

**WERNER, or The Inheritance**  
**A Tragedy**  
**by Lord Byron**

*edited by Peter Cochran*

Byron drafted *Werner*, his penultimate play, in Pisa between December 18th 1821 and January 20th 1822. Mary Shelley had fair-copied it by the end of January, and Byron corrected her work with care. This was the time of the problems with John Murray over *The Liberal* and *The Vision of Judgement*, and Byron, not trusting Murray, sent the manuscript to Moore. But he relented, and it was the last work by him to be published by Murray, who brought it out on November 23rd 1822. The original intention had been to publish it in a volume with *Heaven and Earth*; but Murray changed his mind, or had it changed for him, at the last minute. *Heaven and Earth* was published in N<sup>o</sup> 2 of *The Liberal* on January 1st 1823, and John Hunt had expected to have *Werner* as well, for a later volume: but Murray moved more quickly. A large print-run of the volume containing both works may have been destroyed.

Byron had made a draft of the first act of *Werner* in November 1815 – just when his marriage was disintegrating, which is perhaps why he didn't then finish it (it would have been his first play: see first text below). Based on *The German's Tale* by Harriet Lee, it may be based also on a dramatic treatment of that story, called *The Hungarian*, by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (see essay on this website).

### **The drama**

In the source or sources to *Werner*, a father is made by his son to feel of no further account – neutralised, annihilated in terms of morality and emotion, but without the final resolution (or release) of being murdered too. The son becomes the man the father never could be; but the father experiences the guilt which the son does not feel – as if, without doing the deeds the son has done, he feels that he has incurred the blame for them.

Byron found this thesis interesting. He wrote to Augusta on December 12th 1822:

I am glad that *you* like “Werner” and care very little who may or may not like it – I know nothing yet of opinions about it – except your own. – The story “the German's Tale” from which I took it [ha]d a strange effect upon me when I read it as a boy – and it has haunted me ever since – from some singular conformity between it & my ideas.<sup>1</sup>

The play seems to be a Byronic psycho-drama, with different aspects of its creator – some real, some fantasy – clashing endlessly. Its eponymous protagonist is a study in masculine insecurity and loss of pride. Krutzner / Werner / Siegendorf – his multiple signifier an emblem of his shapelessness – is constantly trying to pull rank, conscious that his weak, vacillating character disqualifies him from receiving the respect that he's demanding. His son, Ulric, is secretly a man of action, the leader of a robber-band whose political aspirations it's hard to fathom (at once a fantasising Byronic self-image and a typical Byronic cop-out). The father is so weak, that not only can he not commit the central crime (killing Stralenheim), but he can't whole-

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1: BLJ X 55.

heartedly commit the substitute crime (robbing Stralenheim: see Fritz's comment at II i 54-5). It's left to his son to do what he daren't, and to conceal having done so until he has to confess. His confession is an accusation:

*Who* deprived me of  
 All power to vindicate myself and race  
 In open day? By his disgrace which stamped  
 (It might be) bastardy on me, and on  
 Himself – a *felon's* brand! The man who is  
 At once both warm and weak, invites to deeds  
 He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange  
 That I should *act* what you could *think*? We've done  
 With right and wrong; and now must only ponder  
 Upon effects, not causes. (V ii 46-55)

The villain, Stralenheim, is a nobleman who travels with a Byronic entourage: they include valet, monkeys, a mastiff (I 216), and they have a tendency to rig the accounts (II i 40-54). Like the two heroes, he has to conceal his actions and motives. He has quasi-paternal tenderness for and interest in the younger hero – the one who kills him. This is an ironic development of Conrad's relationship with Gonsalvo in *The Corsair*, or Fletcher Christian's with Torquil in *The Island*.

The image of "Momus' lattice" (III i 25), through which, if it existed, one might see a person's secret thoughts and motives, is important: none of the three male principles can afford to be frank. The comedy of Idenstein's character – which is Byron's invention – lies in his motives being always obvious.

In this lack of transparency they contrast with the two heroines, who are innocent, full of love, and need no subterfuge – a sentimentality to contrast with Shakespeare's Rosalind and Viola, to say nothing of his Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra.

## The sources

### (1) *The German's Tale* and *The Hungarian*

The play's one unquestionable source is Harriet Lee, *The German's Tale*, in *Canterbury Tales* (1803) Vol. IV ("Lee" below). Byron acknowledges it in the letter to Augusta. Another source which he may have known is the unpublished play *The Hungarian*, ("TH" below) by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire – "GDD" below (see essay on this website). Georgiana was Caroline Lamb's aunt.

Here are some notes which may be of use:

- 1) *TH* is about one-third of *Werner's* length.
- 2) In *TH*, Siegendorf being now a public figure, has no need to call himself "Werner" – a word which does not occur in *TH*. In Lee his *nom de voyage* is Kruitzner, changed by GDD to Kreutzner. Lee makes him – in his earlier period – a wastrel, a military incompetent and a debauchee, even after his marriage to Josephine. He is redeemed, in Lee, only by his regard for the opinion of his father, Siegendorf Sr.; but Siegendorf Sr., disgusted by his behaviour, alters his will, cutting his morally depraved son out and making his inheritance over to Stralenheim (though this is ambiguous – it might be the right of Siegendorf's elder son, Conrad – Byron's Ulric). Neither GDD nor Byron use this idea, which might make

Stralenheim more sympathetic, and Werner less so. Werner must be tragic as well as culpable: sexual depravity, as seen in Lee, won't help this concept. Lee's protagonist is a coward and a hypocrite: "It was the vice of his character, ever to convert the subjects of self-reproach into those of indignation" (Lee, p.185.) "Siegendorf owed half his faults, and almost all his miseries, to a secret tearing consciousness of error, which he never permitted to rise into reformation" (Lee, p.215.) Byron removes Werner's sexual culpability and thus his hypocrisy. Byron's is less sinful Werner than Lee's. If Lee's protagonist loses his inheritance, it will be because he is not worthy of it. Byron does not stress this point.

