oh, yes. Considerably later though. Say about six years.

ASPHODEL. But your Majesty —

KING. Not another word! Get out of this! Shoo! (*Driving girls out at L.3.E. LAZULI goes up B., looking out on lake.*) Siroco, do you know I feel positively nervous when I think that my life absolutely depends on the existence of that frivolous young fluff there?

SIROCO. My life also, Sire.

KING. Who cares for your life?

SIROCO. I do, your Majesty!

KING. Then you'd better take particular care of mine. (*Looking towards LAZULI.*) Do you think he looks healthy?

SIROCO. Not over and above robust, Sire.

KING. I don't want to know what he is over and above — I want to know what he is on a dead level! The best way to find out, I suppose, is to examine him. (*Calling.*) Young man! (*LAZULI turns from B.*) Come here! (*LAZULI comes down slowly.*) Hold your head up and throw your shoulder back!

LAZULI (*aside*). What does he want?

KING (*stopping LAZULI as he reaches him. All three are well front, LAZULI C., KING R., SIROCO L.*). Stand still where you are! Siroco, you experiment with his north-east corner, while I diagnose him on the south-west. (*Business ad lib. of KING and SIROCO working LAZULI's arms up and down, and apparently making a careful inspection of the physical condition of his arms, legs, head, etc.*)

LAZULI. I say! If you think I take to pieces like a puzzle, you're mistaken.

KING. You just keep quiet. How is your side Siroco?

SIROCO. Very fairly flexible and robust, Sire, I'm glad to say.

KING. So is mine. He seems just a trifle flabby, though, don't you think?

SIROCO. Perhaps so, Sire.

KING. Never mind! We'll put him on a raw beef diet to-morrow and stop his liquor! (*Cross L.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). What are these lunatics driving at?

KING. Now for his lungs! (*Crosses R. Gets in front of LAZULI.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). What are they going to do now, I wonder!

KING (*applying ear to LAZULI's chest after the fashion of a physician*). Now, while I listen, you thump him in the neck, Roky — I mean in the back!

LAZULI (*alarmed*). But, I say! Hold on!

KING. Hold on nothing! Nobody's going to hurt you. Keep still and draw a long breath! Now another — now breathe in your ordinary way. Say ninety-nine. (*LAZULI does so.*) Let her go, Siroco!

LAZULI (*as SIROCO hits him in the back*). Ow! That hurts!

KING (*to SIROCO*). I say! What are you trying to do? I didn't tell you to knock his shoulder-blade into my left ear. Hit him again now, easy! (*SIROCO does so.*) That's better. (*To LAZULI.*) Now, go on breathing naturally while I listen. (*Business of testing lungs. Finally straightening up.*) That's all right, Roky. I congratulate you. He has the lungs of an ox. (*Shakes hands with SIROCO. Both are delighted.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). They're certainly stark staring mad, both of them!

KING. Now for a few questions. Do you smoke?

LAZULI. Occasionally.

KING. Don't do it, my boy, don't do it! (*To LAZULI.*) Do you wear flannels?

LAZULI. I? No.

KING. Great Æsculapius! (*To SIROCO.*) He doesn't wear flannels!

LAZULI. But I don't see —

KING. Siroco! Send to the Stores at once for twelve sets of vests and pants. Slender man's neutral undyed Shetland Llama winter wool. Why, what could your parents have been thinking of?

LAZULI. My parents? I lost them long ago.

KING (*anxiously*). At what age?

LAZULI. Four years old.

KING. Siroco! His parents died at four years old!

SIROCO. Great Scott!

KING. This is pitiful! (*To SIROCO.*) What kind of short-lived shrimp have you dove-tailed my star to? I'll bet even money he doesn't live the year out. And where shall I be?

SIROCO. Me too, your Majesty?

KING. Siroco, we are doomed men. (*Shakes SIROCO's hand mournfully. Both despond.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). They ought to have keepers — that's what they want.

KING (*very melancholy, to LAZULI*). Tell me, what particular epidemic nipped them in their youthful bud? (*Earnestly.*) Consumption? Heart disease?

LAZULI. Not a bit of it. It was a carriage accident. They were run over.

KING (*delighted*). Was that all?

LAZULI. All?

KING (*joyously*). Siroco!

SIROCO. Your Majesty!

KING. They were run over! (*They shake hands in glee, and dance a few extravagant steps of joy.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). I don't believe my life is safe with them.

KING (*shaking LAZULI's hand*). My boy, how can I ever thank you enough? You shall kiss all the Maids of Honour you want to. Now, tell me, has every one treated you well since you came here? Have you any complaints to make?

LAZULI. Complaints, your Majesty? On the contrary — your kindness has been absolutely overwhelming. Yesterday, I was nobody — to-day, I'm a Prince. A regular "see-saw!"

TRIO. — LAZULI, KING, *and* SIROCO.

LAZULI. Fortune smiles and we all are gay!
SIROCO. Oh, but we shiver at Fortune's frown!
LAZULI. Whether in rags we go our way,
KING. Or clad in the monarch's purple gown.
First you are nobody —
LAZULI. That was I!
SIROCO. Then you're somebody —
LAZULI. Who knows why?
Fortune laughs through a wintry frown —
ALL. And one goes up as the other goes down!
Life is but a see-saw, see-saw, see-saw!
Fool and philosopher, King and clown,
In spite of Fate's action,
Have this satisfaction —
Life is but a see-saw, see-saw, see-saw:
One goes up as the other goes down!

LAZULI. Who is safe that is up today?
SIROCO. What is dominion? and what renown?
LAZULI. Fame and fortune may pass away.
KING. And even a king may lose his crown!
First you're somebody —
LAZULI. Down you go!
SIROCO. Then you're nobody —
LAZULI. Fallen low!
SIROCO. Fortune laughs through a wintry frown —
ALL. And one goes up as the other goes down!
Life is but a see-saw, see-saw, see-saw! etc.

LAZULI. Thanks, your Majesty. Your kindness will cheer many a lonely hour when I am gone.

KING. When you're gone? Gone where?

LAZULI. On the road, of course. I have my living to earn.

KING (*tickled*). I say, Roky! He says he's his living to earn. It strikes me he's got my living to earn!

SIROCO. Mine too, your Majesty!

KING (*to LAZULI*). Don't worry your head about going anywhere, for if I know myself, you can make up your mind you've taken root right here.

LAZULI. I'm to be your prisoner then?

KING. Not at all, my boy! My honoured guest. The palace and all it contains are yours — that is, bar the Maids of Honour, the crown jewels, and a few trifles like that.

LAZULI. Well, upon my word!

KING. But remember! No dissipation! Regularity in everything. You will get up at the same hour every morning; go the same walk every day with the same companions; hear the same music every evening; go to bed at the same hour. Sobriety and hygiene — those are our watchwords. Eh, Siroco?

SIROCO. Your Majesty puts the matter in a nutshell.

KING (*to LAZULI*). You will be accompanied on your walks by three or four attendants.

LAZULI. Attendants! What for?

KING. To take care of you. You might meet a carriage, or a bicycle. The family tendency might break out.

LAZULI. But I say I object.

KING. Now, my boy, keep cool. Losing your temper might mean a rush of brains to the head, and then, where would I be? I mean, where would you be?

SIROCO (*gloomily*). Where should I be?

KING. Come, Siroco! You've got those flannels to order, you know. Farewell, my boy, for a little time! (*Embracing LAZULI.*) Don't sit in a draught, and keep your shoulders well thrown back! (*SIROCO bows to KING.*) Go on, Siroco, you may even precede your King, for he is merry to-day. Siroco! They were run over! (*Exit L.3.E. laughing, singing, and dancing. Key is heard to turn in lock.*)

LAZULI (*alone*). They've locked me in! It's evident this delightful invitation from the King was nothing but a plot to inveigle me here and keep me prisoner. But why? And what does it all mean? Anyway, I won't put up with it! There must be some way out of this gilded cage. Let's see! (*Tries in turn doors L.1.E., R.1.E., and L.3.E.*) All locked! There's nothing but the window. (*Steps out on balcony B.C. through window and looks down.*) Phew! It's forty feet to the ground if it's an inch, and when you get there, it isn't ground, but water. Luckily I swim like a fish. If I only had a rope! What about these bell-cords? (*Pulls down long bell-cords from beside each of the three doors L.1.E., R.1.E., and L.3.E. As he pulls down last one, bell is heard to ring. Ensuing business of knotting ropes together and fastening then to balcony. Must be done very rapidly. The two taken from doors L.1.E. and R.1.E. should be knotted before the one at door L.3.E., which rings bell, is pulled down.*) This will reduce my dive a little at all events. That's it! I hope it won't give way. Here goes! And there goes! (*Having tied the made rope to balcony B.C., and thrown end over, he climbs over balcony, and apparently descends by it just as SIROCO enters hastily L.3.E. with his arms full of assorted flannel underclothing.*)

SIROCO. Did you ring? (*Discovers LAZULI's absence.*) Why, where is he? Where's he gone? (*Going to balcony B.C., apparently discovers him descending.*) Great heavens! He's going to drown himself! Thieves! Murder! Fire! Police! (*KING enters hastily L.3.E.*)

KING (*falling over clothes which SIROCO has dropped*). Now, whose idiotic idea of a practical joke is that I wonder? (*Kicks bundle.*)

SIROCO (*on balcony*). Help! Murder!

