

M/F SS, SmS, R&D, Kn

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FRANZ: Here again, wilful dreamer? You crept away from our merry feast, and spoilt our guests' pleasure.

AMALIA: I am sorry for these innocent delights! When the dirge must still be ringing in your ears that sang your father to his grave—

FRANZ: Would you mourn for ever? Let the dead sleep, and make the living happy! I have come—

AMALIA: And when will you be gone again?

FRANZ: Oh, Amalia! Let me not see these black, proud looks! You grieve me. I have come to tell you—

AMALIA: I suppose I must hear that Franz von Moor has succeeded to the title.

FRANZ: Yes, I came to hear what you would say—Maximilian has been laid to rest with his forefathers. I am your lord and master. But Amalia, I would be so in every respect. — You remember what you have been to our family, Moor treated you as his daughter, his love for you lives on even after his death—can you ever forget that?

AMALIA: Never, never. Who could be so thoughtless as to drown those memories in feasting!

FRANZ: My father's love for you must be repaid to his sons, and Karl is dead— you wonder? you are giddy? Yes, truly, the thought of it is so grand, so flattering, that it must even numb a woman's pride. Franz tramples upon the hopes of the noblest young ladies in the land, Franz comes and offers his heart and his hand to a poor orphan who would be helpless without him, and with it all his gold and all his castles and forests. Franz, whom men envy and fear, comes of his own free will to declare himself Amalia's slave—

AMALIA: Why does not the lightning split the blaspheming tongue that speaks such shameful words? You, you murdered my love, and Amalia should call you husband! you—

FRANZ: Not so hasty, your most gracious highness! — It is true, Franz cannot mop and mow like a cooing Celadon before you— true, he has not learnt to moan his lover's plaint

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to the echo of the rocks and caves like a languishing Arcadian swain— Franz speaks, and if he hears no answer, he will— command.

AMALIA: Command? You, reptile, command? command me? — and if I throw your command back in your face with scorn?

FRANZ: You will not do that. I know a way that will nicely tame your blind obstinate pride— a convent cell!

AMALIA: Bravo! excellent! in a convent cell, spared your basilisk's look for ever, and with time enough to think of Karl, to cling to his memory. Welcome with your convent! Let your cell enfold me!

FRANZ: Ha! is it so! — beware! Now you have taught me the art of tormenting you— the sight of me shall scourge this everlasting fancy of Karl from your head like a fury with locks of fire, the bogey-man Franz shall lurk behind your lover's image like the dog in the fairy-tale, that lay on the underground treasure— by your hair I will drag you into the chapel with my sword in my hand, force the oath of matrimony out of your soul, take your virgin bed by storm, and conquer your proud innocence with my greater pride.

AMALIA [*striking him across the face*]: Take this for your dowry!

FRANZ [*provoked*]: Ha! ten times and ten times more you shall be paid back for that! Not my wife— you shall not have the honour— no, I will have you for my mistress, and honest peasant women will point their fingers at you if you dare to cross the street. Yes, gnash your teeth— spit fire and venom from your eyes— I like a woman to be angry, it makes you more beautiful, more desirable. Come— your struggling will be sauce to my triumph and spice to my pleasure when I force my embraces on you— Come with me to my room— I am burning with desire— now, this minute you shall go with me! [*Attempting to drag her off.*]

AMALIA [*falling upon him*]: Forgive me, Franz! [*As he is about to embrace her, she snatches his sword from his side and steps*

quickly back.] Look, villain, what I can do to you now! I am a woman, but a woman in desperation – once dare to lay your lustful hands upon my body – this steel shall pierce your loathsome breast, and my uncle's spirit will guide my hand! Away, this minute! [*Drives him away.*] Ah! how good – how good – now I can breathe – I felt I was strong as a fiery steed, fierce as the tigress pursuing the triumphant robber of her cubs – A convent, he said! Thanks, for this happy discovery! Now love betrayed has found its resting-place – a convent – the Redeemer's cross is the resting-place for love betrayed. [*About to go.*]

[*Enter HERRMANN, timidly.*]

HERRMANN: Lady Amalia! Lady Amalia!

AMALIA: Wretch, why do you disturb me?

HERRMANN: I must shed this weight from my soul before it drags me down to hell – [*Falling at her feet*] Forgive me! forgive me! I have wronged you grievously, Lady Amalia!

AMALIA: Stand up! Leave me! I do not want to hear!

HERRMANN [*detaining her*]: No! Stay! In God's name! In God's eternal name, you shall hear it all!

AMALIA: Not another sound – I forgive you – go home in peace! [*Hurrying away.*]

HERRMANN: Then hear me this one word – it will give you peace again!

AMALIA [*comes back and looks at him in amazement*]: What, friend! – who, what on earth or in heaven can give me peace again?

HERRMANN: One single word from my lips – listen to me!

AMALIA [*seizing his hand with pity*]: Good fellow – can a word from your lips draw back the bolts of eternity?

HERRMANN [*standing up*]: Karl is alive!

AMALIA [*crying out*]: Miserable wretch!

HERRMANN: It is so – And one word more – Your uncle –

AMALIA [*rushing at him*]: You are lying –

HERRMANN: Your uncle –

AMALIA: Karl is alive!

HERRMANN: And your uncle –

AMALIA: Karl is alive?

HERRMANN: Your uncle too – Do not betray me. [*Rushes off.*]

AMALIA [*standing as if petrified, then starting up wildly and rushing after him*]: Karl is alive!

SCENE 2

A country scene, near the Danube.

[*The ROBBERS, camped on rising ground beneath trees. The horses are grazing downhill.*]

MOOR: Here I must lie and rest [*throwing himself on the ground*]. My limbs are shattered and my tongue is dried up like a potsherd.

[*SCHWEITZER creeps off unnoticed.*]

I would bid you fetch me a handful of water from the river, but you are all weary unto death.

SCHWARZ: And the wine in our wineskins is no more.

MOOR: See how fair the corn stands! The trees almost breaking beneath their fruits. The vine full of promise.

GRIMM: It will be a fine harvest.

MOOR: You think so? Then one man is repaid for the sweat of his brow. One! – And yet the night may bring hail, and all be beaten to the ground.

SCHWARZ: It may well be. All can be beaten to the ground, a few hours before the reapers are come.

MOOR: It is as I say. All will be beaten to nothingness. Why should man succeed where he imitates the ant, when he is thwarted where he is like the gods? Or is this the limit destined for his endeavour?

SCHWARZ: I do not know.