- 3) In Lee, Stralenheim is given by Siegendorf Sr. the job of watching the movements of his son: Stralenheim's interest is in dividing father and son, and claiming the Siegendorf inheritance for himself. There may be a political point here, relating to the side on which the son has fought; but the question of which character fought on which side in the Thirty Years' War is left as ill-defined by Lee as it will be by Byron.
- 4) The poverty of Siegendorf and Josephine is stressed more by Lee than by Byron, to whom the dynastic dignity of An Inheritance must transcend mere material need.
- 5) Josephine is Siegendorf's wife's name, both in Byron's play and Lee (in the first, 1815 draft –printed below – she is Josepha). They have an elder son, Conrad, whom Lee introduces unexpectedly, and who is raised by Siegendorf Sr., and a little son called Marcellin. GDD calls the wife Leonora, and gives her an Italian bourgeois background, derived in part from Lee. GDD's equivalent of Marcellin is called Casimir.
- 6) The upsetting of Stralenheim's carriage in the swollen river is in Lee (pp.150-1), and Byron, not in GDD.
- 7) Idenstein is in Lee the name of a lawyer; the Intendant has no name; Byron conflates two characters for the sake of economy, and makes Idenstein comic.
- 8) Byron gives them all much greater individuality, and tones of voice. The lower-lifers Idenstein and Fritz (both Byronic inventions) are especially good. All GDD's characters speak in the same way. Lee's work seems often – as does Pickersgill's *The Three Brothers* supposed subtext for *The Deformed Transformed* – to be the paraphrase of a novel rather than a real novel.
- 9) GDD is concerned with spectacular stage-effects, and seems to be writing for the theatre with an eye to pleasing the crowd with costumes, music, pageantry, and scenic grandeur, in which Byron isn't interested. Byron sums up the pageantry of the Thanksgiving Procession for Peace in Ida's recollection of it at V i 14-26, and Siegendorf's recollection at V i 93-135. The style enables GDD to place before the audience one of the tale's most dramatic moments – the sudden, Banquo's-Ghost-appearance of The Hungarian in the procession (Lee pp.312-7.) It's an effect which Byron's lower-key, lower-budget, "classical" approach has to eschew, for the moment has to be reported (see *Werner* V i 128-35). What Siegendorf / Werner has to fear from the Hungarian is not clear – for according to him, it was the Hungarian who killed Stralenheim – in his erroneous perspective, the *Hungarian* should fear *him*.
- 10) Byron is crazy for splitting pentameters into three or even four – see III i 165, or IV i 211. GDD rarely dares more than a two-way split.
- 11) Byron's extensive Thirty Years' War reading results in such historical details as Ulric's preference for the cruel Catholic Tilly's march over that of the noble

Protestant King Gustavus Adolphus (*Werner* IV i 272-5) and Ida's reaction; these are beyond GDD. The subtlety of scenes like the last one in *Werner's* fourth act, in which the protagonist expresses shame, if not guilt, to his confessor, at an act which he did not commit but for which he was in sense responsible, are also beyond GDD. There is no precedent for the scene in Lee, though Lee's Siegendorf does give the stolen money to a convent (Lee, p.278.)

- 12) GDD brings on young Casimir, Conrad's little brother, in II i; he is a version of little Marcellin in Lee. GDD refers to him in the play's last speech as a hope for the future. Byron has no equivalent to Casimir or Marcellin.
- 13) Siegendorf's snatching up the knife (*Werner* I i 621) is from Lee (p.163).
- 14) Both plays are more vivid than their source *novella*, which is slow, artless, and prolix.
- 15) One of the best of Lee's passages (uncharacteristically detailed in the way it's imagined) is the climactic one in which Siegendorf / Werner enters Stralenheim's chamber via an unexpected secret passage. See I 748n. In doing right, Siegendorf fails to do "the manly, Macbethy" thing, and kill the man who stands in his way, substituting the less manly, more practical, but much meaner thing of stealing some (not all) of his gold. This ambiguity is well captured in Lee. It is important to Byron (see *Werner* II ii 130-49), less so to GDD, who passes it over quickly. What the father dare not do, the son does.
- 16) Calling the *banditti* whom Ulric leads "Black Bands" occurs only in *Werner* – more evidence of Byron's greater knowledge of seventeenth-century Europe.
- 17) GDD will not allow Conrad to confess to the murder of Stralenheim – Emma's father – except in the most veiled way, immediately before he dies. Byron's Ida faints (V i 60-1) upon hearing that her father's blood is on Ulric's hand – though how she at once intuits the circumstances by which it came there is a great mystery.