KING. Murder? Who's murdered?

SIROCO (*causing KING to look over balcony*). Look, Sire!

KING (*overcome*). Heavens!

SIROCO. He's taking his life in his hands.

KING. You idiot! You mean he's taking my life in his hands, for I can't swim a stroke. This is simply awful! (*Leaning over balcony*). Hi, there! Lazuli! Come back to Erin! I mean come back to Ouf! You'll be drowned. (*As if listening to LAZULI, pauses for an instant, then resumes.*) I don't care of you *can* swim! The lake is full of sharks! I stocked it last spring myself. What's that? (*Business of pausing, listening, etc., as before, then:*) Yes! Yes! You shall have all the liberty you like. Ah! He's climbing up again! Be careful! For heaven's sake don't lose your grip! If only those infernal bell-cords hold! (*LAZULI's head appears as he climbs up outside of balcony.*) Ah! welcome home! Clutch him, Siroco! (*With SIROCO seizes LAZULI, still outside of balcony.*)

LAZULI. But remember! I'm to have my freedom!

KING. You can have anything — barring whooping cough — if you'll only come in here! Cock your leg over, there's a good lad! *That's it!* Saved! Saved! (*With the aid of SIROCO lifts LAZULI over balcony.*) Siroco!

SIROCO. Sire!

KING. Our lives are saved! (*They embrace in sympathy and kneel.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). I can't understand them at all!

KING (*to LAZULI*). My boy! Never do anything of the kind again! I am subject to perspiration of the heart, and the results might be serious. What could have induced you to expose your silver-plated life in that reckless fashion? Are you mad?

LAZULI. Not quite. But the next thing to it. I'm in love.

KING. In love? Nonsense! You think you are, but you're not. It isn't love. It's liver. I've been there.

LAZULI. You? (*Laughs.*) Fancy you in love!

KING (*offended*). And why not, pray? May I ask if you've a monopoly of the tender passion? (*LAZULI and SIROCO both laugh.*) If this ribald hilarity continues I shall leave the room.

LAZULI (*sobering down*). I could not help it! The idea was too funny.

KING. I don't see anything keenly comic in it myself, but never mind that! There's only one thing to be done. You shall marry the girl.

LAZULI. What girl?

KING. The girl you love.

LAZULI. But she is married.

KING. That settles it. That's the last straw that gives the camel the hump! (*Going R.*) The husband is jealous, of course.

LAZULI. I don't know.

SIROCO. If he isn't, he will be, just to spite us.

KING. Oh, my boy! my boy! Be guilty of any imbecility you choose — but don't fall in love! Believe me, it don't pay! (*Crossing L.*)

LAZULI. It isn't a question of profit and loss. Wait till you see her blue eyes!

KING. Wait till you see your own black ones, when her husband gets on to your curves!

LAZULI. Her husband! Bah! What does he amount to? He isn't worthy of her, and the first time I see him I'll tell him so.

KING. Don't do anything rash!

LAZULI. And, if he doesn't like it, I'll pull his nose!

KING. But, if you do, he'll challenge you.

LAZULI. So much the better.

KING. A duel! Siroco, he is bound to be our death! (*Crossing R. to SIROCO.*)

SIROCO. It certainly looks so, Sire.

KING (*to LAZULI*). You mustn't think of fighting.

LAZULI. But I will fight.

KING. But I say you sha'n't fight, if I have to play the hose on you. I never saw such a mad-brained young firecracker. He'll be my death! I feel like an old hen that has hatched a reckless young duck. (*PAGE enters L.3.E. and announces:*)

PAGE. His Excellency the Baron Tabasco!

KING. Shades of Macchiavelli! The Ambassador who brings my royal fiancée! I'd forgotten his very existence. (*To LAZULI.*) You worry me so, you drive everything out of my head. (*To PAGE.*) Show him in. (*PAGE bows and exit L.3.E.*)

TABASCO (*outside*). Oh, I may enter, may I?

LAZULI (*who has listened attentively*). Heavens! That voice!

KING. Heavens! Which voice? What's the matter with the voice?

LAZULI. Nothing. It can't be he. (*TABASCO followed by TAPIOCA enters very angrily L.3.E.*)

KING, *with back turned to him, is conversing in dumb show R. front.*)

TABASCO. If he's not here, I'll recall myself. I'll send a gunboat. I'll — (*seeing the KING.*) Oh, he is here! So much the better for him. (*Bows to KING, who pays no attention.*) Your Majesty!

LAZULI (*excitedly*). It is he!

KING. What he?

LAZULI. The husband of her I love.

KING. You don't mean it!

QUINTET. — LAZULI, KING, SIROCO, TABASCO, and TAPIOCA.

[words by Adrian Ross]

LAZULI.	It's the husband, harsh and hated,
	As I formerly related,
	But I didn't know before
ALL.	I'm/He's the great Ambassador!
KING and SIROCO (<i>to LAZULI</i>).	Then the problem that you stated
	Grows extremely complicated,
	For you cannot hope to score
KING and SIROCO.	Off }
LAZULI and TAPIOCA.	He's } the great Ambassador!
TABASCO.	I'm }
TABASCO.	Though for mildness celebrated,
	I shall soon be irritated,
	If they utterly ignore
ALL.	Such a great Ambassador!
TAPIOCA.	Then, instead of being mated,
	The unhappy King is fated
	To be dragged into a war —
{ TAPIOCA.	By the great Ambassador!
{ LAZULI.	Blow the great Ambassador!

{	TABASCO.	I'm the great Ambassador!
{	KING <i>and</i> SIROCO.	He's the great Ambassador!
ALL.		He's/I'm athirst for gore, That great Ambassador, That grand Ambassador. Immense Ambassador!

And the consequences that are now in store
Will probably be sore,
If we/you do not implore
Upon the very floor,
That big Ambassador,
That huge Ambassador,
That vast Ambassador;
And perhaps his/my gracious favour he'll/I'll restore
And consent to be a good Ambassador
Evermore!

LAZULI (<i>to</i> KING).	I will call him out politely In a duel fierce, but knightly, And my rapier I will bore Through the great Ambassador!	
{	LAZULI.	I'm the great Ambassador!
{	TABASCO.	He's the great Ambassador!
{	KING, SIROCO, TAPIOCA.	Though your confidence is sprightly, He will make you look unsightly; You'll be cut in three or four —
KING <i>and</i> SIROCO.	By }	
TABASCO.	I'm }	the great Ambassador!
LAZULI <i>and</i> TAPIOCA.	He's }	
TABASCO.	Though I hold my temper tightly, It's the tiger burning brightly That will soon begin to roar —	
{	TABASCO.	Says the great Ambassador!
{	OTHERS.	He's the great Ambassador!
TAPIOCA.	And to terrify you rightly I shall telegraph to Whiteley To supply an Army corps For the great Ambassador!	
{	TAPIOCA.	I'm the great Ambassador!
{	TABASCO.	Oh, the great Ambassador!
{	LAZULI.	He's a great Ambassador!
{	KING <i>and</i> SIROCO.	He's/I'm athirst for gore, etc.
ALL.		

DANCE.

TABASCO (*very loudly*). Ahem!

KING (*without turning round*). Better see a doctor about that throat of yours.

TABASCO (*who has been growing more and more angry*). Your Majesty, I am receiving no attention!

KING (*affably*). I am extremely sorry. This is our busy day, and we're rather short-handed.

TABASCO (*appeased*). So long as it is not intended as a slight —

KING. Not at all! Quite the contrary!

LAZULI (*aside to KING*). I'll challenge him at once!

KING. No, no, my boy! You'll ruin everything! Leave him to me!

TABASCO. Once for all, your Majesty — am I to receive any attention or not?

KING. Any attention? You simply have a grinding monopoly on every thought I ever had. (*Gets two chairs from B.C. and sits C. TABASCO does likewise.*) You'll excuse my not giving you a formal audience from the throne. I'll do that as soon as they send my other crown home from the jeweler's. I've been having it blocked. (*Seated.*) Now, if you'll have the goodness to continue!

TABASCO. But I haven't begun yet!

KING. Never mind. Continue just the same as if you had. I follow you so far — perfectly.

TABASCO (*jumping up, enraged.*) Oh, this is too much! (*Brandishing chair and dashing it down violently.*) I came here with the olive branch of peace — all gentleness and conciliation.

KING. Any one with half an eye can see that. (*To LAZULI.*) And you want to provoke a man with a cayenne pepper temper like that?

TABASCO. But I warn you. I have my ultimatum in my pocket.

KING. Yes, and I'll bet it's loaded way up to the muzzle. (*Aside.*) I wonder if he's much of a swordsman.

TABASCO (*amiably*). And now, as I have explained the position, we may have a little friendly chat. (*Sits.*)

KING (*very amiably*). We may. (*Sits.*) Certainly — a little friendly chat.

TABASCO. What the Scotch call a "crack." (*Brings his fist heavily down on his knee.*)

KING (*aside*). He has a devil of a wrist. (*To TABASCO.*) I beg pardon, but do you go in for fencing at all?

