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**PLAYING WITH LOVE**  
**AND**  
**THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL**

BY *ARTHUR SCHNITZLER*

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and other Plays**

TRANSLATED BY HORACE B. SAMUEL

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# Playing with Love

(Liebeleien)

By  
ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

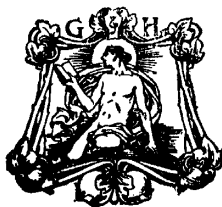
Translated by  
P. MORTON SHAND

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## The Prologue to Anatol

By  
HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

Rendered into English Verse by  
TREVOR BLAKEMORE



LONDON  
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1914

To  
M. J. W

## FOREWORD

SCHNITZLER'S *Liebelei* was first produced at the Burgtheater in Vienna on October 5, 1895, when its author was thirty-two years of age. It met with an immense and instantaneous success.

In England it was performed several times during the run of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's Afternoon Repertoire Season at His Majesty's Theatre, where Mr. Henry Ainley appeared in the part of Fritz. *Liebelei* has also been adapted as the libretto of an opera, the music of which was composed by Herr Franz Neumann, conductor of the Opera-house at Frankfort-on-Main, and would even seem to have attained considerable popularity as such.

Mr. Ashley Dukes, in his excellent volume *Modern Dramatists*, has pointed out that whereas *Anatol* is the comedy of Light Love, *Liebelei* is its tragedy.

“*Liebelei* has often been attacked as undramatic,”

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says Dr. Julius Kapp (*Arthur Schnitzler, Xenien-Verlag, Leipsic 1912*). This criticism is only justifiable, however, if by drama we mean stage effects. These, it is true, are outside the scope of such a sensitive writer as Schnitzler. But if we put aside such an inartistic tendency of the drama, we can safely say that *Liebelei* is one of the most dramatic of plays.

“It is,” he proceeds, “one of the few works of modern literature which have an eternal youth in themselves and have won a lasting respect over and beyond the success of the moment. It holds a paramount position in Schnitzler’s work, for if it is not his ripest achievement, at least it is so far his finest play. . . . There is unending music in this piece. Sentimentality and false emotionalism are studiously avoided. All is genuine feeling.”

Hermann Bahr, the celebrated Austrian critic and dramatist, sums up the lessons of the play in these trenchant words: “As he (Fritz) has died for a lie, so she (Christine) realises that she has lived for one. She did not exist for herself, but only for him; she had in herself no being, but only in him. She was, in fact, nothing but his

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mistress. And now it becomes plain to her that she was not even this. She had only lived in one sense, and even this one was imaginary. Thus her whole life is over. The play says, then, ‘*Be something, have so much in yourself that when you are deprived of position, of love, and of every tie, yet there will always remain sufficient within yourself!*’”

Writing in 1896 (*Das neue Drama*), Alfred Kerr, the eminent German dramatic critic, says: “Out of the world of *Anatol* came *Liebelei*. And yet it is a different world. It has matured to a higher simplicity, the playful spirit has disappeared, sheer tragedy grips at our heart-strings. At one stroke its author, in this deeply human tragedy of love, takes his place in the narrow circle of the best of our era. Christine is more than a *süßes Mädel* . . . she springs from that region whence sprang the sterner beauty of the earlier and most charming of Goethe’s heroines. Whom can one name by her side? . . . the feminine creations of modern poets are, compared to Christine, almost all of them studied and devised.”

In Christine’s father, Dr. Kapp finds a figure as noble and pathetic as Christine herself. “The

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absolute acceptance of life, that constantly reiterated Schnitzlerian theme of living one's life to the full, finds utterance in the brave figure of the old musician Weiring in such eloquent words that they can hardly fade from the memory of any one who has once heard them.

Many suggestions for an English rendering of the German word *Liebelei* have been made from time to time—*Light o' Love*, *Love-Longing*, *Philandering*, and even *Flirtation*. None of these can be pronounced entirely happy, or even approximate or appropriate, equivalents. As an adequate English translation of the German title has seemed little short of impossible to the translator, he has preferred to avoid any attempt to provide one, and to rest content with giving the play in its English dress a name which at least gives the key to the *Leitmotif* of the drama as comprehensively as anything short of the original.

To any one familiar with the German text the insuperable difficulties of providing a literal translation will at once be obvious. The play is written throughout in the Viennese dialect; it is not merely *Wiener*, it is *Weaner*. Nothing is claimed for the present version save that a conscientious

## FOREWORD

attempt has been made to render colloquialism by colloquialism and idiom by corresponding idiom. "To have attempted more," in the words of Mr. Granville Barker, "one would need to be another Schnitzler—which is impossible."

The appended rendering, by Mr. Trevor Blake-more, of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's blank-verse *Prologus* to the original edition of *Anatol* (under his early pseudonym of "Loris") has been incorporated in the present volume with a twofold purpose.

Firstly, in the desire to remedy this omission from the pioneer volume of Schnitzler in English—and it is surely quite as appropriate as an introduction to *Liebelei* as it was to *Anatol*; secondly, in order to introduce to English readers the verse of the greatest living poet writing in the German language.

Mr. Arthur Symons has, it is true, written a worthy version of *Electra* (the libretto of Richard Strauss's Opera of that name), which has been played by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, but it has never appeared in book form.

P. M. S.

March 1914.



**THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL**  
(Yesterday and To-day)

Translated from the German of Hugo von Hofmannsthal  
by Trevor Blakemore



## THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL

(YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY)

HIGH trellises surround its flowery edge,  
Its gates divide the sweep of green Yew-hedge,  
And in their iron, heraldic coats, grown old,  
Tarnish in argent, flake away in gold.  
Slowly, on creaking joints, they open wide,  
These zealous warders of the joys inside. . . .  
Wood-hidden Sphinxes crouch each side the way  
And the broad path leads on where fountains play,  
Play drowsily to Triton, pool and tree ;  
Here, half way through the eighteenth century,  
Lay the bright calyx of Vienna's flower  
That Canaletto painted, masque and bower :  
The old Vienna—palace, terrace, palm ;  
A medley of rococo—stiffness—charm.

The tawny basin to its marble rim  
Lies silent, and beneath the steady, dim

## THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL

Shade of stone Water-Nymphs, quick-veering fish  
Glide past in gold and silver, dive at wish.  
On the smooth sunlit grass, fleeting as they,  
The Oleander shadows spread and play  
As the light breeze bends down their leaves to hide  
The kiss of Shepherd lovers, side by side,  
In marble niches and white drapery,  
Who rest in rigid, age-long ecstasy.  
Heroes and Heroines beneath the dome  
Of close-knit boughs, their season-changing home.  
Within the pool, three Dolphins murmuring, tell  
Strange tales in liquid speech to listening Shell,  
While spiced Chestnut petals flutter down  
Glint bright upon the brimming flood, and drown.  
Through the encircling Yews sweet music floats—  
The far-off sound of Viol or Clarion's notes,  
And, in our fancy light, the music grows  
From the smile-dimpled Cupids' little bows  
As they sit round the terrace, stringing flowers  
In garlands from the rainbowed beds and bowers,  
Fashioned like Grecian urns, whence pour forth  
    blooms :  
Sweet amber Wallflower, Lilac's fretted plumes  
And the small virgin sprays of Jessamine  
Like pallid stars lost in their night of green.

## THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL

At Cupid's feet, low-laughing ladies sit,  
Their eyes agleam with coquetry and wit ;  
And at their own, sit prelates, violet-clad,  
Abbés and courtiers, dallying and glad,  
While on the terrace, gallants, debonair,  
Hand dainty beauty from her scented chair.

Now, through dark leaves pierce sunbeams and caress  
With long gold fingers golden curls and dress,  
Steal o'er path, parterre, and where cushions gay  
Invite repose from such as watch the play,  
And fleck the swift-made stage that we have draped  
With tapestries where Watteau's scenes are shaped  
Between the balcon's pillars where entwine  
The cool Convolvulus and dew-drenched Vine.

Here is our Drama played, our Farce begun,  
With footlights fashioned from the summer's sun  
And blossomed arbour serving us as stage.  
Here our souls speak their mirth and grief and  
rage—

Satires in silk, light wit, and passion's heat,  
Unspoken pain, hid sorrows, amours fleet  
And all the vanities with which we play  
Our pose of yester and our real to-day.

## THE PROLOGUE TO ANATOL

Not all may listen, many laugh or dream,  
Flirt with each other, toy with ices, scheme.

Around unnoticing Carnations sway,  
Long-stalked, milk-white Carnations, grown as gay,  
Under the soft wind's kiss, as Butterflies  
That swarm and hover, flutter, fall and rise.  
And on the lawn a ribboned Toy-dog, strayed,  
Yaps at a Peacock, angry and afraid.

LORIS.

*Autumn 1892.*

# **PLAYING WITH LOVE**

**(Liebelei)**

**A PLAY IN THREE ACTS**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HANS WEIRING . . .	. . .	<i>Violinist at the Josefstadt Theatre.</i>
CHRISTINE . . .	. . .	<i>His daughter.</i>
MIZI SCHLAGER . . .	. . .	<i>A Milliner.</i>
KATHARINA BINDER . . .	. . .	<i>Wife of a Frame-Knitter.</i>
LINA . . . . .	. . .	<i>Their <del>nineteen</del>-year-old daughter.</i>
FRITZ LOBHEIMER . . .	. . .	} <i>Young people.</i>
THEODOR KAISER . . .	. . .	
A GENTLEMAN.		

*Place*

Vienna.

*Time*

The Present.

# PLAYING WITH LOVE

## ACT I

FRITZ'S ROOM (*elegant and comfortable*)

FRITZ and THEODOR

THEODOR *enters first. He carries his overcoat on his arm. He does not take his hat off until he is in the room. He keeps his stick in his hand.*

FRITZ (*speaking outside*). So no one called?

THE SERVANT'S VOICE. No, sir.

FRITZ (*coming in*). We might just as well get rid of the cab?

THEODOR. Of course. I thought you had done so already.

FRITZ (*goes out again. At the door*) Send the cab off. Yes, you can go now too. I don't want you any more to-day. (*He comes into the room. To THEODOR*) Why don't you take your things off?

THEODOR (*at the writing-table*). There are some

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

letters here. (*He throws overcoat and hat on a chair, but still keeps his stick in his hand.*)

FRITZ (*goes hastily to the writing-table*). Ah! . . .

THEODOR. Come, come . . . you are in a regular fright.

FRITZ. From father. (*Opens the other*) From Lensky . . .

THEODOR. Don't mind me.

*FRITZ glances through the letters.*

THEODOR. What does your father say, then?

FRITZ. Nothing in particular. . . . I am to go down to them for a week at Whitsun.

THEODOR. An excellent thing too. I should like to pack you off there for six months.

*FRITZ, standing at the writing-table, turns round to him.*

THEODOR. Yes—riding, driving, fresh air, dairy-maids—

FRITZ. There aren't any Alpine chalets in maize-fields, my friend.

THEODOR. Well, you know what I mean.

FRITZ. Will you come with me?

THEODOR. Can't.

FRITZ. Why not?

THEODOR. My good man, I've got my M.B. to take.

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If I were to go with you it would only be to see you stayed there.

FRITZ. You needn't worry about me!

THEODOR. All you need, I am convinced, is fresh air!—I noticed it to-day. Out there under the trees, where there was the true green of Spring, you were a very nice and a very charming fellow.

FRITZ. Thanks!

THEODOR. And now—now you will slide back again, of course. We are too near the danger zone.

FRITZ *makes an irritated movement.*

THEODOR. You have no idea how jovial you were out there—you were in a normal frame of mind—it was like the good old days; and only the other day, when we were out with those two dear girls, you were very nice too; but now—it's all over again of course, and you feel it imperative (*with ironical pathos*)—to think of “that woman.”

FRITZ *gets up—annoyed.*

THEODOR. You don't know me, my dear boy. I have no intention of standing this any longer.

FRITZ. My word—you're energetic!

THEODOR. I don't want you (*as before*) to forget “that woman.” . . . My dear Fritz (*affectionately*), I only want this unhappy story, which makes one

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

continually tremble for you, to mean nothing more to you than an ordinary adventure. . . . Look here, Fritz, if one of these fine days you no longer adore "that woman," you will be quite surprised how sympathetic she has become to you. Then you will discover for the first time that there is nothing demoniacal in her nature, but that she is a very dear little woman, with whom one can amuse oneself very well, as one can with all women who are young and pretty and have a little temperament.