## (2) Francis Hare-Naylor's History of Germany

Francis Hare-Naylor (1753-1815), was a democrat, and a friend of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Byron refers to him in a note to *Don Juan*, XIV, st.48:

Sir W[illiam]. D[rummond]. was a great gamester. Coming one day to the club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy. "What is the matter, Sir William?" cried Hare of facetious memory. "Ah!" replied Sir W[illiam]. "I have just lost poor Lady D." "Lost? What at – *Quinze* or *Hazard*?" was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist. – –

Hare's posthumous *Civil and Military History of Germany from the landing of Gustavus to the Conclusion of the Treaty of Westphalia* (John Murray, 2 vols., 1816) was both acquired and sold by Byron in the year of its publication: it is item 243 in the 1816 sale catalogue. Unless he received an advance copy, Byron could not have known it when he started his draft of Act I in November 1815. It deals exclusively with the Thirty Years' War. From it Byron would have learned an outline of the conflict, and of its leading personalities. Many of the play's proper names not borrowed from Lee are borrowed from it (Byron having no German). I have noted where each name is first introduced. I have not so far found "Carl", "Fritz",

“Meister”, “Erick”, “Ludwig”, “Herman”, “Waldorf”, or “Peter”, but am not surprised at their absence.

Hare-Naylor’s is the only history of Germany in any of Byron’s book-sale catalogues.

### (3) Coxe’s History of the House of Austria

William Coxe (“Archdeacon Coxe” at *Don Juan* III 92, 8), published his *History of the House of Austria* in 1807. Byron possessed a copy (1813 sale catalogue, item 132), sold it in 1816 (1816 sale catalogue, item 153), and then, on the continent, bought a French translation (*Histoire de la Maison d’Autriche*, 5 vol. Par, 1810), which is item 38 in the 1827 sale catalogue. Pages 1-246 of the fourth volume are devoted to the Thirty Years’ War, dealing with it in a more economical way than Hare-Naylor.

### **Werner and Byron’s insecure sense of aristocracy**

Byron inherited his barony, not from his father, but from his great-uncle, when his cousin died. Because of an eighteenth-century lawyer’s mistake, he was able to sell his inheritance, Newstead Abbey – and did sell it – in a way which very few aristocrats could.

All his life he bit his fingernails. He was extremely self-conscious.

... it [*The German’s Tale*] has haunted me ... – from some singular conformity between it & my ideas.<sup>2</sup>

But he doesn’t say what the ideas *are*, and, if Augusta asked, we have no trace of it.

Harriet Lee’s story is about a man who does not think he deserves the respect an aristocrat should receive, but finds no-one to share his self-evaluation:

The occasion was critical, and loudly forbade all delicacy and delay: yet could he not resolve on re-entering Prague without experiencing a sensation that shook his very soul. The ill-omened hour in which he had quitted it returned to his imagination in vivid colours; and a thousand painful as well as humiliating recollections of the past started forward, to blend with a sort of half-apprehension from the novelty and strangeness of the future. He had no longer a father – hardly a country – still less a friend! – expatriated as he had been, and shook as the nation was to its very foundations, he felt that he should at best be recognised by it without being known – allowed without being claimed. Under this impression, he entered the gates like a man who expects them every moment to be closed against him; till well-remembered and familiar spots once more saluting his eye, he at length began to breathe freely: to rouse from that state of agitation which for a while rendered all objects visionary; to feel that he was still the son of Count Siegendorf; and to assure himself that the sorrow and degradation of the past was to be ranked henceforward among those fearful chimeras conjured up by the indifference of youth, and which fade of themselves before the season of maturity.<sup>3</sup>

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2: BLJ X 55.

3: Harriet Lee, *The German’s Tale*, pp.273-5.

This is the subtext of Siegendorf's / Werner's blusters and fears. The play's three principal male characters – Werner, Ulric, and Stralenheim – are obsessed with the aristocratic inheritance which, all three feel, gives them a qualitative superiority to the rest of the human race. Werner himself spurns the idea of being “a Hanseatic burgher” (I i 142). Stralenheim despises Werner for having lived “... amidst commerce-fetching burghers, / And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews” (II ii 391-2).

This arrogance is commented on at intervals by other characters, in their different idioms. Firstly, Idenstein is crudely satirical:

We know not if his Excellency's dead  
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown, 220  
As it is fit that men in office should be,  
But what is certain is, that he has swallowed  
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants ... (I i 219-23)

Then Josephine is humane and compassionate, contrasting this north European obsession with the more fluid state of Italian class relations:

Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot, 700  
The dimmest in the district's map, exist  
The insolence of wealth in poverty  
O'er something poorer still – the pride of rank  
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;  
And vice in misery affecting still  
A tattered splendour. What a state of being!  
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,  
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,  
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such  
As these ... (I i 7009)

Lastly, Gabor (using an idea from Walter Scott: see note), is egalitarian:

There goes my noble, feudal, self-willed baron!  
Epitome of what brave chivalry  
The *preux chevaliers* of the good old times  
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given  
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,  
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air  
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay  
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window  
Of his o'erset and water-logged conveyance,  
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches  
Because they love their lives too! (II i 323-33)

No echoes of these sentiments are to be found in either Lee or GDD.

The three men destroy one another in their pursuit of the illusion of aristocracy which, Byron implies, is just another “Marsh's meteor-lamp” (*PoC* 35) planted in men's heads to lead them astray.

## Contemporary reactions

Not everyone liked *Werner* when it first appeared. Byron was accused of many literary sins, not least the way he'd used Harriet Lee's *The German's Tale*. *The British Critic* broadened this accusation into something more damaging still:

We formally charge Lord Byron with being under various shapes, in various ways, and in various degrees from the first canto of Childe Harold down to *Werner* – a Plagiary! We say he has been a plagiary of manner, feeling and style, a plagiary of incident, story and character, a plagiary of thoughts, passion and words! We say he has *imitated*, to use very soft language, Madame de Staël; he has *imitated* Mrs Radcliffe; he has imitated principally and most constantly Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth – and *therefore* he abuses them,

“As if his whole vocation  
Were endless imitation”.<sup>4</sup>

The *Edinburgh Monthly Review* found that Byron's exile was making him losing touch with his roots:

The author's absence from England must tend to sap his knowledge of the language: we were therefore not surprised to find in his work inaccuracies, foreign idioms, and habitual misconceptions of common phraseology. But we were not altogether prepared for such examples of awkwardness and vulgarism as these: —

“Who knows? Our son  
May have returned *back* to his grandsire.”<sup>5</sup>

The reviewer lists six more solecisms of one kind or another, implying that they are not the only ones.