TABASCO. Why does your Majesty ask?

KING. Oh, I don't know. Only talking of dogs reminded me of fencing.

TABASCO. But we were not talking of dogs.

KING. *You* may not have been, but *I* was. I always talk of dogs just about this time every Tuesday.

TABASCO (*to TAPIOCA*). I see it all. (*KING gets up to fetch swords.*) He is a born diplomat, and wishes to disarm suspicion by his random remarks. (*Rises.*) I'll meet him on his own ground. (*To KING.*) It does look as if we were liable to have a hard winter, as your Majesty observes.

LAZULI. They're both crazy! (*During these speeches the KING has procured from R.B. two wooden swords. Coming from B. to TABASCO he crosses the handles and offers him his choice.*)

KING (*aside*). I must find out once for all what he can do.

TABASCO (*astonished*). What's this?

KING (*thrusting one sword into TABASCO's hand and putting himself with an appel into a fencing attitude*). On guard!

TABASCO (*holding sword in position*). This is the most extraordinary audience I've ever had!

KING. On guard!

TABASCO (*lowering his sword*). Speaking of the Princess, your Majesty — (KING hits him on the head. TABASCO is staggered and struts up and down stage.)

KING (*aside to LAZULI*). He's no good. (*Aloud.*) On guard! (*Business.*)

TABASCO (*lowering sword*). Of course, as your Majesty very properly observes, it is liable to rain — but — (KING hits him again in the same place.)

KING (*aside to LAZULI*). Very weak defence.

LAZULI. I'm a lot better than that.

KING. I'd have to put you in a strait jacket if you weren't.

TABASCO (*aside*). He's evidently in earnest. I owe it to my dignity as a diplomat not to be assassinated. (*To KING.*) One moment, your Majesty, and I'll be with you. (*Takes off coat and gives it to TAPIOCA.*) (*To TAPIOCA.*) Be careful of that coat. I have my ultimatum in the inside pocket. (*To KING.*) Now then, your Majesty! I'm ready. (*Puts himself on guard*). On guard!

KING (*aside*). A king in his shirt-sleeves is a bit out of the usual, but I must see this through. (*Takes off coat and gives it to SIROCO.*) Don't let the moth get into that while I am engaged. (*They fight, changing position, KING crossing front R., TABASCO crossing back to L. Then four passes and parries and four blows; then they work back to original positions, KING L., TABASCO R., and KING says, seeing TABASCO's position*), Prime! An old-fashioned guard! (*As he speaks, lowers sword, and TABASCO raps him over the head.*)

TABASCO. Anybody at home?

KING. Here, wait a bit!

TABASCO (*hitting him again*). Hup!

KING. Look out! I'm not ready! (*As they cross stand KING slips, TABASCO rushes at KING, who recovers position quickly. They fight several skilful passes, KING lowers his point.*) There is one thing I want to call your attention to — (TABASCO raps him on the head, staggering him. TABASCO prods him in the chest. KING doubles up and turns around. TABASCO prods him in the back. KING, discouraged, drops his sword and runs behind LAZULI and SIROCO. TABASCO throws sword away, takes coat from TAPIOCA and puts it on.) He buttoned me! He buttoned me up the front and he buttoned me up the back! (*To LAZULI.*) And you want to try conclusions with a human hyena like that? Never!

TABASCO. Now then, when you've quite done with mumbling in the corner!

SIROCO. Mumbling in the corner!

LAZULI (*going C., angrily to TABASCO*). Mumbling in the corner!

KING (*pulling LAZULI L.*). Mumbling in the corner!

TABASCO (*loudly*). I repeat — mumbling in the corner! (*Starts to take off coat.*)

KING. Keep your coat on. I admit the mumbling.

TABASCO. Never in my life have I been so insulted. (*Fumbling in his pockets.*) Where's that ultimatum?

KING. Ultimatum? One moment — I apologize.

TABASCO. You apologize?

KING. Exactly. We all apologize. Get down there and apologize. (*LAZULI and SIROCO bow very low.*) Imagine me in the basement.

TABASCO. That's better. (*Amiably.*) May I now present the Princess?

KING. You may present your washerwoman, if you want to. (*Takes coat from SIROCO and puts it on.*) Will an official presentation in ten minutes suit your convenience?

TABASCO. Certainly, your Majesty. (*LAZULI and SIROCO have met TAPIOCA at back.*)

KING. Then I'll just send for the crown, turn the royal cuffs, brush the royal hair, and be ready to receive you *in forma pauperis*. (*Crossing R., TABASCO L.*)

TABASCO. I shall wait upon your Majesty with pleasure. (*Going L.3.E.*) A truly delightful though slightly eccentric monarch. (*To TAPIOCA.*) Now, Tapioca, you see what diplomacy and the command of one's temper can accomplish. (*Bows obsequiously to KING at L.3.E. and exit, followed by TAPIOCA.*)

KING. *Au revoir*, my dear Baron. (*As soon as TABASCO and TAPIOCA are off.*) I hope he'll fall downstairs and break his diplomatic neck. (*To LAZULI.*) Do you now see what a narrow escape you've had? He's pink more holes in you in five minutes than a colander has. I know what I'll do. I'll have him arrested and thrown into the deepest dungeon in the palace, and while he's making friends with the spiders and rats, you can meander with his wife.

LAZULI. You're a brick!

KING. Oh, I'm a whole house when I feel like it. (*Crosses to SIROCO R. LAZULI gone up to L.U.E.*)

SIROCO. Bu your Majesty! Consider! You can't arrest him.

KING. Can't?

SIROCO. Certainly not. The person of an Ambassador is sacred.

KING. An Ambassador's person is not sacred until he's formally presented and recognized.

SIROCO. True, Sire, but he'll be back directly to be presented, and —

KING. And consequently he must be arrested at once, before he has a chance.

SIROCO. Your Majesty is a genius!

LAZULI. Here comes the Ambassador, Sire!

KING. Quick, not a word — follow me! (*Exeunt omnes melodramatically R.1.E. Enter Chorus of Courtiers and Lords and Ladies in Waiting, L.3.E.*)

CHORUS.

[words by Adrian Ross.]

In courtly train,
Let us welcome, with dutiful homage,
The Royal Dame
Who is coming to marry the King!
Long may they reign,
Till they perish exclusively *from* age
Exempt from pain,
Or misfortune, or any such thing!
With hearty cheer,
Let us hail the Ambassador also,
The noble peer
Who is bringing the lady to-day,
We're very glad
He is able to pay us a call so;

And hope he had
An enjoyable time on the way!

We pay the whole Legation
Congratulation
And full felicitation
From all our nation!
Hail, fair Princess!
Hail, noble Lord!
May all success
Your aim reward
In the wish we express;
We are all in full accord
So let us shout,
As a positive proof to her Highness
Beyond all doubt,
That we echo our Sovereign's choice.
And we rejoice, we all rejoice!
Hail!
With jubilant voice —
Laoula!

Flourish of trumpets and enter L.3.E TABASCO escorting LAOULA and TAPIOCA with ALOËS. All are in full court costume. They cross without looking up and kneel before throne R.3.E. Page exit immediately upon their entrance. Pause.

TABASCO. Your Majesty, as usual, I am waiting. *(Pause.)*

LAOULA *(looking up and discovering throne to be vacant, bursts out laughing)*. Why, there's nobody here!

TABASCO *(rising)*. What? *(All rise.)*

ALOËS. And this is your idea of an official presentation. *(Laughs.)*

TABASCO. Silence! Remember your position as the daughter of a diplomatist! *(KEDAS followed by two Guards enters L.3.E.)* Here's some one now. The Royal Chamberlain, I presume?

KEDAS *(advancing, the Guards remaining near L.3.E.)*. His Excellency the Baron Tabasco?

TABASCO. The same, Minister Plenipotentiary and Ambassador Extraordinary from His Majesty, King Mataquin!

KEDAS *(affably)*. Pardon the interruption. I must ask you to consider yourself my prisoner.

ALL. What?

KEDAS. I arrest you in the King's name.

TABASCO. Arrest me! There must be a mistake. What have I done?

KEDAS. Nothing, of course. No one that is arrested ever has done anything.

TABASCO. But — but — oh! this is too much! *(To KEDAS.)* You're making the most monumental blunder of your life. I'm King Mataquin's plenipotentiary — come to arrange for the marriage of the Princess here.

LAOULA. My marriage?

TABASCO. Certainly — with His Majesty King Ouf.

LAOULA (*staggers*). Good heavens!
ALOËS. She's going to faint. (*Supports her.*)
KEDAS (to Guards). Put him in chains at once!
TABASCO. In chains?
KEDAS. That's what I said. Guards — away with him!

CHORUS.

Ho, hale him hence,
To a dungeon disgusting and draughty;
Fetter him fast,
With a rigidly riveted ring.
Though his offence,
He conceals with a cunning that's crafty;
He must be cast
Into jail, by command of the King!

Guards take TABASCO off, followed by Courtiers.