FRITZ. Why do you say "tremble for me" ?

THEODOR. You know why yourself—I cannot conceal it from you—I have a perpetual fear that you will run off with her one of these days.

FRITZ. So that's what you mean ?

THEODOR (*after a short pause*). That is not the only danger.

FRITZ. You are right, Theodor,—there are others.

THEODOR. You mustn't do anything silly, that's all.

FRITZ (*to himself*). There are others. . . .

THEODOR. What is the matter with you ? . . . You are thinking of something particular. . . .

FRITZ. Oh no. I'm not thinking of anything particular. (*With a glance out of the window*) She has deceived herself once before.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

THEODOR. How? . . . what? . . . I don't understand you.

FRITZ. Oh, nothing.

THEODOR. What does that mean?—anyway talk sense.

FRITZ. She has been getting uneasy lately, from time to time.

THEODOR. Why? There must have been a reason.

FRITZ. None whatever. Nerves (*ironically*)—a bad conscience, if you like.

THEODOR. You said she had deceived herself once before.

FRITZ. Well—yes—and again to-day.

THEODOR. To-day—yes; but what does this all mean? . . .

FRITZ (*after a short pause*). She believes . . . we are watched.

THEODOR. How?

FRITZ. She has nightmares, really she has regular hallucinations. (*At the window*) She thinks she sees a man through this chink in the curtains here, who stands over there, at the corner of the street, and she believes—(*interrupts himself*) Is it actually possible to recognise a face at that distance?

THEODOR. Scarcely.

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FRITZ. That's what I say too. But then it's simply horrible. She doesn't dare to go out, gets into every conceivable condition, becomes hysterical, wants to die with me——

THEODOR. Of course.

FRITZ (*a short pause*). To-day I had to go down and have a look—just as unconcernedly as if I were going out by myself;—naturally there was no familiar face to be seen far or near.

THEODOR *is silent.*

FRITZ. That was quite reassuring, wasn't it? People don't suddenly sink into the ground, do they? . . . Answer me that.

THEODOR. What sort of answer do you expect? Of course people don't sink into the ground. But people sometimes hide in doorways.

FRITZ. I looked into every one of them.

THEODOR. Then you must have made a precious innocent impression.

FRITZ. No one was there. I tell you—it was simply a hallucination.

THEODOR. Of course it was—but it ought to teach you to be more careful.

FRITZ. Besides, I could not have helped noticing it if he had had any suspicion. I had supper with

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

them yesterday after the theatre—both of them ; it was so jolly, I tell you—almost absurdly so !

THEODOR. I beg you, Fritz, do me the favour to be reasonable. Give up this whole infernal business—if only for my sake. I have nerves too. . . . I know that you are not the man to get out of a scrape unaided, that is why I have made things so easy for you, and given you the chance to embark on another . . .

FRITZ. You . . . ?

THEODOR. Well, didn't I take you along with me, a few weeks ago, to my rendezvous with Fräulein Mizi ? And didn't I ask Fräulein Mizi to bring her prettiest friend with her ? And can you deny that you liked the little girl very much ? . . .

FRITZ. Certainly, she is charming ! You have no idea how I have longed for such an affection as hers, an affection without pathos, for something sweet and reposeful to caress me ; for some one at whose side I could recover from the continual excitements and miseries of life.

THEODOR. There you are—that's right. Recuperation—that hits the nail on the head. They exist for one's recuperation. That is why I am against the so-called "interesting" women. It

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isn't a woman's business to be interesting—it's her business to be pleasant. You must seek your happiness where hitherto I have sought and found mine—where there are no great scenes, no dangers, and no tragic developments; where the beginning offers no particular difficulty and the end no unhappiness; where one takes the first kiss smilingly and parts with a very gentle sense of melancholy.

FRITZ. Yes, that's it.

THEODOR. Women are so happy in their healthy humanity—what is there to compel us, then, to make demons or angels of them at any price?

FRITZ. Really she is a darling. So affectionate to one, and so sweet. Sometimes she seems almost too good for me.

THEODOR. You are incorrigible, it would seem! If you intend to take this matter seriously as well——

FRITZ. But I've no thought of it. We are agreed: "Recuperation!"

THEODOR. . . . I should withdraw my support from you in that case. I have had enough of your love-tragedies. You bore me with them, and if you like to come to me with your celebrated conscience, I will unfold my very simple principle to you for

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such cases. Better I than another—for the *ō* is as unfailing as fate.

*The bell rings.*

FRITZ. What's that ?

THEODOR. Just look at yourself! You've turned pale again! Calm yourself at once. It's only the two dear girls.

FRITZ (*pleasantly surprised*). What? . . .

THEODOR. I took the liberty of asking them here to-day.

FRITZ (*going out*). But why didn't you tell me? I have sent away the servant.

THEODOR. All the cosier.

FRITZ'S voice (*outside*). How do you do, Mizi ?

MIZI *enters*. *She carries a parcel in her hand.*

FRITZ. Where is Christine ?

MIZI. She'll follow a little later. How do you do, Dori?

THEODOR *kisses her hand*.

MIZI. You must excuse me, Herr Fritz, but Theodor invited us——

FRITZ. But it was a splendid idea! There was only one thing that Theodor forgot——

THEODOR. Theodor forgot nothing! (*takes the parcel out of MIZI'S hand*) Have you brought anything I wrote out for you ?

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

MIZI. Of course I have. (*To FRITZ*) Where can I put it?

FRITZ. Just give it me, Mizi; we'll put it on the sideboard for the moment.

MIZI. I have bought something extra, something which you didn't write out, Dori.

FRITZ. Give me your hat, Mizi—there! (*puts it on the piano with her boa*).

THEODOR (*mistrustfully*). What?

MIZI. A coffee-cream cake.

THEODOR. What a sweet-tooth you are!

FRITZ. But tell me why Christine didn't come with you?

MIZI. Christine has to take her father to the theatre, then she'll take a tram on here.

THEODOR. What an affectionate daughter!

MIZI. Yes, that she is,—and especially lately, since their loss.

THEODOR. Whom did they lose, then?

MIZI. The old man's sister.

THEODOR. Ah, the aunt!

MIZI. No, she was an old lady who had always lived with them, and now you see he feels himself so isolated.

THEODOR. Let's see: isn't Christine's father a little man with short grey hair?

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MIZI (*shakes her head*). No, he's got long hair.

FRITZ. How do you know him, then?

THEODOR. I was with Lensky in the Josefstadt theatre lately, and I had a look at the people with the cellos there.

MIZI. He doesn't play the cello; it's the violin he plays.

THEODOR. Ah—I thought he played the cello. (*To MIZI, who laughs*) That isn't particularly funny—I couldn't very well know that, my child, could I?

MIZI. What a beautiful room you have, Herr Fritz!—It's really lovely. What do you look out on?

FRITZ. That window looks over the Strohgasse, and in the next room——

THEODOR (*suddenly*). Tell me why on earth you are both so constrained with each other? You could really just as well *tutoyer* each other.

MIZI. We will drink *Bruderschaft*\* together at supper.

\* No attempt has been made to render *Bruderschaft* into English. The custom is essentially a Teutonic one, for which there is no English equivalent. The significance of the custom is that after it has taken place the familiar second person singular is employed instead of the more formal plural.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

THEODOR. Sound principles!—and at the same time reassuring ones.—How is your mother?

MIZI (*turns to him with an expression instantly troubled*). Just think:—she has——

THEODOR. Toothache. I knew it—I knew it! Your mother has always toothache. She really ought to go and see a dentist.

MIZI. But the doctor says it's only rheumatism.

THEODOR (*laughing*). Oh, if it's only rheumatism——

MIZI (*taking up an album*). What perfectly beautiful things you have! . . . (*turning over the leaves*) Who is that? . . . is that you, Herr Fritz? . . . in uniform? Were you in the army?

FRITZ. Yes.

MIZI. A dragoon!—were you a yellow or a black one?

FRITZ (*smiling*). A yellow one.

MIZI (*as if lost in a dream*). A yellow dragoon!

THEODOR. Now she is going off in a dream. Mizi, wake up!

MIZI. And now you are an officer in the reserve?

FRITZ. Of course.

MIZI. You must look fine in the fur dolman.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

THEODOR. All-embracing is her knowledge!—Mizi, I was in the army too.

MIZI. Were you in the dragoons too?

THEODOR. Yes.

MIZI. Well, why didn't you tell me so?

THEODOR. I want to be loved for myself alone.

MIZI. I say, Dori, next time we go out anywhere together, you must put on your uniform.

THEODOR. Well, in any case I have got divisional training in August.

MIZI. Heavens, not till August!

THEODOR. Quite right—eternal love won't last till then!

MIZI. Who thinks of August in May? Isn't it true, Herr Fritz? Tell me, why did you cut us last night, Herr Fritz?

FRITZ. How?

MIZI. Yes—after the theatre.

FRITZ. Didn't Theodor make my excuses to you, then?

THEODOR. Certainly I did.

MIZI. What use are your excuses to me—and still more to Christine? One should keep one's promises.

FRITZ. I would much rather have been with you, honestly I would.

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MIZI. Is that true? . . .

FRITZ. But I couldn't. You saw that I was with friends, in their box, and then afterwards I couldn't get away from them.

MIZI. Ah yes, it was the beautiful lady you couldn't tear yourself away from. Do you think we didn't see you from the gallery?

FRITZ. I saw you too. . . .

MIZI. You sat right at the back of the box.

FRITZ. Not all the time.

MIZI. But most of the time.—You sat behind a lady in a black satin dress and kept (*parodies his movement*) craning forward.

FRITZ. You seem to have watched me very closely.

MIZI. Oh, it's none of my business. But if I were Christine . . . How is it that Theodor is always free after the theatre? How is it that he doesn't always have to go and have supper with friends?

THEODOR (*proudly*). How is it that I don't go and have supper with friends? . . .

*The bell rings.*

MIZI. That's Christine!

FRITZ *hastens outside.*

THEODOR. Mizi, you can do me a favour.

MIZI *looks at him interrogatively.*

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

THEODOR. Forget—for some time at least—your military reminiscences.

MIZI. But I have none.

THEODOR. Ah, my child, I see you haven't learnt the Application of the Categories.

FRITZ *comes in with* CHRISTINE—*she has flowers in her hand.*

CHRISTINE (*greeting them with slight embarrassment*). Good evening. (*Greetings to FRITZ*) Are you glad we have come? You aren't angry?

FRITZ. But—my dear child . . .! Theodor often has far better ideas and is more thoughtful than I. Well, is your father playing his violin by now?

CHRISTINE. Of course. I took him to the theatre.

FRITZ. Mizi told us——

CHRISTINE (*to MIZI*). And Katharina kept me back.

MIZI. What—that double-faced creature!

CHRISTINE. Oh, she isn't double-faced, I'm sure, she is very kind to me.

MIZI. You believe in every one.

CHRISTINE. Why should she be false to me behind my back?

FRITZ. Who is Katharina, then?

MIZI. The wife of a frame-knitter, who cannot forgive any one for being younger than herself.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

CHRISTINE. But, she *is* quite young herself.

FRITZ. That'll do for Katharina. What have you got there?

CHRISTINE. I've brought you a few flowers.

FRITZ (*taking them from her and kissing her hand*). You're a little angel. Wait,—we'll put them in the vase there.

THEODOR. Oh, no! You have no gift for arranging dinner-tables. Flowers should be scattered heedlessly on the table—that is to say, later on when the table is laid. As a matter of fact one ought to arrange them so that they fall from the ceiling—but that can hardly be done.

FRITZ (*laughing*). Hardly.

THEODOR. In the meantime let's put them in the vase after all. (*Puts them in the vase.*)

MIZI. Children, it's getting dark.

*Meanwhile FRITZ has helped CHRISTINE to take her coat off, she has also laid aside her hat; he puts her things on a chair in the background.*

FRITZ. We'll light the lamp in a moment.

THEODOR. The lamp! Absurd idea! We'll light the candles. That looks much prettier. Come along, Mizi, you can help me.

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*He and MIZI light the candles in the two brackets on the pier-glass, a candle on the writing-table, then two candles on the sideboard. In the meantime FRITZ and CHRISTINE talk to each other.*

FRITZ. How are you, my darling?

CHRISTINE. I am happy now.

FRITZ. Well,—and at other times?