A general sense that the play's language was imprecise didn't, however, prevent *Siegendorf* from becoming *Seigendorf*,<sup>6</sup> and, most strangely, *Kruitznier* metamorphosing into *Ruitznier*.<sup>7</sup>

The *Monthly Review* took Byron to task for his monosyllabic line-endings:

... we could cite above *fourscore* lines which terminate most unmajestically and unmetrically with propositions [*sic*], adverbs, conjunctions, or other monosyllabic “small fry” of language; cutting through a line most needlessly and barbarously, where no division ought to be made on account of emphasis or construction or sense, but because the *foot-rule* has been supposed to mark off a sufficient quantity of syllables ...<sup>8</sup>

... though none mentioned his inconsistent use of split pentameters.

At least two reviews commented on the way, between his third and fourth acts, Byron violates those very unities of which, in *Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, and *The Foscari*, he had seemed so protective. *The European Magazine*, without pointing out

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4: *The British Critic*, March 1823, at Reiman, Donald H. (ed). *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers, Part B: Byron and Regency Society Poets*, vols I-V (1972), (RR) I p.325.

5: *The Edinburgh Monthly Review*, January 1823, RR II p.824.

6: *Drama*, RR II p.679 *et seq.*

7: *The British Critic*, at RR I p.321 *et seq.*

8: *The Monthly Review*, December 1822, RR IV p.1823; see also Blackwoods at RR I p.195.

the inconsistency, Henry Harte Milman wrote that “The fourth act is the most injudicious violation of the unity of time and place that can well be imagined”.<sup>9</sup> But the *Edinburgh Monthly Review* referred to “A formidable breach of those unities to which Lord Byron had so lately and ceremoniously pledged himself”.<sup>10</sup>

Many reviewers printed extracts from Lee next to extracts from Byron, to show the closeness; and many did what others had done in reviews of Byron’s plays, and printed the verse as prose, saying there was no difference:

As poetry, this performance is of the humblest order; feeble, broken, and parenthetic. Ninety-nine lines out of hundred are mere prose, but without the clearness and common sense of prose.<sup>11</sup>

No consensus seemed possible. *The Examiner* was sympathetic towards what it saw as a promising development:

We wish, that having already dispensed with the unities, Lord Byron would take another stride, and occasionally blend tragedy and comedy with the license of Shakspeare [*sic*]. Could the Author of *Don Juan* entirely fail?<sup>12</sup>

But more representative of the coldness – motivated in part, as can be seen, by politics – was *The Monthly Censor*: “his cockney auxiliary” is Leigh Hunt, author of the review just quoted:

... the verse is his Lordship’s own; and worthy of his cockney auxiliary. The whole production is flat, vulgar, dreary and contemptible.<sup>13</sup>

## Stage history

*Werner* was the most popular of Byron’s plays in the nineteenth century – not that that’s saying much. It was first performed, in New York, in 1828; Macready played it seventeen times in London in 1830-1, and revived it in 1833, and at intervals between then and 1851, totalling seventy-seven performances. He re-wrote the play’s ending, and had Ulric arrested. Samuel Phelps performed it fifty-eight times from 1844 to 1878, and Henry Irving – for one matinee only, we have to admit – in 1887. Ellen Terry was Josephine, and the murder of Stralenheim by Ulric was staged.

The play’s twentieth century performance history is negligible.

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**9:** *The European Magazine*, January 1823, RR II p.997.

**10:** *The Edinburgh Monthly Review*, January 1823, RR. II p.823.

**11:** *The Edinburgh Monthly Review*, January 1823, RR II p.824.

**12:** *The Examiner*, December 8 1822, RR III p.1027.

**13:** *The Monthly Censor*, April 1823, RR IV p.1656.



### **Werner, first act draft, November 1815**

This first text here is a modernised and repunctuated version of the early draft, which dates from the time when Byron was working at *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth*. The ideal marital relationship between Werner and Josepha contrasts with what we know was the far-from-ideal state of Byron's own marriage at this time.

The sketch shows Byron already to be master of the melodramatic, heavily-signalled style of writing which the rhetorical acting manner and large auditoria of the day demanded.

Byron did not have this sketch by him when he wrote the second, complete version of the play, though he did ask Hobhouse to find it and send it to him. (BLJ IX 81, 88).

#### **ACT I scene i.**

*A ruinous chateau on the Silesian frontier of Bohemia.*

Josepha: The storm is at its height! How the wind howls  
Like an unearthly voice through these lone chambers,  
And the rain patters on the flapping casement,  
Which quivers in its frame! The night is starless,  
Yet cheerly, Werner – still our hearts are warm;  
The tempest is without – or should be so,  
For we are sheltered here, where Fortune's clouds  
May roll all harmless o'er us, as the wrath  
Of these wild elements, that menace now,  
Yet do not reach us.