LAZULI (*entering R.U.E., sees LAOULA*). Laoula! She's fainted! (*Going to her.*) I'll attend to her.
ALOËS. Are you a physician?
LAZULI. To a certain extent I am, and my specialty is heart disease.
LAOULA. Ah, Lazuli! You don't know what's going on!
LAZULI. What?
LAOULA. They want to marry me —
LAZULI. How many more of them? You have one husband already. Isn't that enough?
LAOULA. But I haven't any husband?
LAZULI. Isn't the Ambassador your husband?
ALOËS. Not at all. That was only his ridiculous diplomacy. He's my father.
LAZULI. But then — who is *she*?
ALOËS. She's the Princess Laoula.
LAZULI. The Princess? The one who's betrothed to the King?
ALOËS. Exactly.
LAZULI. Phew! This is a nice state of affairs.
LAOULA (*crying*). But I won't marry him. I hate him. I hate everybody.
LAZULI (*embracing LAOULA*). My poor Laoula! (*LAZULI and LAOULA are in each other's arms as the KING enters L.3.E.*)
ALOËS. Tapioca, support me!
KING. Now then, the coast is clear for Lazuli, and he must lose no time. (*Sees LAZULI embracing LAOULA.*) I'm blessed if he is losing any time! Ahem!
LAZULI. The King!
ALL (*separating*). The King!
KING. Oh, don't mind me! I like to see young people enjoying themselves.
LAZULI. Thank you. (*Kisses LAOULA.*)
KING. Hold on, young man! You're not going through a tunnel. (*To LAOULA.*) It's all right. I've locked your husband up!

LAOULA. My husband?

LAZULI (*aside, quickly to LAOULA, ALOËS, and TAPIOCA*). He thinks you are the Ambassador's wife. Let him, it's our only chance. (*To KING.*) So he's really locked up, is he?

KING. He's most decidedly locked up. Poor old Tabasco! But he's where he'll stay. So this is my Royal Consort? (*To ALOËS.*)

ALOËS (*astonished*). I?

LAZULI (*quickly to ALOËS*). Don't undeceive him for the world!

ALOËS. But —

KING (*examining ALOËS critically*). I'm agreeably disappointed. If I'd wanted to contract a morganatic alliance I couldn't have pitched on anything more to my fancy.

ALOËS. Oh, Sire!

KING. You are not shy, are you?

ALOËS. I don't know, Sire! I used to be!

SONG. — ALOËS and CHORUS (WOMEN).

When I was at school, in the days gone by —
Sing hey for those school-days sweet!

(*Very demurely.*) I was very demure and very shy;
(*Mischievously, with business.*) And I glanced askance, with a school-girl's eye,
At the boys whom I chanced to meet!

CHORUS (*shocked*). And she glanced askance, etc.

ALOËS (*two rapturous sighs*). Ah me! Ah me!
And those naughty little boys looked back like this! (*Bus.*)
And they sometimes blew a little kiss! (*Bus.*)
I was as happy as could be,
For they all loved me —
And I knew it when they went like this! (*Bus.*)

CHORUS (*astonished*). Like this! like this! (*Bus.*)

ALOËS (*slyly*). How did I happen to know?
(*Mysteriously.*) Whisper it soft and low!
(*Confidentially.*) With a "cheep, cheep, cheep,"
With a "cheep, cheep, cheep!"
(*Very archly.*) A little bird told me so!
ALL. That's how I/she happened to know!
Whisper it soft and low, etc.

ALOËS. Though now I am "out," I am still quite meek —
Sing hey for the maiden sweet!

I am very demure, but very chic,
(*Business, more grown-up.*) And I glance askance, with a smile unique,
At the boys whom I chance to meet!

CHORUS (*shocked*). Oh, she'll glance askance, etc.

ALOËS (*two sighs*). Ah me! Ah me!
And those naughty boys look back like that! (*Bus.*)
And they sometimes even raise a hat!

I am as happy as can be,
For they worship me —
And I know it when they look like that! (*Business, folded arms and steady stare.*)
CHORUS (*astonished*). Like that! like that! (*Bus.*)
ALOËS. How did I happen to know, etc.
ALL. That's how I/she happened to know! etc.

KING. I should have preferred a little more *embonpoint*, perhaps. But diet will do wonders. You want cod-liver oil.

ALOËS (*shuddering*). Ugh! the nasty stuff. I hate it.

KING. I know that as a beverage it has its drawbacks; but it grows on you.

ALOËS. It certainly won't grow on *me*.

KING. Then again, your nose comes a little short of what I might have wished.

ALOËS. Do you like a longer nose?

KING. Oh, I wasn't thinking of my own personal predilections — I was thinking of the coinage. A *retroussé* nose is all right on the small change; but when you get to half-crowns and five-shilling pieces — I think one's subjects look for a little more bridge. But never mind that now. The first thing to do is to arrange for our betrothal. Siroco! Have the Princess shown to her apartments, No. 27, Corridor B.

TAPIOCA (*offering arm to ALOËS*). Allow me, Princess.

ALOËS (*taking TAPIOCA's arm*). Thanks! (*All fall back and bow profoundly as ALOËS, escorted by TAPIOCA, exit L.3.E.*)

KING (*to LAZULI*). Now, then, the coast is clear! You must be off at once.

LAZULI. But I thought —

KING. You'll want to get out of that habit as soon as you can. I'll do all the thinking. (*Goes to door R.2.E., presses spring and it opens.*) Do you see these stairs?

LAZULI. Yes?

KING. They lead to the lake. At their foot you will find a boat which will take you across the lake. Once on the other side, you'll find a coach and four waiting to convey you to a hunting lodge of mine in the mountains; you can bill and coo there to your heart's content.

LAZULI. Your Majesty is too good.

KING. I know it. I'm so good that they won't insure my life.

LAZULI. We can never thank you enough.

KING. Now, off you go! Take my purse. I want you to have every little comfort and luxury you can think of. Elopements only occur — now and then in a lifetime.

TRIO. — KING, LAZULI, and LAOULA.
[words by Adrian Ross]

LAZULI. Together, darling, let us roam
With staff and scrip and pocket-comb;
The King's highway shall be our home,
The stars shall guide our course!
LAOULA. Though walking's very well for you,
For me I fear it will not do;

A tricycle that's built for two
Would prove a great resource!
KING. But very soon the tire, you'll feel,
Is *in* your legs and *off* our wheel;
You'll find it best to buy or steal
A half-bred hackney horse!
ALL. That noble animal, the horse!
Horse! Horse!
We'll/You'll ride a horse, of course.

All make a sound as if encouraging a horse.

Galloping daily, galloping gaily,
Keep it up and never mind!
All the world goes galloping, galloping,
Galloping past us like the wind!
Galloping longer, galloping stronger,
Leaving all the chase behind,
While our/your laughter echoes after
Galloping, galloping, galloping, galloping, galloping!
Galloping daily, galloping gaily, etc.

LAZULI. But when you gallop fast and far,
Your horse may fall, and there you are!
Perhaps a modern motor car
We'll purchase or retain!

LAOULA. Oh, not a car, for goodness' sake!
Remember what a noise they make!
The brake won't work, the works will break
And never go again!

KING. A motor going by benzine
Will smell like — you know what I mean!
If you must travel by machine,

May I suggest the train?
ALL. That useful article, the train!
Train! Train!
We'll/You'll take a train, it's plain!

All imitate sound of engine,

Tearfully parting, quietly starting,
If you're going, step inside!
Whistle, bell, and quickening, quickening,
Quickening, smoothly out we glide!
Rattling quicker, rattling thicker,
Down the ringing rails we/you ride,

Rocking, reeling, oh, the feeling!
Rattling, rattling, rattling, rattling, rattling!
Rattling quicker, etc.

Exeunt LAOULA and LAZULI R. Noise off.

TABASCO (is heard L.H. off, calling). Where is he? Let me at him! (*Enter TABASCO, in great rage, SIROCO trying to stop him. He pushes SIROCO aside and dashes down chains in centre of stage. KING racing up on the throne. R.1.E. TABASCO is too breathless to speak.*)

KING (*to TABASCO*). My dear Baron, don't say a word! Language will not do justices to the occasion! You have been the victim of a mistake that mortifies me beyond expression. (*To SIROCO.*) And what have you got to say for yourself, you antediluvian idiot, heaping indignity and disgrace on the most distinguished diplomat that ever frescoed our court with honour? You life shall pay the forfeit.

SIROCO (*astonished*). But, Sire —

KING. Don't "but" me, you addle-pated billygoat! (*To TABASCO.*) Baron, receive our most profound apologies. Your arrest was a *lapsus limbo*, but every reparation shall be made. You shall be invested with the Order of the Two Headed Black Beetle of the Third Class.

TABASCO. Sire, you overwhelm me!

KING. That's nothing! I propose to smother you with honours before I get through. But the first thing to do is to sign the treaty and celebrate our betrothal.

TABASCO. Your Majesty, I am overjoyed. The treaty signed and your betrothal celebrated, my triumph as a diplomatist will be complete. I will return with the Princess at once.

KING. That's right. (*Rings bell L.3.E. Page enters L.3.E.*) Conduct His Excellency to the apartments of Her Highness the Princess, No. 27, Corridor B. (*Exit TABASCO L.3.E. with Page.*) I wonder what he'll say when he finds his wife gone. Something unfit of publication, I'll bet a sequin. You might as well be cooking up some kind of excuse, Siroco.