CHRISTINE. I have longed for you so.

FRITZ. It was only yesterday we saw each other.

CHRISTINE. Saw each other . . . yes . . . from a distance (*shyly*). That wasn't nice of you to . . .

FRITZ. Yes, I know what you mean. Mizi has told me already. But you are a perfect child, as usual. I couldn't get away. You must understand that.

CHRISTINE. Yes . . . but Fritz . . . who were those people in the box?

FRITZ. Friends;—as to their names, what does it matter?

CHRISTINE. Who was the lady in the black satin dress?

FRITZ. My child, I can never remember dresses.

CHRISTINE (*coaxingly*). Oh!

FRITZ. That is to say . . . I do remember them—in certain cases. For instance, I very well remember

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the dark grey blouse you wore the first time we ever saw each other, and the black-and-white bodice yesterday . . . at the theatre.

CHRISTINE. I have got it on again to-day!

FRITZ. So you have! . . . it looks quite different from a distance—really it does. Ah! and the locket, that I recognise too!

CHRISTINE (*smilingly*). When did I have it on, then?

FRITZ. On the—well, the time we went for a walk in the gardens by the railway line, where there were so many children playing . . . wasn't it?

CHRISTINE. Yes . . . You think of me sometimes, then?

FRITZ. Pretty often, my child.

CHRISTINE. Not so often as I think of you. I think of you always . . . the whole day long . . . and I can only be happy when I see you.

FRITZ. Don't we see each other often enough, then?

CHRISTINE. Often! . . .

FRITZ. Well, of course. In the summer we shall see each other less. For instance, suppose I was to go away for a few weeks, what would you say then?

CHRISTINE (*anxiously*). What? You're going away?

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FRITZ. No . . . Still I might possibly take it into my head to be quite alone for a week . . .

CHRISTINE. Yes, but why?

FRITZ. I was only speaking of the possibility. I know myself, and I have such moods. And besides, once in a while *you* might not want to see *me* for a few days . . . and I should always understand it.

CHRISTINE. I should never have that mood, Fritz.

FRITZ. One can never tell.

CHRISTINE. I *do* know . . . I love you.

FRITZ. And I love you too very much.

CHRISTINE. You are all I have, Fritz; for you I could . . . (*she checks herself*). No, I cannot imagine that there could ever come an hour when I shouldn't want to see you, as long as I live, Fritz . . .

FRITZ (*interrupts*). Child, I beg you—do not say it—it is better so—I do not like vows and protestations. Don't let's speak of eternity . . .

CHRISTINE (*smiling sadly*). You needn't fear that, Fritz. . . . I know that it is not for ever . . .

FRITZ. You misunderstand me, child. It is quite possible (*laughing*) that there will come a time when we cannot live without each other; but we cannot know it, can we? We are but human.

THEODOR (*pointing to the candles*). Be kind enough

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to look at that . . . doesn't that look better than a stupid lamp ?

FRITZ. You are really a born master-of-ceremonies.

THEODOR. Wouldn't it be a good idea if we were to think about supper, children ?

MIZI. Yes ; . . . come, Christine ! . . .

FRITZ. Wait a moment ; I will show you where to find everything you want.

MIZI. First of all we must have a table-cloth.

THEODOR (*with an accent such as clowns affect*).  
A tab-le-cloth.

FRITZ. What ? . . .

THEODOR. Don't you remember the clown at the Orpheum ? That is a tab-le-cloth ! That is a tin ! That is a little *piccolo* !

MIZI. Dori, when are you going to take me to the Orpheum ? You promised me the other day. But Christine and Herr Fritz must come too. (*She takes from FRITZ's hand the table-cloth which he has just taken out of the sideboard.*) But then *we* shall be the friends in the box !

FRITZ. Yes, yes.

MIZI. And then the lady in the black satin dress can go home alone.

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FRITZ. It's too absurd the way you keep coming back to the lady in black.

MIZI. Oh, she is nothing to us . . . so . . . and the knives and forks. (FRITZ *shows her everything in the open sideboard.*) Yes . . . and the plates? . . . I see, thanks . . . so . . . Now we can do it by ourselves. . . . Leave us alone to it—you'll only hinder us.

THEODOR *has stretched himself out on the sofa in the meantime. As FRITZ comes towards him to front,*

THEODOR. You don't mind, do you?

MIZI *and* CHRISTINE *lay the table.*

MIZI. Have you seen the picture of Fritz in uniform yet?

CHRISTINE. No.

MIZI. Oh, you must see it. Fine! . . . (*They go on talking.*)

THEODOR (*on the sofa*). You can understand it, Fritz, can't you? Evenings like these are my passion.

FRITZ. Yes, they are nice.

THEODOR. I feel myself at home in them—don't you?

FRITZ. Ah, I only wish I was always so happy.

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MIZI. Tell me, Herr Fritz, is there any coffee in that machine?

FRITZ. Yes . . . you might as well light the spirit-lamp now—it takes about an hour with the machine before the coffee is ready. . . .

THEODOR (*to* FRITZ). For such a dear little girl as that I would give you a dozen demoniacal women.

FRITZ. They can't be compared.

THEODOR. We hate those women, in point of fact, whom we love—and love only the ones who are indifferent to us.

FRITZ *laughs.*

MIZI. What's that? We want to hear it too!

THEODOR. Nothing for you children. We were talking philosophy. (*To* FRITZ) If we were with them for the last time to-day we should be none the less merry, should we?

FRITZ. The last time . . . no, there is always a touch of melancholy in that. A farewell always hurts us, even if we have long looked forward to it with rapture!

CHRISTINE. Fritz, where is the cruet?

FRITZ (*goes back to the sideboard*). There it is, darling.

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MIZI, *who has come to the front, runs her fingers through THEODOR'S hair as he lies on the sofa.*

THEODOR. You duck, you!

FRITZ (*opens the parcel which Mizi has brought*).  
Splendid! . . .

CHRISTINE (*to FRITZ*). How beautifully tidy everything is kept!

FRITZ. Yes.

FRITZ *arranges the things which MIZI has brought; boxes of sardines, cold meat, butter and cheese.*

CHRISTINE. Fritz . . . won't you tell me?

FRITZ. Tell you what?

CHRISTINE (*very shyly*). Who the lady was?

FRITZ. No, don't irritate me. (*More mildly*) Remember how clearly that was arranged between us. No questions were to be asked. That is just the glorious part of it. When I am with you the world disappears—full stop! I ask you no questions.

CHRISTINE. You can ask me everything.

FRITZ. But I don't. I don't want to know anything.

MIZI (*coming back*). Great heavens, what a mess

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you're making there! (*taking the things away from him and arranging them on the plates*). There . . .

THEODOR. I say, Fritz, have you got anything to drink here?

FRITZ. Oh yes, we shall find something. (*He goes into the next room.*)

THEODOR (*gets up and views the table*). Good!

MIZI. Well, I think that's all. . . .

FRITZ (*comes back with some bottles*). Here's something to drink.

THEODOR. Where are the roses which are to fall from the ceiling?

MIZI. Yes, quite right, we've forgotten the roses (*she takes them out of the vase, gets on a chair and lets the roses fall on the table*). There you are!

CHRISTINE. Good gracious, what a tomboy the girl is! .

THEODOR. Now, not *on* the plates. . . .

FRITZ. Where will you sit, Christine?

THEODOR. Where's the corkscrew?

FRITZ (*gets one out of the sideboard*). Here's one!

MIZI *tries to open the wine.*

FRITZ. Come, give that to me.

THEODOR. Let me do it (*takes the bottle and*

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*corkscrew out of his hand*). In the meantime you might . . . (*makes motions of piano-playing*).

MIZI. Yes, yes, that's splendid. (*She runs to the piano and opens it, after putting the things on it on to a chair.*)

FRITZ (*to CHRISTINE*). Shall I?

CHRISTINE. Oh, please. I have wanted you to for such a long time.

FRITZ (*at the piano*). You can play a little, too, can't you?

CHRISTINE (*turning away*). Oh heavens!

MIZI. She can play beautifully, can Christine . . . and she can sing too.

FRITZ. Really? You never told me so!

CHRISTINE. Have you ever asked me?

FRITZ. Where did you learn to sing?

CHRISTINE. I didn't exactly learn it, father taught me a little,—but I haven't got much voice. And you see since the aunt died who always lived with us, it is quieter at home than it was before.

FRITZ. What do you actually do all day?

CHRISTINE. Oh, I have enough to do!

FRITZ. In the house—eh?

CHRISTINE. Yes;—and then I copy out notes a lot.

THEODOR. Music-notes?

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CHRISTINE. Of course.

THEODOR. That must be tremendously well paid. (*As the others laugh*) Well, I should pay it tremendously well. I should think that writing out notes must be terrible work!

MIZI. It is perfectly silly of her to exert herself like that. (*To CHRISTINE*) If I had as much voice as you, I should have gone on the stage long ago.

THEODOR. You don't even need a voice . . . you, of course, do nothing all day long—eh?

MIZI. Don't I indeed! I have two little brothers who go to school. I dress them in the morning and do their lessons with them . . .

THEODOR. Not a word of it's true, I'm sure.

MIZI. Well, if you don't believe me!—And up till last autumn I was in business from eight in the morning till eight at night, if you want to know—

THEODOR (*in a gently mocking tone*). Where?

MIZI. In a milliner's shop. Mother wants me to go back.

THEODOR (*in the same tone*) Why did you leave it, then?

FRITZ (*to CHRISTINE*). You must sing something to us.

THEODOR. Children, let's eat first and then afterwards Fritz will play to us—what do you say?

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FRITZ (*getting up, to CHRISTINE*). Come, darling.  
(*Leads her to the table.*)

MIZI. Oh, the coffee! The coffee's boiling over,  
and we haven't eaten anything yet!

THEODOR. Nothing matters now.

MIZI. But it's boiling over! (*She blows out the  
spirit-lamp and they take their places at table.*)

THEODOR. What will you have, Mizi? But I  
warn you at once—the cake will come last! To  
begin with, you must eat something solid.

FRITZ *pours out the wine.*

THEODOR. Not like that. Nowadays one does it  
differently. Don't you know the newest fashion?  
(*Stands up with affected pompousness, the bottle in  
his hand. To CHRISTINE*) Vöslauer Auslese \* eighteen  
. . . (*utters the next numbers unintelligibly. Pours  
out. To MIZI*) Vöslauer Auslese eighteen . . . (*as  
before; pours out again. To FRITZ*) Vöslauer Auslese  
eighteen . . . (*as before. At his own place*) Vöslauer  
Auslese . . . (*as before. . . . Sits down.*)

\* *Auslese* has here been substituted for the Austrian term  
*Ausstich* as being more intelligible to English readers to  
whom Hock and Moselle vintages are familiar, while Austrian  
wines are all but unknown. The meaning is in both cases  
identical, and implies that the vintage is of a selected growth

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MIZI (*laughing*). He plays the fool the whole time.

THEODOR (*raising his glass. All clink theirs with his*). Prosit!

MIZI. Your health, Theodor!

THEODOR (*rising to his feet*). Ladies and gentlemen . . .

FRITZ. Oh, not yet!

THEODOR (*sits down*). Oh, well, I can wait.

*They eat.*

MIZI. Oh, I am so fond of hearing speeches made at table. Do you know, I have a cousin who always makes his speeches in verse.

THEODOR. What regiment is he in?

MIZI. Oh, do stop it. He speaks by heart and in verse. Oh, but it's splendid, I tell you, Christine, and he is quite an elderly gentleman too!

THEODOR. Ah, elderly gentlemen do sometimes still speak in verse.

FRITZ. But you're drinking nothing, Christine! (*he clinks glasses with her*).

THEODOR (*clinks glasses with Mizi*). To the old gentlemen who make rhymed speeches!

MIZI (*merrily*). To the young gentlemen—even if they don't speak at all . . . for instance to Herr Fritz . . . Herr Fritz, we will drink *Bruderschaft*

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together now, if you like, and Christine must drink it with Theodor too.

THEODOR. But not in this wine. This is no wine to drink *Bruderschaft* in. (*Gets up and takes another bottle—same procedure as before*). Xeres de la Frontera mille huit cent cinquante—Xeres de la Frontera—Xeres de la Frontera—Xeres de la Frontera.

MIZI (*tasting it*). Ah!—

THEODOR. Can't you wait till we all drink? Well, children—before we celebrate this auspicious occasion—let us drink to the happy chance which— which, etc., etc.