Werner (*without attending, and walking disturbedly, speaking to himself*):

No – 'tis past – 'tis blighted – 10

The last faint hope to which my withered fortune  
Clung with a feeble and a fluttering grasp,  
Yet clung convulsively – for 'twas the *last* –  
Is broken with the rest – would that my heart were!  
But there is pride and passion's war within,  
Which give my breast vitality to suffer  
As it has suffered through long years till now:  
My father's wrath extends beyond the grave,  
And haunts me in the shape of Stralenheim!  
He revels in my father's palace – I – 20  
Exiled – disherited – a nameless outcast –

*Werner pauses.*

My boy too – where and what is he? My father  
Might well have limited his curse to me,  
If that my heritage had passed to Ulric,<sup>14</sup>  
I had not mourned my own less happy lot –  
No – No – all's past – all torn away!

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**14:** In Lee, the son is named Conrad, a name B. had used already in *The Corsair*.

- Joseph: Dear Werner!  
 Oh banish these discomfortable thoughts  
 That thus contend within you; we are poor –  
 So we have ever been – but I remember  
 The time when thy Josepha's smile could turn 30  
 Thy heart to hers, despite of any ill!  
 So let it now – alas! you hear me not.
- Werner: What said you? Let it pass – no matter what.  
 Think me not churlish, sweet; I am not well.  
 My brain is hot and busy – long fatigue  
 And last night's watching have oppressed me much.
- Joseph: Then get thee to thy couch – I do perceive  
 In thy pale cheek and in thy bloodshot eye  
 A strange distemperature; nay, as a boon  
 I do entreat thee to thy rest –
- Werner: My *rest!* 40  
 Well – be it so. Goodnight.
- Joseph: Thy hand is burning.  
 I will prepare a potion. Peace be with thee;  
 Tomorrow's dawn, I trust, will find thee healthful,  
 And then our Ulric may, perchance ...
- Werner: *There 'tis!*  
*Our* Ulric! Thine and mine – our only boy!  
 Curse on his father and his father's sire  
 (For if it is so, I will render back  
 A curse that Heaven will hear as well as his).  
 Our Ulric, by his father's fault or folly,  
 And by my father's unrelenting pride, 50  
 Is at this hour perchance undone – this night,  
 That shelters us, may shower its wrath on him,  
 A homeless beggar for his parents' sin –  
 Thy sin and mine! Thy child and mine atones!  
 Our Ulric – Woman! I'll to no bed tonight –  
 There is no pillow for my thoughts.
- Joseph: What words –  
 What fearful words are these? What may they mean?
- Werner: Look on me – thou hast known me hitherto  
 As an oppressed, but yet a humble creature,  
 By birth predestined to the yoke I've borne – 60  
 Till now I've borne it patiently, at least  
 In bitter silence; but the hour is come  
 That should and shall behold me as I was  
 And ought again to be –
- Joseph: I know not what  
 Thy mystery may tend to, but my fate,  
 My heart, my will, my love, are linked with thine,  
 And I would share thy sorrow – lay it open!
- Werner: Thou seest the son of Count ... but let it pass –  
 I have forfeited the name in wedding thee.  
 That fault of many faults, a father's pride, 70

- Proclaimed the last and worst – and from that hour  
 He disavowed – disherited – debased –  
 A wayward son – 'tis a long tale – too long –  
 And I am heartsick of the heavy thought.
- Josepha: Oh I could weep, but that were little solace.  
 Yet tell the rest – or if thou wilt not, say,  
 Yet say – why through long years from me withheld  
 This fearful secret that hath gnawed thy soul?
- Werner: Why, had it not been base to call on thee  
 For patience and for pity – to awake 80  
 The thirst of grandeur in thy gentle spirit –  
 To tell thee what thou should'st have been – the wife  
 Of one in power, birth, wealth pre-eminent –  
 Then sudden quailing in that lofty tone  
 To bid thee soothe thy husband – peasant Werner?
- Josepha: I would thou wert indeed the peasant Werner,  
 For then thy soul had been of calmer mould,  
 And suited to thy lot –
- Werner: Was it not so?  
 Beneath a humble name and garb, the which  
 My youthful riot and a father's frown 90  
 Too justly fixed upon me, had compelled  
 My bowed-down spirit to assume too well,  
 Since it deceived the world, myself, and thee.  
 I linked my lot irrevocably with thine,  
 And I have loved thee deeply – long and dearly,  
 Even as I love thee still – but these late crosses,  
 And most of all the last, have maddened me,  
 And I am wild and wayward, as in youth  
 Ere I beheld thee –
- Josepha: Would thou never hadst,  
 Since I have been a blight upon thy hope, 100  
 And marred alike the present and the future.
- Werner: Yet say not so – for all that I have known  
 Of true and calm content, of love, of peace,  
 Has been with thee and from thee. Wert thou not,  
 I were a lonely and self-loathing thing.  
 Ulric has left us – all save thou have left me:  
 Father, and son, fortune, fame, power, ambition,  
 The ties of being – the high soul of man –  
 All save the long remorse, the consciousness,  
 The curse of living on, regretting life 110  
 Misspent in miserably gazing upward  
 While others soared – away! I'll think no more!
- Josepha: But Ulric – wherefore didst thou let him leave  
 His home and us? 'Tis now three weary years –
- Werner (*interrupting her quickly*): Since my hard father half relenting sent  
 The offer of a scanty stipend – which  
 I needs must earn, by rendering up my son,  
 Fool that I was – I thought this quick compliance,