SIROCO. I, Sire?

KING. Precisely. You've got to earn your salary in this palace. Don't argue. Here comes the Court. Look happy while I take my matrimonial pill.

SIROCO. Excuse me, Sire. I've an important engagement with my dentist.

KING. No, you don't! You'll have to face the music like a man. (*Courtiers and Ladies enter L.3.E. All are ranged watching L.3.E. SIROCO stands by throne R.H. There is a brief pause.*) Well, what's up? Where's the Princess? (*Enter TABASCO L.3.E. in a state of the utmost confusion, too breathless to speak. All manifest great interest.*)

TABASCO (*tremendously agitated*). Oh, Sire — the Princess!

KING. Well, where's the Princess?

TABASCO. She's gone, eloped!

KING. Nonsense! It can't be. You must have gone to the wrong room. I said No. 27.

TABASCO. There was no one there but my daughter and Tapioca.

KING. Your daughter? Who's she? (*ALOËS and TAPIOCA enter L.3.E.*)

TABASCO. Here she is, Sire.

KING. She? Why, that's the Princess.

TABASCO. Not at all, Sire. The other was the Princess.

KING. What? Why then, I've just been assisting the elopement with somebody else of my future Queen!

TABASCO. You have? What did you do that for?

KING. I thought it was your wife.

TABASCO. That's a nice reason!

KING. Didn't you yourself introduce this lady as the Princess, and the other one as your wife?

TABASCO. That was a diplomatic subterfuge, Sire.

KING. Diplomatic grandmother! It was the concentrated essence of asinine imbecility! You blithering idiot! You've made me help a man to run away with my own wife!

TABASCO. But how was I to know, Sire?

KING. This is too deeply diabolical for words. But don't stand there like a lot of mummies. Pursue them.

TABASCO. I've attended to that, Sire. Kedas and a dozen Guards with loaded rifles are on the track, with strict instructions to rescue the Princess and shoot her companion on the spot.

KING. What! *(Falls into TAPIOCA's arms, very weak.)*

SIROCO. Great heavens!

TABASCO. Don't be afraid. They'll make a lead mine of him.

KING. A lead mine of him? Miserable man! Don't you know that my very existence is bound up in his — you — you — ? *(Jumps at TABASCO's throat, shakes him, then goes over and sinks in SIROCO's arms, too faint to proceed.)*

SIROCO. Sire! *(They fall into each other's arms.)*

TABASCO. They're mad!

KING *(starting up)*. Send after them! Countermand the order! A million of piastres to the man who gets there in time! *(Just as a rush is being made by every one, a crash of rifles is heard off R.C. KING fainting in SIROCO's arms.)*

FINALE.

[words by Adrian Ross]

CHORUS.

It's a shot
Then a lot!
Did they pot him,
Yes or not?
Has he got
Something hot
For his plot
Or say for what?
Tell us, tell us on the spot!
Is he shot, or is he not?

Enter LAOULA alone. ALOËS, TABASCO, and TAPIOCA rush to her. The Chorus surround her while the lines below are spoken. The music continues in the orchestra during LAOULA's entrance and during the dialogue following.

SIROCO. Here is the Princess, Sire!

KING *(not daring to turn round)*. Siroco! break it to me gently! Is — is she — alone?

SIROCO. Yes, Sire!

KING. Holy smoke! Only twenty-four hours left!

CHORUS (*bringing LAOULA down*). What has occurred?

Tell us, if still able,
Every word,
Every syllable!
Though it may pain,
Harrow and frighten us,
Do not refrain,
Kindly enlighten us!

BARCAROLLE. — LAOULA.

Over the lake we went sailing,
I and my lover together,
Laughing at fates unavailing,
Never a cloud on the weather.
Sunlight behind us was trailing,
Diamonds leapt in the spray,
Ripples in silvery chorus
Telling of rapture before us,
As we went sailing, sailing, sailing,
Sailing away!

CHORUS (*bouche fermé*).

Ah!
Sailing away!
As she went sailing away!

LAOULA.

Then a bang!

CHORUS.

Bang!

LAOULA.

Rifles rang!

CHORUS.

Rang!

LAOULA.

And a rash
Sudden dash,
And a splash —

CHORUS.

Splash!

LAOULA.

And the boat went on
But my love was gone —
Her love, her love was gone!

CHORUS.

LAOULA.

So will I —

CHORUS.

Why?

LAOULA.

Dare to die!

CHORUS.

Die!

LAOULA.

I will leap
From the steep
To the deep!

CHORUS. Deep!
 LAOULA. Why should I live on
 When my love is gone?
 CHORUS. Why should she live on
 When her love is gone?
 We care not a copper
 That he should die;
 However, it's proper
 We should reply —
 (spoken.) What an awful fate! What an awful fate!
 It makes us quite disconsolate!
 Your Highness, we own with sorrow great,
 Never was such an awful fate!
 Simply awful!

Exit TABASCO L.3.E. supporting LAOULA.

SIROCO (to KING). Do not give way so!
 Show a smiling brow!
 KING (to SIROCO). Well, if you say so,
 I'll dissemble now!
 (to Court.) My friends, let's laugh and sing!
 CHORUS. Long live the King!

KING. There are Kings, unfortunate things,
 Who would wail in a woeful way,
 If you made it clear, they would fill a bier
 By about this time next day!
 I despise such imbecile sighs,
 Which are not of the slightest good;
 I will face my fate with a heart elate,
 As a manly monarch should!
 So rejoice, heart and voice.
 That's a truly royal choice!
 ALL. Sing and sup, fill the cup,
 ALL. Laugh and sing and keep it up!
 KING. And if any subject sobs or cries,
 He dies!
 ALL. For the grief unwise he dies!

KING. To all the land I give command
 To join in jolly jib and saraband!
 Which is why I remark, though my doom may be dark,
 And my reign may be done in a day,
 As a jocular host, I'm entitled to boast
 I'm a King with a capital K!

Big K!
 I'm a King with a capital K!
 CHORUS. Which is why we remark, though we're quite in the dark
 As to what has disturbed him to-day,
 He has conquered his pain, and is jolly again,
 Like a King with a capital K!
 Big K!
 He's a King with a capital K!
 Exactly! undoubted!

ALOËS. As the King gives the word to be gay —
 OASIS, ASPHODEL, ZINNIA. That is what we say!
 ALOËS. It's a duty for all to obey —
 For our play-time is passing away —
 THREE GIRLS. That is what we say!
 ALOËS. And November will come after May!
 So, in spite of the recent mischance
 THREE GIRLS. Let us have a dance!
 ALOËS. That has ended an artist's romance,
 The proposal I dare to advance
 Is, let us have a dance!
 THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS. Let us have a dance!
 ALL. While the dreaming
 Music calls,
 Through the gleaming
 Palace halls,
 Let us hearken,
 Ere they darken,
 As the dusk of the evening falls!
 When the porches
 Fill with night,
 All with torches
 Let us light,
 Merrily scorning
 Twilight's warning
 Dance we the night into morning.

CHORUS. As the King gives the word to be gay —
 THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS. That is what I say!
 CHORUS. It is clear we must hear and obey —
 THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS. That is what I say!
 CHORUS. For our play-time is passing away —
 THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS. That is what I say!
 CHORUS. And we feel that the year is not May!
 THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS. That is what I say!
 CHORUS. So, in spite of the recent mischance

THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS.

Let us have a dance!

CHORUS.

Which has closed, as supposed, a romance,

THREE GIRLS *and* ALOËS.

Let us have a dance!

CHORUS.

Mourning we bury,

With minstrelsy merry

Chiming in tune to our glad, mad dance!

Wild dance. KING and SIROCO try to dance, but finally break down and fall weeping in each other's arms. Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *A summer-room in the Palace. Three large openings at back show landscape drop with view of lake in short middle distance. Between openings L.B. and B.C. large practicable clock, whose hands move continuously through scene. Doors R.H. and L. Drapery curtains to door R.H. Clock hands are at five minutes to one o'clock. Chorus of Soldiers and Citizens are heard off stage at B.C. singing. They enter, cross back, and execut.*

MILITARY CHORUS.

[words by Aubrey Hopwood]

MEN.

When the tramp, tramp, tramp of our military march is heard
Far and near crowds appear as we march along,
For the idlest scamp of a dilatory urchin's stirred,
Martial pride fills his stride while he joins the throng.

King's own bodyguard, of world renown,
We're on view, two by two, daily in the town;
Stalwart soldiers we, and known by fame,
Hear the crowd shout aloud as they all acclaim
The bodyguard! Rataplan! plan! plan!

As we march away,
Brave and gay,
Our diplay,
'Tis most plain to see
Heroes we
All must be,
And we've cause to know
Every foe
Dreads our blow,
When for war the bugles go
Tarantara! Tarantara! Ta-Ra!

MEN *and* WOMEN.

As we/they march away, etc.

When the tramp, tramp, tramp, etc.

As Chorus dies away, clock strikes one and KING enters gloomily from R.1.E., SIROCO enters from L.E., looks at clock and shakes his head mournfully. Both come down stage.

KING. What was that noise outside?