MIZI. Yes, that'll do. (*They drink.*)

FRTZ *takes* MIZI'S, THEODOR CHRISTINE'S *arm, each with glass in hand, as Bruderschaft is drunk.* FRTZ *kisses* MIZI. THEODOR *wants to kiss* CHRISTINE.

CHRISTINE (*smiling*). Must you?

THEODOR. Certainly, otherwise it doesn't count . . . (*kisses her*). So now *à place!*

MIZI. But it's terribly hot in here!

FRTZ. That's due to all the candles Theodor has lit.

MIZI. And to the wine! (*she leans back in her arm-chair*).

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THEODOR. Come here. Now you shall have the best of all. (*Cuts off a little piece of cake and puts it in her mouth.*) There, you duck! Good?—

MIZI. Very! . . . (*he gives her another*).

THEODOR. Now, Fritz, now's the time. Now you can play us something.

FRITZ. Would you like me to, Christine?

CHRISTINE. Oh, please do!

MIZI. But let it be something dashing.

THEODOR *fills the glasses.*

MIZI. I can't take any more (*drinks*).

CHRISTINE (*sipping*). The wine is so strong.

THEODOR (*pointing to the wine*). Fritz!

FRITZ *empties his glass and goes to the piano.*

CHRISTINE *takes her seat at his side.*

MIZI. Herr Fritz, play the *Double Eagle March*.

FRITZ. *The Double Eagle*—how does it go?

MIZI. Dori, can't you play *The Double Eagle*?

THEODOR. I can't play the piano at all.

FRITZ. I know it all right, only I can't remember it.

MIZI. I will hum it over to you . . . La . . . la . . . lalala . . . la . . .

FRITZ. Ah, now I know it. (*Plays it, but not quite correctly.*)

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MIZI (*goes to the piano*). No, like this. (*Plays the melody with one finger.*)

FRITZ. Oh yes. (*He plays, MIZI sings to it.*)

THEODOR. That brings back sweet memories, I suppose ?

FRITZ (*plays incorrectly again and leaves off*). It's no use. I have no ear. (*He improvises.*)

MIZI (*after the very first chord*). That's nothing at all.

FRITZ (*laughs*). Don't abuse it ; it's my own composition.

MIZI. But one can't dance to it.

FRITZ. Just you see. . . .

THEODOR (*to MIZI*). Come, let's try it. (*He takes her by the waist. They dance.*)

CHRISTINE *stands at the piano and looks at the keys. The bell rings. FRITZ stops playing at once. THEODOR and MIZI go on dancing.*

THEODOR and MIZI (*simultaneously*). What was that ?

FRITZ. The bell has just rung. . . . (*To THEODOR*) Did you invite any one else ?

THEODOR. Of course not—there is no need for you to answer it.

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CHRISTINE (*to* FRITZ). What is the matter with you ?

FRITZ. Nothing. . . .

*The bell rings again.* FRITZ *gets up and remains standing.*

THEODOR. You're simply not at home.

FRITZ. One can hear the piano on the landing, and any one can see from the street that the room is lit up.

THEODOR. What absurd ideas! You're simply not at home, that's all.

FRITZ. But it gets on my nerves.

THEODOR. Well, what do you think it is, then? A letter—or a telegram? At—(*he looks at his watch*)—at nine you would scarcely have a visit.

*The bell rings again.*

FRITZ. Nonsense. I must go and see (*goes out*).

MIZI. But that isn't at all nice of you (*she strikes a few keys on the piano*).

THEODOR. Oh, stop playing. (*To* CHRISTINE) What's the matter with you then? Does the bell ringing get on your nerves too.

*FRITZ comes back with assumed calmness.*

THEODOR and CHRISTINE (*together*). Well, who was it?—who was it?

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FRITZ (*with a forced smile*). You must be so kind as to excuse me a moment. Would you mind going in there for a short time?

THEODOR. What is it, then?

CHRISTINE. Who is it?

FRITZ. Nothing, my child. I have just a few words to speak to a gentleman.

*He has opened the door into the next room, and escorts the girls into it. THEODOR goes last and looks at FRITZ inquiringly.*

FRITZ (*softly, and with a horrified expression*). It's he! . . .

THEODOR. Ah! . . .

FRITZ. Go in there, will you? Go in there!

THEODOR. I beg you to do nothing silly; it may be a case . . .

FRITZ. Go . . . go! (*THEODOR goes into the next room*).

*FRITZ goes quickly through the room into the passage, so that the stage is empty a few moments. Then he comes back, ushering in a smartly dressed man about thirty-five years of age. The gentleman is in a yellow overcoat, carries gloves, and holds his hat in his hand.*

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FRITZ (*as he enters the room*). I must beg your pardon for keeping you waiting . . . please . . .

THE GENTLEMAN (*in quite an easy tone*). Oh, that's nothing. I only regret that I have disturbed you.

FRITZ. Not at all. Please—won't you? (*points to a chair*).

THE GENTLEMAN. I see that I have disturbed you, though. A little entertainment, eh?

FRITZ. A few friends.

THE GENTLEMAN (*sitting down, still quite friendly*). A masked ball probably?

FRITZ (*embarrassed*). What do you mean?

THE GENTLEMAN. Well, your friends seem to have ladies' hats and cloaks.

FRITZ. Ah, yes . . . (*smiling*) perhaps there are lady friends too. . . . (*A pause.*)

THE GENTLEMAN. Life is sometimes quite a merry business. . . . Yes. . . . (*He looks at FRITZ fixedly.*)

FRITZ (*sustains his gaze for some time, then looks away*). Perhaps I may be permitted to ask to what I owe the honour of your visit.

THE GENTLEMAN. Certainly. . . . (*calmly*) My wife left her veil with you.

FRITZ. Your wife? . . . here? . . . her? . . . (*smiling*) The joke is a trifle peculiar.

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THE GENTLEMAN (*at once rising to his feet, very sternly, almost furiously; he leans on the arm of the chair with one hand*). I tell you, she has left it here.

FRITZ *also rises to his feet. They stand opposite each other.*

THE GENTLEMAN (*lifting his fist as if he wanted to fly at FRITZ in fury and loathing*). Oh!

FRITZ *stands on his guard; takes a short pace backwards.*

THE GENTLEMAN (*after a long pause*). Here are your letters. (*He throws a bundle of letters on the writing-table which he takes out of his overcoat pocket.*) I must ask you for those which you have received.

FRITZ *makes a gesture of refusal.*

THE GENTLEMAN (*with passionate emphasis*). I do not want them to be found here—later.

FRITZ (*very sternly*). They will not be found here.

THE GENTLEMAN *looks at him. Pause.*

FRITZ. What else do you desire of me?

THE GENTLEMAN (*sneeringly*). What else do I desire?

FRITZ. I am at your disposal.

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THE GENTLEMAN (*bows coldly*). Good !

*He lets his glance travel round the room, and as he sees the table laid, the ladies' hats, etc., a violent movement passes over his features, as if he wanted to give vent to a new paroxysm of wrath.*

FRITZ (*who notices it, repeats*) I am entirely at your disposal. I shall be at home till twelve to-morrow.

THE GENTLEMAN *bows and turns to go.*

FRITZ (*accompanies him to the door, which THE GENTLEMAN motions as unnecessary. When he has gone, FRITZ goes to the writing-table and remains standing awhile. Then he hastens to the window, looks out through a chink left between the curtains, and one sees how he follows the man along the pavement with his gaze. Then he withdraws from the window, standing still and looking down at the ground a second. Then he goes to the door of the anteroom, half opens it, and calls*) Theodor . . . One minute.

*(This scene very rapidly).*

THEODOR (*excitedly*). Well ?

FRITZ. He knows.

THEODOR. He knows nothing. Of course you fell

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into his trap, and ended by admitting it. You're a fool, I tell you . . . you're —

FRITZ (*pointing to the letters*). He brought me back my letters.

THEODOR (*taken aback*). Ah . . . (*after a pause*). I have always said that one shouldn't write letters.

FRITZ. It must have been he outside this afternoon.

THEODOR. Well, what happened?—tell me that at least.

FRITZ. You must do me a great service, Theodor.

THEODOR. I'll put the matter right.

FRITZ. There is no longer any question of that.

THEODOR. Well . . .

FRITZ. It will be all right in any case . . . (*interrupting himself*) But we can't leave the poor girls so long.

THEODOR. They can wait. What were you going to say?

FRITZ. It would be as well, in any case, if you were to go and find Lensky this evening.

THEODOR. At once if you like.

FRITZ. You won't find him now . . . but he's sure to be in the café between eleven and twelve . . . perhaps you two will come on to me then?

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THEODOR. Don't put on such an expression . . . in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the business ends all right.

FRITZ. He will take care that this particular case does not.

THEODOR. But just think of that affair last year between Doctor Billinger and Herz—it was precisely the same.

FRITZ. Oh, do drop that attitude! You know it yourself—it would have been better if he had simply shot me down here in this very room—the result would have been the same.

THEODOR (*in a forced manner*). Oh, that's magnificent—that's a superb point of view. . . . And we, Lensky and I, are of no account? Do you think we shall allow——

FRITZ. Please stop that! . . . you will simply accept what is proposed.

THEODOR. Oh!

FRITZ. What's the good of all this, Theodor? As if you didn't know it yourself.

THEODOR. Nonsense. Besides, the whole thing is a matter of luck. It's just as likely that you . . .

FRITZ (*without listening to him*). She guessed it. We both guessed it. We knew it . . .

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THEODOR. Come now, Fritz . . .

FRITZ (*at the writing-table, locks up the letters*).  
And what on earth is she doing at this moment? I wonder if he . . .? Theodor . . . to-morrow you must find out what happened there.

THEODOR. I'll try.

FRITZ. And see, too, that no unnecessary delay . . .

THEODOR. Before the day after to-morrow—in the morning—it won't be possible.

FRITZ (*almost anxiously*). Theodor!

THEODOR. Come . . . Head up . . . After all, inward convictions count for something, don't they?—and I have the firmest conviction that everything . . . will turn out all right. (*Talks himself into joviality*)  
I don't know why myself, but still I have that conviction.

FRITZ (*smiling*). What a good fellow you are! But whatever are we going to tell the girls?

THEODOR. That doesn't matter. Let's simply send them away.

FRITZ. Oh no. We must be as merry as possible. Christine must know nothing. I will go and take my place at the piano again. You go and call them in.

THEODOR *turns to do so with a dissatisfied expression.*

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FRITZ. What are you going to tell them ?

THEODOR. That it's no concern of theirs.

FRITZ (*who has sat down at the piano, turning round to him*). No, no——

THEODOR. That it concerns a friend of yours—that ought to do.

FRITZ *plays a few chords.*

THEODOR. If you please, ladies. (*Opens the door.*)

CHRISTINE *and* MIZI *come in.*

MIZI. At last ! Has he gone ?

CHRISTINE (*hastening to FRITZ*). Who was with you, Fritz ?

FRITZ (*at the piano. Plays on*). So she's curious again !

CHRISTINE. Fritz, I beg you to tell me.

FRITZ. Darling, I can't tell you. It concerns people whom you really don't know.

CHRISTINE (*coaxingly*). Fritz, tell me the truth.

THEODOR. Of course she won't leave you in peace. . . . Mind you don't tell her. You promised him, remember !

MIZI. Don't be so silly, Christine. Let them have the satisfaction. They're only trying to make themselves out important.

THEODOR. I must finish my valse with Fräulein

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Mizi (*in the voice of a clown*). Please—Mr. Conductor—a little music.

FRITZ *plays*. THEODOR and MIZI dance . . .  
*After a few notes—*

MIZI. I can't. (*She falls back into an arm-chair.*)

THEODOR *kisses her, and sits on the arm of her chair*. FRITZ *remains at the piano, takes CHRISTINE by both hands, and looks at her.*

CHRISTINE (*as if awakening*). Why don't you go on playing?

FRITZ (*smiling*). Enough for to-night.

CHRISTINE. That's how I'd like to be able to play.

FRITZ. Do you play much?

CHRISTINE. I don't often get the chance. There's always so much to do at home. And then, you see, we have such a bad piano.

FRITZ. I should so like to try it, and to see your room.

CHRISTINE (*smiling*). It isn't as nice as yours!

FRITZ. And there is something else that I want. I want you to tell me a great deal about yourself—lots of things. I know really so little about you.

