

# 4-Countess-Mariette

DUKE (CONT.)

*Steps aside from the garden door, takes a deep breath.*

*And now, to the bath. It cannot come too soon, this night.*

*Exit the Duke.*

*Mariette enters from the garden door, sits down, crying.*

*The Countess enters.*

COUNTESS

What's wrong, my dear?

MARIETTE

He's so handsome!

COUNTESS

Tragic, I agree. Who? Chevalier Raoul?

MARIETTE

No.

COUNTESS

The Duke?!

MARIETTE

No! His valet!

COUNTESS

Oh? Would you like to take this evening off, my dear? So you can entertain him properly?

MARIETTE

I cannot!

COUNTESS

Why not? You're not a virgin, are you?

MARIETTE

I'm not a virgin! – I'm French! And I was already entertaining him, under the hy, hy, hydrangea! And he was getting very – entertained! And then the Duke tells him to ride away.

COUNTESS

Aww.

MARIETTE

To Paris.

COUNTESS

Oh?

MARIETTE

To bring some key!

COUNTESS

Ahh!

MARIETTE

Yes! So he buttoned up and left! All buttoned!

COUNTESS

The poor lad is in for a few hours of chafing, I'm afraid. Cheer up, my dear. I'm sure he'll be back.

MARIETTE

He will?

COUNTESS

Oh yes. Mariette – tonight, stay in your room. Whatever you hear. Go now. I need to think.

*Exit Mariette. The Countess stands, thinking.*

Your horses are faster than mine, my love, and I cannot ride.

*She stares at the two halves of the broken coin on the table.*

Oh, burn it all!

*She opens the house door and calls out.*

Gabrielle! Gabrielle!

*Gabrielle runs in.*

Get your basket. It's five o'clock. The Duke is dining with the Count at seven. You will speak with the Count first, and you will plead your case yourself.

GABRIELLE

But how can I –

COUNTESS

I will take you to him myself, and I will make him listen to you, and I will make him do what you ask.

GABRIELLE

He is your husband, you said you've no influence, you said –

COUNTESS

He will do what I say not because he is my husband, but because I am his wife. You will speak to the Count, and you will take my carriage and you will go to Paris and you will see your father. Tonight!

GABRIELLE

How can I ever thank you –