SIROCO. It was the Grenadiers, Sire, changing guard at the Palace entrance.

KING. Tell them to do it *sotto voce* next time. It's no use, Roky. As a painter I am a lamentable frost. I've done my best to impart a cheerful crimson tone to the landscape, but it persists in remaining "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue." (*Sits.*)

SIROCO. I quite agree with you, Sire. Things look very indigoish. (*Sits.*)

KING. And the worst of it is the horrible suspense. We really don't know for sure that Lazuli is dead.

SIROCO. True, Sire!

KING. The soldiers may not have hit him.

SIROCO. Let us hope so, Sire!

KING. They miss everything except their meals. Here I am, with doubt and despair slowly but surely knocking me into a cocked-hat, and that Chief of Police, who promised to bring the first glint of intelligence, has evidently curled up somewhere and gone to sleep. No Chief! No glint! No intelligence!

SIROCO. There is still time, Sire.

KING (*brings out book*). Let's do some figuring. It was just about five o'clock yesterday when those fatal shots were fired.

SIROCO. Almost exactly five, Sire.

KING. According to your most ill-advised astrological investigations, my device follows that of Lazuli in twenty-four hours. By the air of my ready-reckoner I have arrived at the conclusion that my — my hegira will take place at five today.

SIROCO. And mine at quarter past, Sire.

KING. In that case I have barely four hours left before dusting out, so to speak.

SIROCO. And I a short four hours and a quarter.

KING (*annoyed*). What are you grumbling about? You're better off than I am! There's no pleasing you! (*Looks at clock.*) That clock is fast! It must be! (*Sets hands of clock back five minutes.*) That's more like it. (*As he comes down from clock, SIROCO sets the hands back another five minutes.*) There's no use in precipitating events.

SIROCO. Quite right, Sire.

KING. Remind me to-morrow, Siroco, to have every clock —

SIROCO (*meaningly*). To-morrow, sire?

KING. Great snakes! I forgot. There won't be any to-morrow for us. A devilish pretty mess you and the stars have cooked up between you

SIROCO. Here he comes!

KING. Who?

SIROCO. The Chief of Police. (*Enter KEDAS L.E. all smiles and elation.*)

KEDAS (*very cheerfully*). Your Majesty! At last I have news!

KING. And good news! I can see it in your mobile Alabama countenance.

KEDAS. I have every reason, your Majesty, to be satisfied with the results of my efforts.

KING. Siroco!

SIROCO. Sire!

KING. We are saved! (KING and SIROCO embrace. To KEDAS, who has been regarding them with astonishment.) You must be tired. Sit down — take it easy, and tell us all about it.

(KEDAS sits L. of table.) Take your time. (Remembering clock.) Siroco, that clock is slow. Set it ahead five minutes. (Sits R. of table.)

SIROCO. Ten, Sire. You remember I did a little regulating on my won account. (Goes to clock and sets it ahead ten minutes.)

KING. Set it ahead five hours if you like. What's time to us now? (To KEDAS.) Now then, go on with your story.

KEDAS. Thank you, sir. I was a bit afraid at one time that this was going to be added to the mysteries which the police have failed to clear up.

KING. I was — well — not *afraid* you know, but anxious.

KEDAS. What hampered me was that I had no clue.

KING. Don't let that occur again. An officer in your position should never be without a clue. You ought to carry a spare one in your hat.

KEDAS. We had indications, but they were vague. What I wanted was certainty.

KING. That's right. You've struck your thumb-nail on the head. Two pennyworth of certainty is worth more than fourteen pounds of indications.

KEDAS. I said to myself, Lazuli must be found.

KING. That's right.

KEDAS. And I found him.

KING. Siroco!

SIROCO. Sire!

KING. He found him! (KING and SIROCO embrace.)

KEDAS. That is, I didn't exactly find him —but I found out where he was.

KING (*slightly anxious*). Well, that's almost the same thing, of course. It's all right, isn't it?

KEDAS. Oh, you can rely on its being right, your Majesty.

KING. I breathe again. Well, where is he?

KEDAS. At the bottom of the lake, Sire.

KING. Wh — a — a — t? (Both KING and SIROCO subside.)

KEDAS. We could not recover his body, but we found his hat and cloak floating in twenty fathoms of water.

KING (*weakly*). Siroco!

SIROCO (*sadly*). Sire!

KING. Set that clock back again! It's our last chance. (SIROCO *does so*.)

KEDAS. I hope your Majesty is pleased with the manner in which I have conducted this enquiry.

KING. Idiot!

SIROCO. Blockhead!

KING. Dunderpate!

KEDAS. What?

KING. Out you get!

SIROCO. Off you go!

KEDAS. It seems a bit rough —

KING. Will you clear out? (KING seizes cushion and hurls it as KEDAS, hitting SIROCO, who gets in the way. KEDAS exits L.H. As KEDAS exits KING sits on low stool, and SIROCO on

nearest chair up stage. Both hold their heads in the hands and appear plunged in the greatest despondency.)

SIROCO (*timidly*). Sire!

KING. Well, what is it?

SIROCO. How does your Majesty feel?

KING. Don't ask me. Compared to me a boiled owl is a bird of Paradise with tail feathers nine feet long. How about a little nip of something?

SIROCO. Not a bad idea!

KING. Just *one*, you know. (*Rising.*) I'm all right in myself — only I seem to have lost the command of my legs.

SIROCO (*rising*). I'm a bit gone in the knees myself.

KING. You lean against me, and I'll lean against you. (They go towards the door, leaning on one another.) Siroco, I'm afraid it's about six to four on.

SIROCO. Six to four? Ten to one on.

KING. It looks to me unpleasantly like a dead snip! (*Exit R.H. supported by SIROCO. Enter TAPIOCA L.*)

TAPIOCA. I must see Aloës. We were so happy till yesterday — when that poor Lazuli was shot. Since then, the Princess won't let her out of her sight, and I can't get word to her. Last night I dreamed of her — beautiful, delusive dreams — but in the morning they were gone, and only the cold truth remained!

SONG. "THE IVORY GATE." — TAPIOCA.¹
[words by Adrian Ross]

Dreaming in the dark,
Your vision comes upon my lonely slumber,
Ere the soaring lark
Is singing in the golden halls of day!
Over me you bow,
With tender words and kisses without number,
And heart for ever growing fonder;
Until the darkness flees away,
And all the visions wander
Into the portal yonder!

'Tis fair and great, the Ivory Gate,
Where dreams are born;
Fairer far falsehoods are
Then the truth, that comes by the Portal of Horn!
For half a night I gather delight,

¹ *Note.* — *The Gates of Dreams.* — An ancient poetic fancy was that delusive dreams passed through an Ivory Gate, those which come true through one of Horn.

"Sunt geminae somni portae, quarum altera fertur
Corneo, qua veris facilis datur exitus umbris;
Altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto
Sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia manes."

Virgil: *Aeneid*, lib. vi., 893 et seq.

In face of Fate —
Then you pass with the dreams, alas!
Into the Ivory Gate!

Shall a morning dawn
When kinder light, that does not leave me lonely,
When, the veil withdrawn,
Will give me back the vision plain and clear?
Will you hear my vows,
And come to love me, not in shadow only,
Till years have flown, as flies the swallow,
And hand in hand we go, my dear,
Our happy dreams to follow,
In the dreamland hollow?

Though fair and great the Ivory Gate,
Where dreams are born,
Fairer far sights there are
In the truth, that comes by the Portal of Horn!
And day and night shall gather delight,
Both soon and late,
Till we will go, with the love we know,
Into the Ivory Gate!
The marvelous, mystical Ivory Gate!

Exit R.H. LAZULI enters cautiously by windows B.C. first looking round carefully to be sure no one is present.

LAZULI. Well, no one can say I haven't given the water cure a fair trial. When the soldiers fired I slipped over the side of the boat, and paddled along until I saw my opportunity — an island of reeds about twenty yards off. I dived — got into the covert, and I've been shivering about in the reeds and rushes ever since. Why the King should have suddenly turned against me I can't imagine. But he evidently has. You don't order soldiers to fire on adopted sons unless you're annoyed with them. I can only suppose — Hullo! Somebody's coming! I must hide! (*Exit by window B.C. as KING enters R.H. with tin box containing documents under his arm.*)

KING. Well, they can say what they like — (*looking at clock.*) What's that? Two o'clock? It can't be. That clock wants a curb. I know it can't be more than a quarter to. (*Sets clock back to 1.45.*) That confounded pendulum makes me nervous. (*Bangs clock case to, and sits at table or desk R.H. busying himself with papers, which he takes from tin box. SIROCO enters R.H.*)

SIROCO (*looking at clock*). It can't be as late as that. A quarter to two. It's impossible. (*Sets clock back to 1.30.*) Three hours and three-quarters are short enough for a man in my position.

KING. Come here and help me arrange my papers. Just throw your eyes over these bills, and when you find a receipted one whistle. You do whistle, don't you?

SIROCO. Very rarely, Sire.