CHRISTINE. There is little to tell. I have no secrets—*unlike* some one else.

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FRITZ. Have you never loved any one ?

CHRISTINE *only looks at him.* FRITZ *kisses her hands.*

CHRISTINE. And I shall never love another.

FRITZ (*with an almost painful emphasis*). Don't say that . . . don't say it . . . How can you tell? . . . Does your father love you very much, Christine ?

CHRISTINE. Alas ! there was once a time when I told him everything——

FRITZ. Child, don't reproach yourself. . . . In the long run we all have our secrets—that is the way of the world.

CHRISTINE. If I only knew that you were fond of me, then everything would be all right.

FRITZ. Don't you know it, then ?

CHRISTINE. If you were always to speak to me in that tone, yes, then . . .

FRITZ. Christine, you are sitting so uncomfortably.

CHRISTINE. Oh, let me be—it is quite comfortable here (*she lays her head on the piano*).

FRITZ *stands up and strokes her hair.*

CHRISTINE. Oh, that's good.

*Silence in the room.*

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THEODOR. Where are the cigars, Fritz?

FRITZ *comes over to THEODOR, who stands by the sideboard where he has been looking for them. MIZI has fallen asleep.*

FRITZ (*hands THEODOR a cigar-cabinet*). And the black coffee? (*he pours out two cups*).

THEODOR. Won't you have some coffee, children?

FRITZ. Mizi, shall I give you a cup . . . ?

THEODOR. Let her sleep . . . but don't you drink any coffee now. You ought to get to bed as soon as possible, and see you get a good night's rest.

FRITZ *looks at him, and laughs bitterly.*

THEODOR. Ah, well, things are now as they are . . . and it isn't a question now of being so imposing or so profound, but of being as rational as possible. . . . That is what it amounts to . . . in such cases.

FRITZ. You're coming back to me with Lensky to-night, aren't you? . . .

THEODOR. That's absurd. To-morrow morning will be quite time enough.

FRITZ. But I ask you to.

THEODOR. Very well, then——

FRITZ. Are you going to see the girls home?

THEODOR. Yes, and at once too . . . Mizi! . . .  
Get up!——

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

MIZI. You're drinking black coffee—give me some too——

THEODOR. There you are, child. . . .

FRITZ (*to CHRISTINE*). Are you tired, my darling?

CHRISTINE. How sweet it is when you speak to me like that!

FRITZ. Very tired?

CHRISTINE (*smiling*). The wine—I have a little headache too . . .

FRITZ. Oh, that will soon disappear in the fresh air!

CHRISTINE. Are we going already?—Are you coming with us?

FRITZ. No, my child. I shall stay at home now—I have some things to do.

CHRISTINE (*remembering at once what has just happened*). Now? . . . what have you got to do now?

FRITZ (*almost sternly*). Look here, Christine, you must get yourself out of that habit. (*Mildly*) As a matter of fact I'm dead beat . . . Theodor and I were on our feet for two hours out in the country to-day——

THEODOR. Oh, it was glorious. Soon we'll all go out into the country together.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

MIZI. Oh, that'll be fine! But you must both put your uniforms on.

THEODOR. That at least shows a feeling for nature!

CHRISTINE. When shall we see each other again?

FRITZ (*rather nervously*). I'll write to you.

CHRISTINE (*sadly*). Farewell. (*Turns to go.*)

FRITZ (*notices her sadness*). We'll see each other to-morrow then, Christine.

CHRISTINE (*eagerly*). Really?

FRITZ. In the gardens—out by the railway line—the same as last time . . . at—shall we say six?—will that suit you?

CHRISTINE *nods*.

MIZI (*to FRITZ*). Are you coming with us, Fritz?

THEODOR. What a genius she has for the second person singular!

FRITZ. No, I shall stay at home.

MIZI. The lucky man! What a stretch we've got in front of us before we get home! . . .

FRITZ. But, Mizi, you had almost left the whole of that excellent cake behind. Wait, and I'll wrap it up for you, shall I?

MIZI (*to THEODOR*). Is that all right?

FRITZ *wraps up the cake*.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

CHRISTINE. She is like a little child.

MIZI (*to FRITZ*). Wait a moment now, and I'll help you blow out the lights in return. (*Blows one out after the other. The candle on the writing-table remains.*)

CHRISTINE. Shall I open the window for you?—it's so close. (*She opens the window with a glance at the house opposite.*)

FRITZ. There, children! Now I'll light you out.

MIZI. Are the lights on the stairs put out yet?

THEODOR. Why, of course they are.

CHRISTINE. Oh, how good the air is that comes in! . . .

MIZI. May breezes. . . . (*At the door. FRITZ holds the candlestick in his hand.*) We thank you for your kind reception!

THEODOR (*urging her*). Come—come! . . .

FRITZ *sees the others out. The door remains open. One hears them speaking outside and the flat door open.*

MIZI. Oh law!

THEODOR. Mind, there are steps.

MIZI. Thank you very much for the cake. . . .

THEODOR. Pst! you'll wake every one up!—

CHRISTINE. Good night!

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

THEODOR. Good night.

*One hears FRITZ shutting and bolting the flat door outside. As he returns, and puts the light on the writing-table, the house door down below opens and shuts. FRITZ goes to the window and waves to them below.*

CHRISTINE (*from the street*). Good night.

MIZI (*likewise, saucily*). Good night, my darling child!

THEODOR (*scoldingly*). Mizi!

*One hears their words, their laughter and their steps dying away. THEODOR whistles the melody of the Double Eagle March, which dies away last of all. FRITZ looks out for a few seconds longer. Then he sinks into an arm-chair by the window.*

CURTAIN.

## ACT II

CHRISTINE'S ROOM (*unassuming and neat*)

CHRISTINE *is just putting on her things to go out.* KATHARINA *enters, after having knocked outside.*

KATHARINA. Good evening, Fräulein Christine.

CHRISTINE (*standing in front of the mirror, turns round*). Good evening.

KATHARINA. You're just going out?

CHRISTINE. Oh, I'm in no hurry.

KATHARINA. My husband wants to know if you will come and have supper with us in the Lehnergarten, as the band plays there to-day.

CHRISTINE. Thank you very much, Frau Binder . . . I can't to-day . . . another time perhaps? But you aren't angry with me, are you?

KATHARINA. Not a bit . . . why should I be? You will be able to amuse yourself better than with us.

CHRISTINE *gives her a look.*

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

KATHARINA. Is your father in the theatre by now?

CHRISTINE. Oh no, he will come home first. It doesn't start till half-past seven now.

KATHARINA. Of course. I keep forgetting. Then I'll just wait for him, as I have been wanting to ask him for some free tickets for the new piece, for some time . . . One can get them now, I suppose?

CHRISTINE. Certainly . . . no one goes now that the evenings are so lovely.

KATHARINA. People like ourselves would never get there otherwise . . . if one didn't chance to have friends in the theatre. . . . But don't stay on my account, Fräulein Christine, if you must go out. Naturally my husband will be very disappointed . . . and some one else too.

CHRISTINE. Who?

KATHARINA. Binder's cousin will be with us, of course. . . . Do you know, Fräulein Christine, that he has got a permanent berth now?

CHRISTINE (*indifferently*). Really.—

KATHARINA. One with a very good salary too. And he's such a respectable young man. And what an admiration he's got for you!—

CHRISTINE. Well—good-bye, Fräü Binder.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

KATHARINA. One could tell him what one liked about you—he would never believe a word . . .

CHRISTINE *gives her a look.*

KATHARINA. There are men who . . .

CHRISTINE. Adieu, Frau Binder.

KATHARINA. Adieu. . . . (*Not too malicious in tone*)  
Mind you aren't late for your rendezvous, Fräulein Christine.

CHRISTINE. What do you mean?

KATHARINA. Nothing. You're quite right. We are only young once.

CHRISTINE. Adieu.

KATHARINE. But I would like to give you one piece of advice. You might really be a little more careful.

CHRISTINE. What do you mean?

KATHARINE. Well, you see—Vienna is a big enough city. Why must you make your rendezvous exactly a hundred yards from your home?

CHRISTINE. That's nobody's business but my own.

KATHARINA. I couldn't believe it when Binder told me. He saw you, as a matter of fact. . . . "Oh," I said to him, "you have made a mistake; Fräulein Christine is not the sort of person who walks out with smart young gentlemen of an evening; and if

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

she did, she would be more sensible than to do so in these very streets here." "Well," he said, "you can ask her yourself. And," he said, "it's no wonder—she never comes to us now, but always goes about with that Mizi Schlager instead—is that a companion for a nice girl, I ask you?" Men are so vulgar, Fräulein Christine—and of course he must needs tell it to Franz at once, but *he* got properly angry—for he would go through fire for Fräulein Christine, and whoever says anything against her has him to reckon with. And he's for ever saying how domesticated you are, and how sweet you were always to the old aunt—God rest her soul—and how no one is more modest and retiring than you in your manner of life, and so on . . . (*Pause*) Perhaps you will come with us to listen to the music, after all?

CHRISTINE. No.

WEIRING *enters*; *he has a piece of lilac in his hand.* Good evening . . . Oh, it's you, Frau Binder. How are you, then?

KATHARINA. Nicely, thank you.

WEIRING. And the little Lina?—and your husband? . . .

KATHARINA. All quite well, I'm thankful to say.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

WEIRING. Well, that's good. (*To CHRISTINE*) You're still indoors in this lovely weather?

CHRISTINE. I was just going out.

WEIRING. That's right. What a breeze there is out of doors to-day, Frau Binder! it's really wonderful. I have just been through the gardens by the railway line; the lilac is in blossom there—it's a sight! I'm afraid I have been guilty of trespassing too. (*Gives the piece of lilac to CHRISTINE.*)

CHRISTINE. Thank you, father.

KATHARINA. You can be glad the keeper didn't catch you!

WEIRING. You must go there, Frau Binder—the scent is just as strong as if I hadn't picked off the twig.

KATHARINA. But if every one thought like that—

WEIRING. Then, indeed, it wouldn't be so.

CHRISTINE. Good-bye, father.

WEIRING. If you could wait a few minutes you could walk with me to the theatre.

CHRISTINE. I—I promised to fetch Mizi.

WEIRING. Ah well—it's better so; youth will be served. Adieu, Christine.

CHRISTINE (*kisses him—then*) Adieu, Frau Binder. (*She goes out; WEIRING looks after her tenderly.*)

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

KATHARINA. That has become a very intimate friendship with Fräulein Mizi.

WEIRING. Yes, I am heartily glad that Tini has some one to take an interest in her, and does not for ever sit at home. What does the girl actually get out of her life?

KATHARINA. Yes, indeed.

WEIRING. I cannot tell you, Frau Binder, how sad it often makes me when I come home from a rehearsal, and find her sitting there sewing—and in the afternoons as soon as we rise from table she sits down again to copy out her notes. . . .

KATHARINA. Ah, yes, the millionaires have a better time of it, in truth, than the likes of us. But what about her singing?

WEIRING. Well, she hasn't much of a voice. It carries for chamber-singing all right, and she sings well enough for her father, but she couldn't make her living by it.

KATHARINA. What a pity!

WEIRING. I am glad that she sees it herself. She will at least be spared from disillusionments. Of course I could get her into the chorus of our theatre——

KATHARINA. Well, naturally, with her figure.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

WEIRING. But there are no prospects there.

KATHARINA. Oh, one has one's tribulations with a girl. When I think that in five or six years my little Lina will be a grown-up woman——

WEIRING. But why don't you take a seat, Frau Binder?

KATHARINA. Oh, thank you very much—but my husband will be here to fetch me soon. I only came up to invite Christine. . . .

WEIRING. To invite her?

KATHARINA. Yes—to come and hear the band in the Lehnergarten. I thought it might cheer her up a little,—for she really needs it.

WEIRING. It could do her no harm indeed, especially after our sad winter. Why doesn't she go with you, then?

KATHARINA. I don't know . . . perhaps because Binder's cousin is with us.

WEIRING. Ah, quite possibly. She can't stand him. She told me so herself.

KATHARINA. But why ever not? Franz is a very respectable man—he has got a permanent position now, which is at all events a stroke of good fortune in these days for a . . .

WEIRING. For a . . . poor girl, I suppose.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

KATHARINA. For any girl it's a stroke of good fortune.