And never more assuming in myself  
 The haught name of my house, would soften him, 120  
 And for our child secure the heritage  
 Forfeit in me forever. Since that hour,  
 Till the last year, the wretched pittance came,  
 Then ceased with every tidings of my son  
 And sire. Till late I heard the last had ceased  
 To live, and unforgiving died – Oh God –  
 Josepha: Was it for this our Ulric left us so?  
 Thou didst deceive me then – he went not forth  
 To join the legions of Count Tilly’s power?<sup>15</sup>  
 Werner: I know not – he had left my father’s castle 130  
 Some months before his death – but why? – but why?  
 Left it as I did ere his birth – perchance,  
 Like me, an outcast. Old age had not made  
 My father meeker – and my son, alas!  
 Too much his sire resembled –  
 Josepha: Yet there’s comfort.  
 Restrain thy wandering spirit – Ulric cannot  
 Have left his native land – thou dost not know,  
 Though it seem angrily – thy sire and he  
 In anger parted. Hope is left us still.  
 Werner: The best hope that I ever held in youth 140  
 When every pulse was life – each thought a joy,  
 Yet not irrationally sanguine, since  
 My birth bespake high thoughts – hath lured and left me.  
 I will be not a dreamer in mine age,  
 The hunter of a shadow – let *boys’ hope!*  
 Of hope I now know nothing, but the name –  
 And that’s a sound which jars upon my heart.  
 I’ve wearied thee. Good night, my patient Love!  
 Josepha: I must not leave thee thus, my husband, friend!  
 My heart is rent in twain for thee – I scarce 150  
 Dare greet thee as I would, lest that my love  
 Should seem officious and ill-timed – ’tis early,  
 Yet rest were as a healing balm to thee;  
 Then once again – goodnight.  
 Voice without: What ho! Lights!

### Act I scene ii.

Josepha: What noise is that? ’tis nearer – hush – they knock!

*A knocking heard at the gate. Werner starts.*

Werner (*aside*): It may be that the bloodhounds of the villain  
 Who long has tracked me have approached at last;

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**15:** Tilly – a catholic general in the Thirty Years’ War. The first intimation that the play is set at that time.

I'll not be taken tamely –  
 Josepha: 'Twas the voice,  
 The single voice of some lone traveller.  
 I'll to the door –  
 Werner: No! stay thou here again!

*Knocking repeated. Werner opens the door.*

Well, Sir – your pleasure?

*Enter Carl the Bavarian.*

Carl: Thanks, most worthy Sir.  
 My pleasure for tonight depends on yours.  
 I'm weary, wet, and way-worn – without shelter,  
 Unless you please to grant it.

Josepha: You shall have it, 10  
 Such as this ruinous mansion may afford.  
 'Tis spacious – but too cold and crazy now  
 For Hospitality's more cordial welcome.  
 But as it is, 'tis yours.

Werner (*to his wife*): Why say ye so?  
 At once such hearty greeting to a stranger,  
 At such a lonely hour too.

Josepha (*in reply to Werner*): Nay – he's honest;  
 There is trust-worthiness in his blunt looks.

Werner (*to Josepha*): "Trustworthiness in looks!" – I'll trust no looks.  
 I look into men's faces for their age,  
 Not for their actions – had he Adam's brow, 20  
 Open and goodly as before the fall,  
 I've lived too long to trust the frankest aspect.  
 (*to Carl*): Whence come you, Sir?

Carl: From Frankfurt, on my way  
 To my own country. I've a companion, too;  
 He tarries now behind. An hour ago,  
 On reaching that same river on your frontier,  
 We found it swoln by storms. A stranger's carriage,  
 Despite the current – drawn by sturdy mules –  
 Essayed to pass, and nearly reached the middle  
 Of that which was the *ford* in gentler weather, 30  
 When down came the driver, carriage, mules, and all.  
 You may suppose the worthy lord within  
 Fared ill enough: worse still he might have suffered,  
 But that my comrade and myself rushed in  
 And with main strength and some good luck beside  
 Dislodged and saved him. He'll be here anon –  
 His equipage by this time is at Dresden.  
 I left it floating that way.

Werner: Where is he?  
 Carl: Hitherward on his way, even like myself.

- We saw the light, and made for the nearest shelter. 40  
 You'll not deny us for a single night –  
 You've room enough, methinks – and this vast ruin  
 Will not be worse for three more guests.
- Werner: Two more.  
 And thou? – well – be it so. (*aside*) (Tonight will soon  
 Be overpast – they shall not stay tomorrow.)  
 Know you the name of him you saved?
- Carl: Not I.  
 I think I heard him called a Baron Something,  
 But was too chill to stay and hear his titles.  
 You know they're sometimes tedious in the reckoning.  
 If counted over by the noble wearer. 50  
 Has't any wine? I'm wet – stung to the marrow.  
 My comrade waited to escort the baron;  
 They will be here anon – they too want cheering.  
 I'll taste for them, if it please you, courteous host.
- Josepha: Such as our vintage is, shall give you welcome –  
 I'll bring you some anon.
- Carl (*looking round*): A goodly mansion!  
 And has been nobly tenanted, I doubt not –  
 This worn magnificence some day has shone  
 On light hearts and long revels; those torn banners  
 Have waved o'er courtly guests, and yon huge lamp 60  
 High blazed through many a midnight. I could wish  
 My lot had led me here in those gay times.  
 Your days, my host, must pass but heavily.  
 Are you the vassal of these ancient chiefs,  
 Whose heir wastes elsewhere their fast melting hoards,  
 And placed to keep these cobwebs company?
- Werner: (*who has been absorbed in thought till the latter part of his speech*):  
 A vassal! – I a vassal? Who accosts me  
 With such familiar question? (*checks himself and says aside*):  
 Down, startled pride!  
 Have not long years of wretchedness yet quenched thee,  
 And, suffering evil, wilt thou start at scorn? 70  
 (*to Carl*): Sir, if I boast no birth – and as you see  
 My state bespeaks none – still no being breathes  
 Who calls me slave or servant. Like yourself  
 I am a stranger here – a lonely guest  
 But for a time on sufferance, on my way  
 From – a far distant city. Sickness seized,  
 And long detained me in the neighbouring hamlet;  
 The Intendant of the owner of this castle,  
 Then uninhabited, with kind intent  
 Permitted me to wait returning health 80  
 Within these walls, more sheltered than the cott  
 Of humble peasants.
- Carl: Worthy Sir, your mercy!  
 I meant not to offend you – plain of speech



Out, out, I say – thou shalt not harbour here!  
 Stralenheim: What means the peasant? Knows he not unto whom  
 He dares address this language?