KING. Well, you probably won't be called upon to strain yourself. (*As they both busy themselves with papers, LAZULI appears unobserved at window R.C.*)

LAZULI (*aside*). The King and Siroco. I wonder what they're up to. If it's anything concerning me, I want to know it. I must keep my eye on them. (*During following scene he hides and reveals himself as the lines require, being careful not to be discovered by any of the characters on stage.*)

PAGE (*entering L.H. and announcing*). His Excellency Baron Tabasco! (TABASCO *enters L.H. and stands bowing as Page exit L.H.*)

KING (*aside to SIROCO*). Take that man away!

TABASCO. Pardon my intrusion, your Majesty, but the necessity is imperative.

KING (*aside, while he tears up papers and pays no attention to TABASCO*). He's a Jonah of the thirty-third degree. Trouble and he are twins, and if he thinks I'm going to waste any of my last hours on him, he's mistaken. I've a good mind not to invite him to the funeral.

TABASCO. How am I to interpret this reception, your Majesty? (SIROCO *whistles, KING examines receipt, and, apparently disgusted, knocks it out of SIROCO's hand on floor.*)

KING (*to SIROCO*). I can't be disturbed over my accounts, I shall be paying somebody twice over. Tell him I'm not in.

SIROCO (*to TABASCO*). His Majesty desires me to convey his compliments to your Excellency, and regrets very much that he has just stepped out on business.

TABASCO. Well, of all the outrageous treatment I've been subjected to since I first came her, this is the worst. I can stand no more!

KING. Oh, go and have fits in the garden if you want to, but don't bother me! Try the next street. I've no time to waste on idiots.

TABASCO. Idiots! Repeat that word!

KING. I'll not only repeat it, I'll emphasize it. (*Kicks TABASCO.*)

TABASCO. Your Majesty will repent that emphasis!

KING. I think not, I think not, and again I say, I think not.

TABASCO (*restraining himself with difficulty and speaking with forced composure*). I presume your Majesty is aware that this treatment of an ambassador is tantamount to a declaration of war.

KING. I don't care what it's tantamount to. War? War? What's war or anything else to me, with less than three hours to live?

TABASCO (*astonished*). Less than three hours to live?

LAZULI (*aside*). What's that he says?

KING. Yes, and it's all your fault too!

TABASCO. Mine?

KING. For it was you who ordered the shooting of that poor young man.

LAZULI (*aside*). Oh, the old ruffian!

TABASCO. Well, what of it?

KING. What of it? Everything of it! Family vaults for two. That's what of it. And I'm one of the two.

SIROCO. And I'm the other.

KING. That's a side issue of no importance whatever.

TABASCO. But I don't understand.

KING. Of course you don't. You wouldn't understand anything unless an artesian well was driven into your intellect. Lazuli and I were born under the same star, and my existence depended on his.

TABASCO. Good gracious!

LAZULI (*aside*). Oho! This is growing interesting!

KING. I had twenty-four hours leeway to be sure, but that isn't much among one; and to-day at five o'clock, twenty-four hours after you made fish-bait of him, yours truly must skip skyward. It isn't a wildly hilarious prospect.

TABASCO. I should say not. (*Deeply moved.*) Your Majesty has my most profound sympathy. There can no longer be any question of your marrying the Princess, of course.

KING. No, that's off!

LAZULI (*aside*). Thank goodness for that!

KING (*much moved*). You'll take her back to her papa, and tell him how sorry I was I didn't have time to get married.

TABASCO. I will take her home to-night. But we'll return for the funeral, of course.

KING. That will be very nice of you.

TABASCO (*to SIROCO*). Both funerals, of course, I mean.

SIROCO. Oh, Lord! Thanks, I'm sure!

TABASCO (*withdrawing backwards very slowly and softly on tiptoe*). I will trespass no longer now on your Majesty's limited time — your clock is a trifle slow, I fancy — but I will, with your permission, return later for a moment, to obtain your signature on my passports, to be treasured as a token of our friendship when you, alas! are — elsewhere. (*Disappears backwards through door L.H. KING and SIROCO both watching in silence. When he is off they look at each other.*)

KING. Nice cheerful party he is! Roky, it's no use! I've got to brace up on something or I shall break down with one tremendous crash! My legs are like limp shoe-strings!

SIROCO. Mine, too, Sire, are very wobbly.

KING (*addressing coloured trainbearers*). You'd better take a month's salary instead of notice and skip — I sha'n't want trainbearers any more. What I'm chiefly interested in now is pallbearers. (*Boys grin.*) Funny isn't it? (*Savagely.*) What do you mean by laughing at your monarch? Say, Roky, I've an idea! If I don't change the current of my thoughts I shall go mad! We'll die to music. Something in B flat will about suit our case. I can't fiddle as Nero did, but I can give him several points in vocalisation. Let us drown our sorrows in melodious mirth!

SONG. — KING *with* COONS.

[words by Adrian Ross]

KING.	Merrie little darkie's Very kind remark is "Life in the old dog yet!"
COONS.	Life in de old dog, Luck for de bold dog, Dat's what we mean, you bet.
ALL.	Life in the old dog yet!
KING.	Very glad to hear it;

	All the same, I fear it Looks as if I shall die!
COONS.	Boss, what's de hurry? Don't you worry, Wait till de clouds roll by —
ALL.	Wait till de clouds roll by — by — by!
KING.	King in a crisis, Court in a trice is Sure its advice is Right! Bad luck attacks him: Every one backs him Up with the maxim Trite!
COONS.	And dat's why we say "Sit tight!"
ALL.	There's always a maxim trite.
COONS (<i>laughing</i>).	Yah! yah! yah!
KING.	Every Jack must have his Jill; Every stone two birds may kill; There's a top to every hill;
COONS.	So dey say! So dey say!
KING.	All that glitters is not gold, Fortune will reward the bold! Keys may lock, bars may hold; <i>But</i> , Love will find a way!
ALL.	Every Jack must have his Jill, etc.
KING.	Pardon me the question, Is it your digestion Makes you so bright and gay?
COONS.	Why do we laugh so? Why do we chaff so? 'Cos we was built that way!
ALL.	'Cos we was/they were built that way!
KING.	My look-out at present Isn't very pleasant, I am condemned to die!
COONS.	Boss, keep your pluck up! Cheer up! Buck up! Wait till de clouds roll by —
ALL.	Wait till de clouds roll by — by — by!
KING.	King in a hole is! Feeble his role is! Court to condole is There! Fortune forsakes him,

Bends him and breaks him
 Down, till it makes him
 Swear!
 COONS. And dat's when we say "Take care!"
 ALL. We've/They've got advice to spare!
 COONS (*laughing*). Yah! yah! yah!
 KING. Every cloud is sliver lined!
 He who hides can always find!
 Out of sight is out of mind!
 COONS. So dey say! So dey say!
 KING. Every candle has its moth!
 Cut your coat to suit your cloth!
 Spare your breath, cool your broth!
 And Love will find a way!
 ALL. Every cloud is sliver lined! etc.

At end of song KING, SIROCO, and Coons dance off R.H. LAZULI enters.

LAZULI. Here's an interesting state of affairs. If he dies, Laoula cannot be forced to marry him, of course. And if he doesn't die, she will. But, as I can't marry her unless he dies, and as he won't die as long as I live, I don't see how I'm going to marry her, unless I commit suicide; and then, of course, I can't! It's worse than a Chinese puzzle. (*Looking off R.H.*) Here comes Laoula, and in tears. She thinks me dead. And so I must be to all but her. (*Throws kisses of L.H. and conceals himself behind curtains R.H. When he is off ALOËS enters L.H. supporting LAOULA, who appears very sad.*)

LAOULA. Ah me! (*Sighs.*) I'm very wretched, Aloës!

ALOËS. I know you are. But you mustn't give way like this. It doesn't do any good, you know, and it ruins your complexion.

LAOULA. But he's drowned! My Lazuli is d — d — drowned. (*Crying.*)

ALOËS. I know he is. But even that's better than if he were hanged. And he might have been if he'd lived, you know.

LAZULI (*aside*). There's cheerful consolation!

LAOULA. I think you are very cruel. How would you feel if it had been Tapioca who'd been drowned?

ALOËS. I love Tapioca very well, but I shouldn't cry my eyes out for him.

LAOULA. You have no heart. I can't live without Lazuli. (*Enter LAZULI.*)

LAZULI. Laoula!

LAOULA. Lazuli! My own Lazuli!

LAZULI (*embracing LAOULA*). My darling!

ALOËS. Don't mind me. Consider me deaf, dumb, and blind. (*Goes up and looks off L.C.*)

LAOULA (*to LAZULI*). Alive? You're really alive?

LAZULI. On the contrary, I'm dead!

LAOULA. What in the world does he mean, Aloës?

ALOËS. Don't ask me. My impression is he's mad.

LAZULI. Not a bit of it. (*To LAOULA.*) You see, dear, it's like this — unless I'm dead I can't marry you.

LAOULA. Oh!

LAZULI. But if I'm dead, and stay dead, I can.

LAOULA (*not understanding him at all*). Ah!

LAZULI (*to ALOËS*). You follow me, don't you?

ALOËS. If I do, it's at such a tremendous distance that you're out of sight.

LAZULI. Never mind, leave it all to me. I know what I'm about.

LAOULA. But the King?

LAZULI. He's all right. He's changed his plans.