WEIRING. Come, tell me, Frau Binder, is a girl like her, in the prime of her youth, created for no other purpose than for a respectable man who happens to have a permanent position?

KATHARINA. Well, it's best so. One can't afford to wait for a nobleman, and if one comes along he usually takes his leave without marrying one . . . (*Weiring at the window. Pause.*) Ah, well, that's why I always say one can never be too careful with a young girl—especially in her acquaintances.

WEIRING. Is it simply a question of throwing away the years of one's youth for that? And what good does all her keeping straight do a poor creature like her, when all is said and done, if—after years of waiting—some frame-knitter turns up in the end!

KATHARINA. If my husband is a frame-knitter, Herr Weiring, he is at least an honest and respectable man who has never given me cause for complaint. . . .

WEIRING (*propitiatingly*). But, Frau Binder—does that apply to you? You didn't throw your youth away.

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KATHARINA. I remember nothing more of that time.

WEIRING. Don't say that: you can tell me what you like now—your memories of it are still the best that you have had from life.

KATHARINA. I have no memories.

WEIRING. Tut, tut! . . .

KATHARINA. And what remains then if one did have the sort of memories you mean?—Regret!

WEIRING. Well—and what remains if she has nothing to remember—if the whole of her life has slipped by (*very simply and without pathos*) one day like another, without happiness and without love? Is she any better off then?

KATHARINA. But, Herr Weiring, just think of the old lady—your sister . . . But it still makes you sad if one talks of her, I can see, Herr Weiring . . .

WEIRING. Yes, it still makes me sad. . . .

KATHARINA. Of course . . . when two people have so clung together. . . . I have always said that a brother like you is not easily found.

WEIRING *makes a movement of protestation.*

KATHARINA. But it's true. When you were quite a young man, you had to take the place of father and mother to her.

WEIRING. Yes, yes . . .

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KATHARINA. That, too, must be a kind of consolation. When one knows that one has always been the benefactor and protector of some poor creature——

WEIRING. Yes, I imagined that myself at first—when she was still a beautiful young girl,—and appeared heaven only knows how noble and sagacious in my own eyes. But then later, when the grey hairs and wrinkles came little by little, and one day passed by like another—and all her youth with them, and the young girl gradually became the old maid—so gradually that one hardly noticed it—then I first began to perceive what I had really done!

KATHARINA. But, Herr Weiring——

WEIRING. I see her still before me—as she so often used to sit opposite me in the evenings by the lamp in the room there, looking at me with her quiet smile and air of resignation, as if she wanted to thank me for something,—and I—I ought rather to have sunk on my knees before her and begged her forgiveness, for having shielded her so well from all dangers—and from all happiness.  
(Pause.)

KATHARINA. None the less, many would be glad

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if they could always have had such a brother at their side . . . and nothing to regret.

*MIZI enters.*

*MIZI.* Good evening. . . . Why, it's quite dark here already . . . one can't see any longer. Ah, it's you, Fräü Binder. Your husband is downstairs, and waiting for you. . . . Isn't Christine at home? . . .

*WEIRING.* She went out a quarter of an hour ago.

*KATHARINA.* Didn't you meet her, then? She had a rendezvous with you, didn't she?

*MIZI.* No . . . well, in any case, we've missed each other. You're going to listen to the band with your husband, he told me—aren't you?

*KATHARINA.* Yes, he's so fond of it. But I say, Fräulein Mizi, what a charming hat you've got on! A new one, isn't it?

*MIZI.* Not at all. Don't you recognise the shape? It's last spring's fashion—only it's been retrimmed.

*KATHARINA.* Did you retrim it yourself?

*MIZI.* Why, of course I did.

*WEIRING.* How clever of you!

*KATHARINA.* Of course—I always forget that you were in a milliner's shop for a year.

*MIZI.* I shall probably go into one again soon. Mother wants me to, so I suppose I shall have to.

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KATHARINA. How is your mother, then ?

MIZI. Oh, quite well—only she has a little tooth-ache ;—but the doctor says it's only rheumatism. . . .

WEIRING. Well, it's high time for me . . .

KATHARINA. I'll go down with you, Herr Weiring.

MIZI. I'll come, too . . . but take your overcoat with you, Herr Weiring ; it may turn quite chilly later on.

WEIRING. Do you think so ?

KATHARINA. Of course it will . . . how can you take so little care of yourself !

CHRISTINE *comes in.*

MIZI. Here she is. . . .

KATHARINA. Back from your walk already ?

CHRISTINE. Yes. How do you do, Mizi ? . . . I've such a headache . . . (*sits down*).

WEIRING. How's that ? . . .

KATHARINA. Probably from the air.

WEIRING. Well, what's the matter, Christine ? Will you please light the lamp, Fräulein Mizi.

MIZI *prepares to do so.*

CHRISTINE. But I can do that myself.

WEIRING. I want to see your face, Christine ! . . .

CHRISTINE. But it's nothing. I expect it's probably from being out of doors.

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KATHARINA. It's just the spring, which upsets so many people.

WEIRING. You'll stay with Christine, won't you, Fräulein Mizi?

MIZI. Of course I'll stay. . . .

CHRISTINE. But it's nothing, father.

MIZI. My mother doesn't make such a fuss of me, if I have a headache. . . .

WEIRING (*to CHRISTINE, who is still sitting*). Are you so tired? . . .

CHRISTINE (*getting up from the chair*). I'm better now (*smiling*).

WEIRING. That's right—now you look quite different. (*To KATHARINE*) Doesn't she look quite different when she laughs? . . . Well, good-bye, Christine (*kisses her*), and mind your little head doesn't ache any more when I come home again! (*Stands at the door.*)

KATHARINA (*softly to CHRISTINE*). Have you quarrelled?

CHRISTINE *makes a resentful movement.*

WEIRING (*at the door*). Frau Binder!

MIZI. Good-bye!

WEIRING *and* KATHARINA *go out.*

MIZI. Do you know what the headache comes

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from?—from the sweet wine yesterday. I am quite surprised that I haven't felt it . . . but it was jolly, wasn't it? (CHRISTINE *nods*.) They're smart young fellows, both of them—one can't deny it, can one?—and what a beautiful place Fritz has got, really magnificent! Now Dori's place . . . (*Checks herself*) Oh, nothing—What, have you still got such a bad headache? Why don't you say anything? What's the matter with you, then?

CHRISTINE. Just think—he didn't come.

MIZI. He let you wait for nothing? That serves you right!

CHRISTINE. What do you mean? What have I done, then?

MIZI. You spoil him, you're too good to him,—that's what you've done—and that makes a man conceited, of course.

CHRISTINE. But you don't know what you're saying.

MIZI. I know quite well what I'm saying. I worry myself about you the whole time. He comes late to the rendezvous, he doesn't see you home, he sits with strangers in their box—he simply leaves you in the lurch; and you quietly put up with all that, and you look at him (*parodies her*),—to make matters worse,—with such lovelorn eyes.

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CHRISTINE. Now don't talk like that—don't make yourself out worse than you are. You know you like Theodor too.

MIZI. Like him—of course I like him. But neither Dori, nor any other man, can say that I fretted myself ill on his account;—men—the whole lot of them put together—aren't worth that.

CHRISTINE. I have never heard you speak like this—never!

MIZI. No, Tini, we've never spoken to each other like this before, I know—I didn't like to. You wouldn't believe what a great respect I had for you! But see, I always thought, when once it takes you, it will take you badly. The first time fairly crumples one up! And you can be glad of this too—that at the time of your first love you have such a good friend at your side.

CHRISTINE. Mizi!

MIZI. Don't you believe that I'm a good friend to you? If I wasn't here to say to you "Child, he is a man like the others, and not all of them put together are worth an unhappy hour," you would take heaven knows what into your head. But I tell you so all the same. One must not believe a word men say.

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CHRISTINE. What are you talking about? Men, men—what have men got to do with me?—I don't ask about the others. For the whole of my life I shall never ask about another!

MIZI. Yes, but what are you thinking of, then? Did he actually . . .? Of course everything is possible, but in that case you ought to have set about it differently.

CHRISTINE. Oh, do stop it!

MIZI. Well, what do you want me to say? I can't help that—you ought to have considered that beforehand. Otherwise you must simply wait till somebody comes along whose honourable intentions are written on his face. . . .

CHRISTINE. Mizi, I can't endure such words to-day; they hurt me—

MIZI (*good-naturedly*). Come, come—

CHRISTINE. Leave me alone, then . . . don't be angry with me . . . but leave me alone!

MIZI. Why should I be angry? I am going now. I didn't want to upset you, Christine, really I didn't. (*As she turns round to go*) Ah, Herr Fritz!

FRITZ *has entered*.

FRITZ. Good evening!

CHRISTINE (*with a shout of joy*). Fritz, Fritz!

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(*rushing towards him and throwing herself into his arms*).

MIZI *steals out with an expression that says,*  
“*I am quite superfluous here.*”

FRITZ (*freeing himself*). But——

CHRISTINE. Everybody tells me that you will forsake me. But you won't, will you? Not yet—not yet——

FRITZ. Who told you that, then? What is the matter with you? (*fondling her*). But, darling . . . I really thought that you would have quite a shock when I came in here so unexpectedly.

CHRISTINE. Oh, so long as it's you!

FRITZ. Come, calm yourself—did you wait for me long? I was detained, and so I was late. Then I went to the gardens, and didn't find you there—and I was on the point of going home—but suddenly such a yearning seized me, such a yearning for this dear, sweet little face . . .

CHRISTINE (*ecstatically*). Is it true?

FRITZ. And then suddenly I had such an indescribable desire to see where you really lived—yes, seriously I had—I felt I must see it once—and so I didn't wait, and came straight up. . . . Do you mind?

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CHRISTINE. Oh, how can you ask such a question!

FRITZ. No one saw me—and I knew that your father was at the theatre.

CHRISTINE. What do I care what people think?

FRITZ. So here it is! (*Looks round the room.*) This is your room, then? Very pretty. . . .

CHRISTINE. But you can't see everything (*is about to take the shade off the lamp*).

FRITZ. No, let it be . . . it dazzles me . . . it's better as it is. . . . So here we are! . . . that's the window you told me about, which you always work at, isn't it? And the lovely view (*smiling*)! What a lot of roofs you look over! . . . and over there—what's that dark mass over there?

CHRISTINE. That's the Kahlenberg.

FRITZ. So it is.\* Really you are much better off than I am——

CHRISTINE. Oh!

FRITZ. I should like to live high up like this myself. I think it's charming to look over all these roofs; and it must be quiet in this street too, isn't it?

CHRISTINE. Oh, in the daytime there's\* noise enough.

FRITZ. Does anything ever pass by here?

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CHRISTINE. Seldom ; but in the house opposite there is a locksmith's workshop.

FRITZ. Ah, that must be very unpleasant. (*He has sat down.*)

CHRISTINE. One gets used to it, and after a time one doesn't notice it any longer.

FRITZ (*gets up again quickly*). Is it really the first time I've been here? It all seems so familiar to me!—I imagined somehow that it would be just like this. (*As he attempts to examine the room more closely.*)

CHRISTINE. No, you mustn't look there . . .

FRITZ. What are those pictures? . . .

CHRISTINE. No, don't! . . .

FRITZ. Oh, I should like to see them. (*He takes the lamp and lights up the pictures.*)

CHRISTINE. "Farewell"—and "Homecoming."

FRITZ. Quite right:—"Farewell" and "Homecoming."

CHRISTINE. I know quite well that they aren't beautiful pictures; but in father's room there is one that's much better.

FRITZ. What sort of picture is it?

CHRISTINE. It's a girl looking out of a window—and outside you see that it's winter—and it's called "Forsaken."

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FRITZ. Ah . . . (*puts the lamp down*), and there's your library! (*sits down by the little bookshelf*).

CHRISTINE. Please don't look at them. . . .

FRITZ. Why not? Ah!—Schiller—Hauff—an encyclopædia . . . well, I never!—

CHRISTINE. It only goes up to G.

FRITZ (*smiling*). Really . . . *Everybody's Book* . . . You look at the pictures in that, don't you?

CHRISTINE. Of course I've looked at the pictures in it.

FRITZ (*still sitting*). Who is the gentleman up there on the stove?

CHRISTINE (*in an instructive manner*). That's Schubert!

FRITZ (*getting up*). Of course!

CHRISTINE. Because father is so fond of him. Father used to compose songs, very beautiful ones, himself once.