Carl: Noble Sir,  
 Pray heed him not – he’s frenzy’s next door neighbour,  
 And full of these strange starts and causeless jarrings.

Werner: Oh, that long wished-for voice! I dreamed of it,  
 And then it did elude me – then and now.

*Enter Ulric and Josepha. Werner falls on his neck.*

Oh God, forgive me! for thou didst not forget me,  
 Although I murmured! ’Tis – it is – my son! 120  
 Josepha: Aye, ’tis dear Ulric – yet methinks he’s changed too.  
 His cheek is tanned, his frame more firmly knit –  
 That scar too – dearest Ulric – I do fear me  
 Thou hast been battling with these heretics,  
 And that’s a Swedish token on thy brow.<sup>16</sup>

Ulric: My heart is glad with yours – we meet like those  
 Who never would have parted: of the past  
 You shall know more anon. But here’s a guest  
 That asks a gentle welcome – noble Baron,  
 My father’s silence looks discourtesy, 130  
 Yet must I plead his pardon – ’tis his love  
 Of a long truant that has rapt him thus  
 From hospitable greeting. You’ll be seated –  
 And, Father, we will sup like famished hunters.

*Josepha goes out.*

Stralenheim: I have much need of rest – no more refreshment.  
 Were all my people housed within the hamlet,  
 Or can they follow?

Ulric: Not tonight, I fear.  
 They stayed, in hope the damaged cabriole<sup>17</sup>  
 Might with the dawn of day have such repairs  
 As circumstance admits of.

Carl: Nay – that’s hopeless. 140  
 They must not only mend, but draw it, too:  
 The mules are drowned – a murrain on them both!  
 One kicked me as I would have helped him on.

Stralenheim: It is most irksome to me, this delay.  
 I was for Prague on business of great moment.

Werner: For Prague, Sir – say you?

Stralenheim: Yes, my host – for Prague;  
 And these vile floods and villainous crossroads

**16:** Swedes were on the protestant side. As in the 1822 version, Werner and his family are Catholic.

**17:** In 1822 it’s a calèche (borrowed from Lee), which is the same thing, a two-wheeled carriage with a folding top. Such a thing, however would not have needed “sturdy mules” to pull it; and there were no cabriolets in the seventeenth century.



- Steal my time from its uses. But – my people –  
Where do they shelter?<sup>18</sup>
- Ulric: In the boatman's shed,  
Near to the ferry – you mistook the ford, 150  
'Tis higher to the right. Their entertainment  
Will be but rough – but 'tis a single night,  
And they had best be guardians of the baggage.  
The shed will hold the weather from their sleep,  
The wood fire warm them – and for beds, a cloak  
Is swansdown to a seasoned traveller;  
It has been mine for many a moon, and may  
Tonight, for aught it recks me.
- Stralenheim: And tomorrow  
I must be on my journey; and betimes.  
It is not more than three days travel hence 160  
To Mansfeldt Castle –
- Werner and Ulric: Mansfeldt Castle!<sup>19</sup>
- Stralenheim: Aye –  
For thither tends my progress; so betimes,  
Mine host, I would be stirring – think of that,  
And let me find my couch of rest at present.
- Werner: You shall, Sir – but – to Mansfeldt –

*Ulric stops his father and says aside to him:*

- Silence, Father!*
- Whate'er it be that shakes you thus – *tread down!*<sup>20</sup>  
(to Stralenheim): My father, Sir, was born not far from Prague,  
And knows its environs – and when he hears  
The name endeared to him by native thoughts,  
He would ask of it and its habitants. 170  
You will excuse his plain blunt mode of question.
- Stralenheim: Indeed – perchance then he may aid my search.  
Pray, know you aught of one named Werner – who  
(But he no doubt has passed through many names),  
Lived long in Hamburg? and has thence been  
Into Silesia – and not far from hence?  
But there we lost him. He who can disclose  
Aught of him, or his hiding place, will find  
Advantage in revealing it.
- Ulric: Why so, Sir?
- Stralenheim: There are strong reasons to suspect this man 180  
Of crimes against the state – league with the Swedes,  
And other evil acts of moment: he  
Who shall deliver him bound hand and foot

**18:** In the 1822 version B. makes Stralenheim's retinue resemble his own, with "A monkey, and a mastiff – and a valet" (I i 216).