LAOULA. How?

LAZULI. He's given up all idea of marriage. This evening the Baron will start upon his journey back with you to your father. Once outside the city walls, I'll be waiting with fast horses, and, aided by darkness, we'll make our next elopement a success, or know the reason why.

LAOULA. But you haven't told me how you escaped yesterday.

LAZULI. I haven't time now. Besides, I didn't escape. (*Embracing LAOULA.*) Good-bye, love! Trust to me, and everything will go right. (*Exit B.C.*)

LAOULA. Do you understand, Aloës?

ALOËS. Not in the slightest. Only, as long as he says he's dead, I suppose he is. He ought to know.

LAOULA. I suppose so. But oh, Aloës, how happy I am to know, too, he's —

ALOËS. Dead!

LAOULA. No, alive, and true to me! (*LAOULA and ALOËS exeunt B.L. KING and SIROCO re-enter R.H.*)

KING. They talk about drowning your sorrow in drink! It's humbug, for I've tried it, and my sorrows swim like ducks in a frog-pond.

SIROCO. I must make one last appeal to the King. (*To KING.*) Your Majesty!

KING. Well, what is it? This is my busy day.

SIROCO. Don't repulse me! Remember, Sire, your hours are numbered?

KING. It's very kind of you to mention the fact. I'm quite aware of it. What then? So are yours.

SIROCO. That's just it. Oh, Sire, in memory of the many sleepless nights I have spent cooped up in my lonely observatory questioning the silent stars on your behalf — in memory of the countless rosy horoscopes I have snaked out of the most complicated and threatening conjunctions — have mercy, Sire! With one stroke of your pen make me the happiest of men!

KING. What in the world are you driving at?

SIROCO. Cancel that fatal clause of your will, Sire! (*On knees to KING.*)

KING (*enraged*). You want to rat, do you? To desert the union? Blackleg!

SIROCO. But —

KING. But nothing. Do you suppose I'm going to start off on a trip like this without a travelling companion? We'll postpone further discussion of the question till next week.

SIROCO. But where shall I be next week, Sire?

KING. That entirely depends on your past life.

DUET. — KING *and* SIROCO.

KING.

When away I slink, I should like to think

	That my past was really splendid!
	For a life well-spent brings much content
	When that life must soon be ended!
SIROCO.	Yes, I quite agree, it's the same with me,
	For I don't like taking chances;
	And whether we go above or below,
	Depends on the circumstances!
BOTH.	Depends on the circumstances!
KING.	It depends —
SIROCO.	It depends —
BOTH.	It depends upon circumstances!

And other verses.

Exit SIROCO R.H. LAOULA and ALOËS re-enter.

LAOULA. You must come with me when I go to meet Lazuli this evening.

ALOËS. Of course I will, and I'll bring Tapioca too. (*Sees KING. Aside.*) The King!

KING (*not seeing them*). That Castle A. of Ghilbetti's takes a lot of beating. It went right to the spot. Excuse me! By the way, I wonder what particular spot is that a drink goes to? I'd like to cultivate that spot's acquaintance. Excuse me! Roky, old boy, I feel like a new man. Who's afraid? Eh, Roky? Why the devil don't you speak when I answer you? (*Turns around and sees LAOULA and ALOËS at window.*) Hallo! It ain't Roky! It's ladies! Good afternoon, ladies. Excuse me! Sit down, ladies! (*Waving hand.*) Make yourselves quite at home.

LAOULA (*to ALOËS*). What shall we do?

ALOËS (*to LAOULA*). Humour him, to be sure. He can't eat us. (*They sit R.H.*)

KING (*standing by LAOULA*). So this is the (*with difficulty*) sunny sylph who was to have meandered down life's pathway with me, eh? Excuse me! I wouldn't hurt your friend's feelings for the world, but she was too thin. It wasn't her fault, I know, but you remember what the poet said — "A little leanness is a dangerous thing." I don't know what it is, but I've always noticed bones and a bad temper generally live in the same house. It's curious, isn't it?

LAOULA (*to ALOËS*). Isn't he dreadful?

ALOËS (*to LAOULA*). I rather like him.

KING. Hand in hand we would have ambled towards old age, and as we became winkled and withered, I mean winkered and writhled — excuse me — wrinkled and withered, our hearts would have still been young. (*Looking at LAOULA steadily.*) Is that a dimple or where a tooth's gone? I used to know a dimple that had a girl like that — but never mind that now. I wish I'd met you before. I'd liked to have left you something in my will.

ALOËS. It isn't too late yet, is it, your Majesty?

LAOULA (*to ALOËS*). For shame! Aloës.

KING. Yes, it is. It's a melancholy fact that it's very much too late — I've only got — how much time have I got, anyway? Excuse me. (*To ALOËS.*) Would you mind asking that clock to tell you what time it is? We don't speak now!

ALOËS. A quarter to four, your Majesty.

KING. Thank you. It's a great thing to have a head for figures like that. I've only got an hour and fifteen minutes left. If you were only my widow now it would be all right, wouldn't it?

LAOULA (*bashfully*). Oh, Sire!

KING (*struck by an idea*). Well, what's the matter with your being my widow, as it is?

LAOULA (*terrified*). Great heavens!

KING. It's a great idea! Don't you worry. You just watch me pull myself together and attend to business. (*From this point all signs of the KING's inebriety disappear.*)

PAGE (*entering L.H. and announcing*). His Excellency Baron Tabasco. (*Exit L.H. as TABASCO enters L.H., followed by TAPIOCA.*)

TABASCO (*tip-toeing softly in, in the same manner as he made his last exit*). Pardon my intrusion, your Majesty, but I just brought my passports —

KING. That's all right! I'll attend to them later. I've got something else on hand now. I've got to marry the Princess.

TABASCO. But your Majesty distinctly told me you had no intention of marrying the Princess.

KING. I know I did, but I've changed my mind. The wedding shall take place at once!

TABASCO. But consider, your Majesty. You have so short a time to live.

KING. I know it. I've got only an hour and ten minutes now. Lost five minutes by your interference. What do you want to do? Murder me?

TABASCO. Certainly not, your Majesty.

KING. Come, Princess! We have no time to waste. (*Exit KING with LAOULA. To music enter L.H. the full Court.*)

WEDDING CHORUS.

In courtly train,
Let us welcome, with dutiful homage,
The Royal dame
Who is coming to marry the King!
Long may they reign,
Till they perish exclusively *from* age
Exempt from pain,
Or misfortune, or any such thing!
With hearty cheer,

We pay the whole legation
Congratulation
And full felicitation
From all our nation!
Hail, fair Princess!
Hail, noble lord!
May all success
Your aim reward,
In the wish we express;
We're all in full accord!
So let us shout,
As a positive proof to Her Highness,

Beyond all doubt,
That we echo our Sovereign's choice.
And we rejoice, we all rejoice!
Hail!
With jubilant voice —
Laoula!

(Melodrame music continues in orchestra.)

KING *(to LAOULA)*. Come, Princess! All is prepared!

LAOULA *(shrinking back as King attempts to take her hand)*. Your Majesty, I beg of you —
(SIROCO enters in great haste R.H.)

SIROCO. Oh, your Majesty! Your Majesty!

KING. Well, what's the matter now?

SIROCO. All is nearly over, Sire! It's five minutes to five.

KING. What? *(Hurries to clock and looks at it.)* Rubbish! It isn't half-past four yet. We've over half an hour.

SIROCO. Do not deceive yourself with false hopes, Sire! By the Royal Observatory there are scarcely five minutes lacking before the hour of five will strike.

KING. I shall be ready for it! Princess, you are free!

LAOULA. Thanks, your Majesty! Thanks!

KING *(to SIROCO)*. And now, Siroco, to show my faithful subjects how the King can face relentless fate! My cloak! *(Page hands KING a black cloak, in which he swathes himself melodramatically. Music, very piano. KING sits L.H. and throws end of cloak over his head concealing features. SIROCO does the same R.H. The others on stage all show great emotion, hiding their faces in their hands. In the dead silence that follows, orchestra plays a strain of "There is a Happy Land" pianissimo.)*

SIROCO *(undoing cloak from his face)*. Your Majesty!

KING *(removing flap of cloak also)*. Well, what is it?

SIROCO. There is barely time to strike out that clause, Sire! It's the third and last call for me.

KING. Coward! You have another quarter of an hour to revel in, and yet you murmur! You make me sleepy! *(Again covers his head, as does SIROCO. Clock outside begins striking five slowly. At each stroke both groan and shriek convulsively. When clock ceases striking there is a slight pause. Suddenly KING emerges from cloth.)* Siroco!

SIROCO. Sire!

KING. Was that five o'clock?

SIROCO. It certainly was, Sire.

KING. And am I alive?

SIROCO. You undoubtedly are, Sire.

KEDAS *(entering hastily L.H.)* Your Majesty! Your Majesty! We've got him! *(Two Guards enter with LAZULI L.H.)*

ALL. Lazuli!

LAZULI. Yes, Lazuli!

KING. No wonder my funeral flashed in the pan! Now let the wedding ceremony begin.

LAOULA. This time I'm lost!

LAZULI. Wait a minute! Whom do you propose to marry?