FRITZ. And doesn't he now?

CHRISTINE. No, he doesn't now. (*Pause*.)

FRITZ (*sits down*). It's so cosy here.

CHRISTINE. Do you really like it?

FRITZ. Very much. . . . Why, whatever's this? (*takes up a vase with artificial flowers in it which stands on the table*).

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CHRISTINE. Why, he's found something else! . . .

FRITZ. No, child, that doesn't go with it . . . they look dusty.

CHRISTINE. I'm sure they aren't dusty.

FRITZ. Artificial flowers always look dusty . . . There must be real flowers in your room, which smell sweet and are fresh. From now onwards I will . . . (*interrupts himself, turns round in order to conceal his emotion*).

CHRISTINE. What? What were you going to say?

FRITZ. Nothing, nothing . . .

CHRISTINE (*stands up; tenderly*) What were you going to say?

FRITZ. I was going to have said that to-morrow I will send you some fresh flowers.

CHRISTINE. Well—and do you regret it already?—Oh, of course, to-morrow you won't think of me any more.

FRITZ *makes a movement of dissent.*

CHRISTINE. Of course, when you don't see me you don't think of me.

FRITZ. What nonsense you're talking!

CHRISTINE. Oh yes, I know it—I can feel it.

FRITZ. How can you imagine such a thing?

CHRISTINE. That's your fault, it's because you

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always have secrets apart from me! . . . Because you tell me nothing of yourself.—What do you do all day?

FRITZ. But, darling, that's very simple. I go to lectures—sometimes; then I go to the café . . . then I read . . . often I play the piano; then I talk to somebody or other . . . then I go and see people . . . it's all quite trivial. It's boring to talk about it. And now I must go, child.

CHRISTINE. Already?

FRITZ. Your father will be back soon.

CHRISTINE. Not for a long time yet. Stay—only for a minute—do stay!

FRITZ. And then I have . . . Theodor expects me. I must see him.

CHRISTINE. To-day?

FRITZ. Certainly to-day.

CHRISTINE. But you'll see him to-morrow.

FRITZ. Perhaps I shan't be in Vienna to-morrow.

CHRISTINE. Not in Vienna?

FRITZ (*noticing her anxiety—calmly, almost jauntily*). Well, yes, such things do happen. I am going away for a day—or perhaps even two, you child.—

CHRISTINE. Where are you going to?

FRITZ. Where to? . . . Somewhere or other.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

Good heavens, don't pull such a face about it. . . . I am going down to my people's place. . . . Well, . . . is that so strange, too?

CHRISTINE. You see, you never tell me about them either!

FRITZ. But what a child you are! . . . You don't understand how good it is that we are so completely isolated with each other. Tell me, don't you feel it yourself?

CHRISTINE. No, it isn't good at all that you never tell me anything about yourself. You see everything that concerns you interests me—yes . . . everything. I want to have more of you than one hour in an evening when we are sometimes together. For then you disappear again, and I know nothing . . . then a whole night and a whole day with their many hours go by—and I know nothing. That's why I am so often sad.

FRITZ. Why are you sad, then?

CHRISTINE. Just because I have such a longing for you. It's just as if you were not in the same town—as if you were somewhere else. How vanished you seem to me, then; how far away! . . .

FRITZ (*rather impatiently*). But . . .

CHRISTINE. But you see, it's true.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

FRITZ. Come here, to me (*she is at his side*). There is but one thing that you know: that I—that you love me at this moment . . . (*As she tries to speak*) Do not speak of eternity (*more to himself*). There are perhaps moments that shed a glimmer of eternity about them. . . . That is the only thing we can understand—the only thing that is ours in life. (*He kisses her—pause—he gets up. Bursting out almost involuntarily*) Oh, how sweet it is here with you—how sweet! . . . (*He stands by the window.*) One is so far from all the world here, amongst all these houses . . . I seem so isolated—so alone with you . . . (*softly*)—so secure . . .

CHRISTINE. If you always spoke like that . . . I could almost believe . . .

FRITZ. What could you almost believe, child?

CHRISTINE. That you loved me as I have dreamed you did—on the day when you first kissed me. . . . Do you remember it?

FRITZ (*passionately*). I do love you! (*He embraces her, tears himself away.*) But now let me go.

CHRISTINE. Do you regret having told me so again? You're free—you're free. You can leave me in the lurch if you like . . . you promised me nothing—and I asked you nothing. And what

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becomes of me—doesn't matter. I have been happy once, and more than that I don't ask of life. I only want you to know that and to believe me; to believe that I loved no one before you, and that I shall never love another—when you don't want me any longer——

FRITZ (*more to himself*). Don't say it—don't say it. It sounds . . . too sweet . . .

*A knock at the door.*

FRITZ (*startled*). It must be Theodor . . .

CHRISTINE (*concerned*). He knows that you're here with me?

THEODOR *enters*.

THEODOR. Good evening.—Unheard of, isn't it?

CHRISTINE. Have you something so important to say to him?

THEODOR. Indeed I have—and I've been looking for him everywhere.

FRITZ (*softly*). Why didn't you wait for me below?

CHRISTINE. What are you whispering to him?

THEODOR (*deliberately raising his voice*). Why didn't I wait downstairs? . . . Well, if I had known for certain that you were here . . . But as I didn't want to run the risk of walking up and down outside for a couple of hours——

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

FRITZ (*with meaning*). Well, you're coming with me to-morrow?

THEODOR (*understands*). Yes.

FRITZ. That's right. . . .

THEODOR. I have been rushing about so that I must ask permission to sit down for a moment.

CHRISTINE. Oh, please do. (*Busies herself at the window.*)

FRITZ (*softly*). Is there any news? Have you found out anything about her?

THEODOR (*softly to FRITZ*). No; I only came to take you away because you're so senseless. Why these unnecessary excitements? You ought to go to bed . . . You need rest.

CHRISTINE *comes back to them.*

FRITZ. Tell me, don't you find this room too charming?

THEODOR. Yes, it's very nice . . . (*To CHRISTINE*) Do you stay at home up here all day? Really, it's very habitable. Rather too high up for my taste.

FRITZ. That's exactly why I like it so much.

THEODOR. But now I am going to take Fritz away from you; we've got to get up early to-morrow.

CHRISTINE. So you're really going away?

THEODOR. He's coming back, Fräulein Christine.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

CHRISTINE. Will you write to me ?

THEODOR. But if he's back again to-morrow——"

CHRISTINE Oh, but I know he's going away for longer.

FRITZ *shrinks together.*

THEODOR (*who notices it*). Has he got to write at once, then ? I should not have thought you were so sentimental. . . . I must say—we are intimate enough for that . . . Well . . . give your farewell kisses . . . as it will be so long . . . (*checks himself*). Well, consider I'm not here.

FRITZ *and* CHRISTINE *kiss each other.*

THEODOR (*takes out a cigarette-case, puts a cigarette in his mouth and looks for a match in his overcoat pocket. As he doesn't find one there——*) I say, my dear Christine, haven't you got a match ?

CHRISTINE. Oh yes—there are some (*pointing to a matchstand on the chest of drawers*).

THEODOR. There aren't any left.

CHRISTINE. I'll bring you some (*runs quickly into the next room*).

FRITZ (*following her with his glance. To THEODOR*) Good God ! How hours like these lie !

THEODOR. What hours, then ?

FRITZ. I am almost convinced now that my happi-

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

ness would be here—that this sweet girl . . . (*he checks himself*). But this hour is a great prevaricator. . . .

THEODOR. Tasteless metaphor . . . how you'll laugh over it yourself——

FRITZ. I'm afraid I shan't have time enough for that.

CHRISTINE (*comes back with the matches*). Here you are.

THEODOR. Thank you very much. . . . Well, good-bye. (*To FRITZ*) What do you want now?

FRITZ (*looks all round the room as if he wished to let every detail sink into himself*). One can scarcely part here.

CHRISTINE. Oh, it's all very well for you. . . .

THEODOR (*sternly*). Come. Adieu, Christine.

FRITZ. Farewell.

CHRISTINE. Au revoir.

THEODOR *and* FRITZ *go*.

CHRISTINE (*remains standing, dazed; then she goes to the door, which stands open, and says in a whisper*) Fritz! . . .

FRITZ (*comes back again, and presses her to his heart*). Farewell! . . .

CURTAIN.

### ACT III

*The same as the last. It is about midday.*

CHRISTINE *is alone. She sits at the window sewing. Then she puts her work aside. LINA enters, KATHARINA's nine-year-old daughter.*

LINA. Good day, Fräulein Christine!

CHRISTINE (*very distracted*). How do you do, dear?  
—what do you want?

LINA. Mother sent me, and she wants to know if I can take the tickets for the theatre back with me now.

CHRISTINE. My father isn't home yet, my dear child. Will you wait?

LINA. No, Fräulein Christine. I'll come back after dinner.

CHRISTINE. Very well.

LINA (*is already leaving, but turns back again*). Mother sends her love and wants to know if you've still got a headache?

CHRISTINE. No, not now, dear.

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

LINA. Good-bye, Fräulein Christine!

CHRISTINE. Good-bye!

*As LINA goes out, MIZI appears at the door.*

LINA. Good day, Fräulein Mizi.

MIZI. Hullo, you little imp!

*LINA goes out.*

CHRISTINE (*gets up as MIZI comes in and goes towards her*). Well, are they back yet?

MIZI. How can I tell?

CHRISTINE. You haven't had a letter, or anything?—

MIZI. No.

CHRISTINE. What! You haven't had a letter either?

MIZI. What have Theodor and I got to write to each other about?

CHRISTINE. They've been gone now since the day before yesterday.

MIZI. Well, that isn't such a long time! You mustn't make such a fuss about that. I don't understand you at all . . . If you only knew how you looked! You look as if you'd cried your eyes out. Your father's bound to notice it when he comes home!

CHRISTINE (*simply*). My father knows everything—

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MIZI (*almost alarmed*). What ?

CHRISTINE. I told him.

MIZI. That was a sensible thing to do ! But of course one can read everything in your face.—Does he even know who it is ?

CHRISTINE. Yes.

MIZI. And did he abuse you ?

CHRISTINE *shakes her head*.

MIZI. Well, what did he say ?

CHRISTINE. Nothing . . . he went off quite quietly, as usual.—

MIZI. All the same it was stupid of you to have told him anything. You'll see . . . Do you know why your father didn't make a fuss about it ? Because he imagines that Fritz will marry you.

CHRISTINE. Why do you say that ?

MIZI. Do you know what I believe ?

CHRISTINE. What ?

MIZI. That the whole story of their going away is bluff.

CHRISTINE. What ?

MIZI. Perhaps they never went away at all !

CHRISTINE. They did—I know. I passed his house last night, and the blinds were down: he isn't there.—

MIZI. That may well be the case. They have left

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

there right enough—but they'll never come back again—to us, at least.

CHRISTINE (*anxiously*). You——

MIZI. Well, it's quite possible.

CHRISTINE. And you tell me that calmly!——

MIZI. Well, after all, if it's to-day, or to-morrow, or in six months' time, it all comes to the same thing.

CHRISTINE. You don't know what you're saying . . . you don't know Fritz. . . . He is not what you think him—only lately I saw that, when he was here, in this room.—He only appears to be unfeeling at times—but he loves me. (*As if she wanted to read MIZI's thoughts*) Yes, yes—not for ever, I know—but that won't come to an end so suddenly——

MIZI. Of course I don't know Fritz as well as that.

CHRISTINE. He will come back, and Theodor too!

MIZI *makes a gesture which implies* “*It's rather a matter of indifference to me.*”

CHRISTINE. Mizi . . . do something for my sake.

MIZI. Don't get so excited—what is it you want, then?

CHRISTINE. Go to Theodor's—it's quite near; just look in . . . and ask if he is back yet; and if he isn't there, they will perhaps know when he is coming.

MIZI. I'm not going to run after any man.

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CHRISTINE. There is no reason why he should know. Perhaps you might meet him by chance. It's nearly one—and that's just the time he goes out to lunch.

MIZI. Why don't you go yourself, then, and inquire at Fritz's house?

CHRISTINE. I daren't trust myself—he can't bear anything like that . . . and I'm sure he isn't there yet. But perhaps Theodor's back now, and will know when Fritz is coming. I beg you to, Mizi.

MIZI. You are so childish sometimes.

CHRISTINE. Do it for my sake! Do go! It can do no harm.

