

- 1 -STRUMPET VOLUNTARY

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A play by Terry Kroenung

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SCENE: *A garden of one of Louis XIV's palaces, 1690's. A dance is in progress through the doors off left. Its music can be faintly heard.*

Vilepender *(moving to DRC)*

Bravo! Your finest performance! I was enchanted! I'm of a mind to write a review for one of those broadsheets one sees posted about town. "Last night at the sumptuous ball given by the Duc du Orleans, attended by the Sun King himself, a stirring—one might almost say moving performance—was given by a performer whose previous work was as nothing compared to what this noble audience enjoyed." *(to La Maupin)* By the way, was there the slightest germ of truth in that heart-rending speech you just gave to this beautiful but admittedly naïve young faun?

La Maupin

Well...I did have a mother. *(fingering her sword hilt)*

So do I. Where would you like to feel it, Vicomte? Your belly or your throat?

Vilepender

Such fire! Such passion in the face of adversity. I do believe you almost deserve the plaudits you gain at the Opera. Where was I? Ah! Yes, my lady, you have been deceived. This is no gentleman. For God's sake, tell her, will you? I'll wager she'd have found out later tonight anyway if we hadn't come along.

Aurore *(looking at La Maupin)*

Monsieur?

La Maupin

Not quite. *(removes her man's wig to reveal her red-blond hair)* My name is Julie D'Aubigny. Better known at the Opera as La Maupin. I apologize for selling you fraudulent merchandise. *(takes Aurore's hand, places it on her bosom)* But I declare that my heart is true, my lady. *(kisses her tenderly; then she whispers something to her that neither the men nor audience can here)* You understand me? All this, then, is for your wounded male pride? Because she preferred me to you?

Vilepender *(laughs)*

I'll say this for you, Mademoiselle La Maupin...I shall miss your wit.

La Maupin

Why? Am I going somewhere?

- 2 -STRUMPET VOLUNTARY

Vilepender (*drawing his sword*)

Oh, I rather think so. But I can promise you that we'll take up a collection to have your friends at the Opera sing a hymn for you. A last goodbye for one of their own.

La Maupin

Save your money for your own funeral. Worry not, I'll sing there for free.

She Defeats him

Aurore (*looking at La Maupin*)

I was so frightened for you!

La Maupin

You should have been more frightened **of** me.

Vilepender

I thought I would serve.

La Maupin

(*helps him to his feet*) We can attend to you at my apartment. And we should hurry before the Duc's guards wonder what been going on out here.