MIZI. Well, if it means so much to you I'll go. But it won't be much use. I'm sure they're not there.

CHRISTINE. And you'll come straight back . . . won't you?

MIZI. Very well. Mother must wait dinner a little.

CHRISTINE. Thank you, Mizi; you are kind. . . .

MIZI. Of course I'm kind—but now be sensible, won't you? Well, good-bye!

CHRISTINE. Thank you.

*MIZI goes out.*

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

CHRISTINE *remains alone. She tidies the room, puts her work together, etc. Then she goes to the window and looks out. A minute later WEIRING enters, at first unseen by her. He is in a state of great excitement, and watches his daughter anxiously as she stands at the window.*

WEIRING. She doesn't know yet—no, she doesn't know yet. . . . (*He stands at the door, and doesn't dare to take a single step nearer.*)

CHRISTINE *turns round, notices him, and gives a start.*

WEIRING (*tries to smile. He comes farther into the room*). Well, Christine . . . (*as if he were calling her back to herself*).

CHRISTINE *goes towards him as if about to fall down on her knees before him.*

WEIRING (*won't let her*). Well . . . what do you say, Christine? We'll—(*with determination*)—we'll forget it, won't we?

CHRISTINE *lifts her head.*

WEIRING. Well, yes . . . I—and you!

CHRISTINE. Father, didn't you understand me this morning? . . .

WEIRING. Yes, but what do you want, then? . . .

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

I must tell you what I think of it. Mustn't I? Well . . .

CHRISTINE. Father, what does this mean?

WEIRING. Come here, my child. . . . Listen to me patiently. After all, I listened to you patiently when you told me the story. We must—

CHRISTINE. I beg of you not to speak to me like that, father. . . . If you have thought it over and come to the conclusion that you can't forgive me, then turn me out—but don't speak like that. . . .

WEIRING. Only listen to me calmly, Christine. You can still do as you like . . . See, you are so young, Christine—hasn't it occurred to you (*very hesitatingly*) that it might all be a mistake?

CHRISTINE. Why do you say that to me, father?—I know what I have done—and I don't ask you, or any one else alive, if it was a mistake. . . . I told you,—turn me out if you will, but . . .

WEIRING (*interrupting her*). How can you speak like that? . . . Even if it was a mistake, is that any reason for any one as young as you are to give way to despair at once?—Just think how good life is, how wonderfully good. Only think of what a number of things one can be glad of, how much of youth and happiness still lies before you. . . . See,

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

I have not much left of this world, and yet life is still good even to me—and I can still be glad of so many things. How you and I will be together—how we can settle our life—you and I; how once again you will start singing—when the right time comes; and how, when the holidays come round, we will go straight off into the country, into the green fields, for the whole day.—Yes.—Oh, there are so many good things . . . so many—it is madness to throw over everything at once just because one must sacrifice one's first happiness, or something that one has taken for it——

CHRISTINE (*anxiously*). Why . . . must I give it up, then?

WEIRING. Was it ever one at all, then? Do you really think that it was only to-day that you ought to have told your father? I have known it for a long time—and I knew too that you would tell me. No, it was never a happiness for you! . . . Don't I know your eyes? Had it been one for you there would not have been tears in them so often, and your cheeks would not have grown so pale if you had loved some one who deserved your love.

CHRISTINE. How can you? . . . what do you know? . . . what have you heard?

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

WEIRING. Nothing, nothing at all . . . You told me yourself what he is . . . quite a young fellow—what does he know then? Had he an idea of what fell into his lap, so to speak? Does he know the difference between true and false—could he understand anything at all of your mad love?

CHRISTINE (*still more anxiously*). Have you? . . . —you went to see him?

WEIRING. What do you imagine! He has gone away, hasn't he? But, Christine, I have some common sense, and I have eyes in my head! Come, my child, forget it, forget it! Your future lies somewhere quite different; you can be, you will be, so happy still, as happy as you deserve to be. And you will one day meet a man who knows what he has found in you—

CHRISTINE *has rushed to the chest of drawers to get her hat.*

Very quickly. { WEIRING. What are you going to do?—  
CHRISTINE. Let me go, I'm off . . .  
WEIRING. Where are you going to?  
CHRISTINE. To him . . . to him . . .  
WEIRING. But what are you thinking of? . . .  
CHRISTINE. You are keeping something back from me—let me go—

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

WEIRING (*holding her back firmly*). Come to your senses, child. He certainly isn't there . . . perhaps he has gone away for a very long time? . . . Come, stay with me: what can you do there? To-morrow, or even this evening, I'll go there with you. You can't go out like that; you don't know what you look like . . .

CHRISTINE. You will go with me?

WEIRING. I promise you—only stay here quietly now; sit down, and come to me again. It almost makes one laugh to see you like this . . . and all for nothing, for less than nothing. Can't you bear to stay with your father any longer?

CHRISTINE. What do you know?

WEIRING (*more and more at his wits' end*). What should I know, then? . . . I know that I love you, that you are my only child, and that you must stay with me—that you ought always to have stayed with me——

CHRISTINE. Enough!—let me go. (*She tears herself away from him, and opens the door, at which MIZI appears.*)

MIZI (*gives a little cry as CHRISTINE rushes towards her*). Why do you frighten me so? . . .

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CHRISTINE *starts back as she sees THEODOR at the door. THEODOR remains standing at the door. He is dressed in black.*

CHRISTINE. What . . . what does it mean? . . .  
(*She receives no answer, and looks straight at THEODOR, who tries to avoid her gaze.*) Where is he? where is he? . . . (*In the utmost anxiety. She receives no answer; sees their perplexed and saddened faces.*)  
Where is he? (*To THEODOR*) Speak!

THEODOR *tries to speak. CHRISTINE looks at him with dilated eyes, looks round her, interprets the expression of their faces, and utters a terrible cry, after a sudden comprehension of the truth has shown itself in her own.*

CHRISTINE. Theodor! . . . He is . . .

THEODOR *nods.*

CHRISTINE (*clutches her forehead, and does not understand it. She goes up to Theodor and seizes him by the arm like one distraught*). He is . . . dead . . . ?  
(*as if she was asking herself*).

WEIRING. My child—

CHRISTINE (*repulses him*). Theodor, speak!

THEODOR. You know everything.

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CHRISTINE. I know nothing . . . I don't know what has happened . . . Do you think . . . I can't hear everything now? . . . How did it occur?—  
—Father?—Theodor? (*To MIZI*) You know, too?

THEODOR. An unfortunate accident.

CHRISTINE. What did you say—what?

THEODOR. He fell.

CHRISTINE. What does that mean: he . . . ?

THEODOR. He fell in a duel.

CHRISTINE (*utters a shriek*). Oh! . . . (*She threatens to swoon, WEIRING holds her up and gives THEODOR a sign to go.*)

CHRISTINE (*notices it and clutches at THEODOR*). Stay here. I must know everything. Do you think you can still keep anything back from me?

THEODOR. What more do you want to know?

CHRISTINE. Why—why he fought the duel?

THEODOR. I am ignorant of the reason.

CHRISTINE. With whom was it—with whom? You must know who killed him! Well, well—

THEODOR. No one you know.

CHRISTINE. Who was it? who—?

MIZI. Christine!

CHRISTINE. Who? Will you tell me, then? (*to MIZI*)—or you, Father? (*No answer. . . . She tries*

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

*to get away.* WEIBING *holds her back.*) Surely I can know who has killed him, and why?—

THEODOR. It was . . . the reason was a negligible one . . .

CHRISTINE. You aren't telling the truth . . . Why, why? . . .

THEODOR. Dear Christine . . .

CHRISTINE (*goes up to him as if she wanted to interrupt him, and then suddenly cries out*). It was for a woman?

THEODOR. No.—

CHRISTINE. Yes—for a woman . . . (*turning to MIZI*), for this woman, this woman whom he loved;—and her husband—yes, yes, her husband killed him . . . And I . . . what am I, then? . . . what was I to him? . . . Theodor, have you nothing for me, then? . . . didn't he write anything for me? Did he give you no message for me?—Haven't you found anything? . . . a letter? . . . a note?

THEODOR *shakes his head.*

CHRISTINE. And on that evening . . . when he was here, when you came and fetched him . . . he knew it then already, he knew that perhaps he would never see me . . . and he went away from here to let himself be killed for another.—No, no—it's

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impossible . . . didn't he know what he was to me? . . . Did he? . . .

THEODOR. He did know it. On the last morning, as we drove out together . . . he spoke of you too.

CHRISTINE. He spoke of me *too!* Of me *too!* And of what else? Of how many other people, and of how many other things which were just as much to him as I was? Of me *too!* Oh my God! . . . And of his father, and his mother, and his friends, and his rooms, and the spring, and the town, and everything—of everything to do with his life, which he had to forsake just as he had to forsake me . . . he spoke to you of everything . . . and of me *too.* . . .

THEODOR (*touched*). He certainly loved you.

CHRISTINE. Loved!—he? I was nothing to him but a pastime—and he died for another!—And I—I adored him! Didn't he know it? . . . that I gave him all that I had to give, that I would have died for him—that he was my Lord God and my Salvation—didn't he realise it? And he could leave me with a smile, and go from this very room and let himself be shot down for another woman. . . . Father, father—do you understand that?

WEIRING. Christine! (*at her side*).

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THEODOR (*to MIZI*). You could have spared me this, my child. . . .

MIZI *looks at him angrily.*

THEODOR. I have had enough agitations, I can tell you . . . these last few days. . . .

CHRISTINE (*with a sudden determination*). Theodor, take me there . . . I want to see him—I want to see him once again—his face—Theodor, take me there!

THEODOR (*refuses, hesitatingly*). No. . . .

CHRISTINE. Why not, then?—you can't deny me that! Surely I may still see him once again?

THEODOR. It's too late.

CHRISTINE. Too late?—too late to see his body—too late? Yes . . . yes. (*She does not understand.*)

THEODOR. He was buried this morning.

CHRISTINE (*with an expression of the most intense indignation*). Buried . . . and I didn't know it! . . . And they laid him in the coffin . . . and took him away and buried him in the ground—and I may not even see him once more? He has been dead for two days—and you never came and told me——?

THEODOR (*very touched*). In these two days . . . you can have no idea what these two days . . . Remember that I was bound to inform his parents—I

## PLAYING WITH LOVE

had to think of so much—and consider my own state of mind too . . .

CHRISTINE. Your . . .

THEODOR. And then again . . . it all happened so quietly . . . Only his nearest relations and friends . . .

CHRISTINE. *Only* the nearest—! And I—? . . . What am I, then? . . .

MIZI. That's what *they* would have asked too.

CHRISTINE. What am I, then? Less than all the others? Less than his relations—less than . . . you?

WEIRING. My child, my child! Come—come to me . . . (*He embraces her.* To THEODOR) Go . . . leave me alone with her.

THEODOR. I am very . . . (*In a choked voice*) I had no idea . . .

CHRISTINE. No idea of what?—that I loved him?—

WEIRING *draws her to himself.* THEODOR *looks fixedly before him.* MIZI *stands at CHRISTINE's side.*

CHRISTINE (*breaking away from WEIRING*). Take me to his grave!

WEIRING. No, no.—

MIZI. Don't go, Christine!

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THEODOR. Christine . . . later . . . to-morrow . . . when you are calmer.

CHRISTINE. To-morrow?—when I am calmer?—And in a month's time quite consoled, I suppose?—And in six months I shall laugh again, shan't I? (*Breaking out into laughter*) And when will my next lover come along? . . .

WEIRING. Christine! . . .

CHRISTINE. Well, stay here then . . . I shall find the way by myself . . .

WEIRING. Don't go!

MIZI. Don't go!

CHRISTINE. It is even better . . . if I . . . Let me pass . . . let me pass!

WEIRING. Stay, Christine. . . .

MIZI. Don't go there—perhaps you might even find the other woman there—praying.

CHRISTINE (*looking in front of her with a glassy stare and speaking to herself*). I won't pray there . . . no . . . (*She rushes out . . . the others are almost speechless.*)

WEIRING. Hasten after her.

THEODOR and MIZI follow her.

WEIRING. I can't, I can't . . . (*He moves with difficulty from the door to the window.*) What does

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she want? . . . What does she want? . . . (*He looks through the window into space.*) She will never come back—No, I know she will never come back ! (*He sinks to the ground sobbing loudly.*)

CURTAIN

THE END

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