**19:** Ernst von *Mansfeldt* was a famous commander of Palatinate forces in the Thirty Years' War: Hare-Naylor, I 90.

**20:** Compare *On this day*, 29-30: *Tread those reviving passions down, / Unworthy Manhood ...*

- Will benefit his country and himself –  
I will reward him doubly, too.
- Ulric: You know him?
- Stralenheim: He never met my eyes – but circumstance  
Has led me to near knowledge of the man.  
He is a villain – and an enemy  
To all men – most to me – if earth contain him,  
He shall be found and fettered. I have hopes, 190  
By traces which tomorrow will unravel,  
A fresh clue to his lurking spot is nigh.
- Carl: And if I find it, I will break the thread.  
What, all the world against one luckless wight?  
And he a fugitive? I would I knew him.
- Ulric: You'd help him to escape – is it not so?
- Carl: I would indeed.
- Ulric: The greater greenhorn you!  
I would secure him; nay, I will do so.
- Stralenheim: If it be so, my gratitude for aid,  
And rescue of my life from the wild waters, 200  
Will double in its strength and its requital.  
Your father too perhaps can help our search.
- Werner: *I turn a spy? – no – not for Mansfeldt Castle,*  
And all the broad domain it frowns upon!
- Stralenheim: Mansfeldt again! – you know it, then? Perchance  
You also know the story of its lords?
- Werner: Whate'er I know, there is no bribe of thine  
Can serve me to the crooked path thou pointest.  
The chamber's ready which your rest demands. 209
- Stralenheim (*aside*): 'Tis strange – this peasant's tone is wondrous high –  
His air imperious – and his eye shines out  
As wont to look command with a quick glance.  
His garb befits him not – why, he may be  
The man I look for! Now I look again,  
There is the very lip – short curling lip –  
And the o'erjutting eye – brow dark and large –  
And the peculiar wild variety  
Of feature – even unto the viper's eye  
Of that detested race and its descendant,  
Who stands alone between me and a power 220  
Which princes gaze at with unquiet eyes.  
This is no peasant – but whate'er he be,  
Tomorrow shall secure him, and unfold.
- Ulric: It will not please you, Sir, then, to remain  
With us beyond tomorrow?
- Stralenheim: Nay – I do not say so. There is no haste;  
And now I think again – I'll tarry here,  
Perhaps until the floods abate – we'll see.  
In the meantime, to my chamber – so – goodnight.

*Exit with Werner.*

Werner: This way, Sir.  
 Carl: And I to mine – pray, where are we to rest? 230  
 We'll sup within.  
 Ulric: What matters where? There's room.  
 Carl: I would fain see my way through this vast ruin.  
 Come, take the lamp, and we'll explore together.  
 Josepha (*meeting them*): And I will with my son.  
 Ulric: Nay, stay, dear Mother;  
 These chilly damps, and the cold rush of winds  
 Fling a rough paleness o'er thy delicate cheek.  
 Yet thou seem'st lovely in thy sickliness  
 Of most transparent beauty – but it grieves me.  
 Nay, tarry here – by the blaze of the bright hearth;  
 I will return anon, and we have much 240  
 To listen and impart. Come, Carl – we'll find  
 Some gorgeous canopy, and thence unroost  
 Its present bedfellows, the bats – and thou  
 Shalt slumber underneath a velvet cloud  
 That mantles o'er the couch of some dead countess.

*Exeunt Carl and Ulric.*

Josepha (*sola*): It was my joy to see him – nothing more  
 I should have said – which sent my gush of blood  
 Back on my full heart with a dancing tide.  
 It was my weary hope's unthought fulfilment –  
 My agony of mother<sup>21</sup> – feelings curdled 250  
 At once in gathering rapture, which did change  
 My cheek into the hue of fainting Nature.  
 I should have answered thus, and yet I could not,  
 For though 'twas true, it was not all the truth –  
 I have much suffered in the thought of Werner's  
 Late deep distemperature of mind and fortunes,  
 Which since have almost driven him into frenzy;  
 And though that I would soothe, not share, such passions,  
 And show not how they shake me; when alone,  
 I feel them prey upon me by reflection, 260  
 And want the very solace I bestowed,  
 And which, it seems, I cannot give and have.  
 Ulric must be my comforter. His father's  
 Hath long been the most melancholy soul  
 That ever hovered o'er the verge of madness,  
 And better had he leapt into its gulf;  
 Though to the mad thoughts are realities,  
 Yet they can play with sorrow – and live on;  
 But with the mind of consciousness and care  
 The body wears to ruin, and the struggle, 270

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21: Compare *King Lear*, II iv 55: *O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!*



**WERNER, or The Inheritance**  
**A Tragedy**  
*by Lord Byron*

**To**  
**the illustrious Goethe**  
**by one of his humblest admirers,**  
**this tragedy is dedicated.<sup>22</sup>**

**PREFACE**

THE following drama is taken entirely from the “German’s Tale, Kruitzner”, published many years ago in “Lee’s Canterbury Tales”; written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection. I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who had read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add conception, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been more developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names; but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to their own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815 (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called “Ulric and Ilvina”, which I had sense enough to burn), and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found,<sup>23</sup> I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage<sup>24</sup> of England or any other country. It may seem unnecessary to add this; but having seen a poem of mine never intended for representation dragged, in spite of my remonstrances, upon the theatres of more than one nation,<sup>25</sup> I trust it will not be deemed impertinent if I once more repeat my protest against a gross folly which may injure me, and benefit no one. If it be understood that *all* “dramatic” writing is generally intended for the stage

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**22:** The wording of the dedication may be by John Murray. For B.’s dedications to Goethe, see introduction to *Marino Faliero* on this website.

**23:** The first text above is an edition of this draft.

**24:** From this point on, the text of B.’s Preface is taken from the conjectural reconstructions at Coleridge V 338-9 and CPW VI 713-4.

**25:** B. refers to *Marino Faliero*, staged against his wishes in 1821 in London, Paris, and New York.

– I deny it. With the exception of Shakespeare (or Tate, Cibber, and Thompson<sup>26</sup> under his name), not one in fifty plays of our dramatists is ever acted, however much they may be read. Only *one* of Massinger<sup>27</sup> – none of Ford<sup>28</sup> – none of Marlow<sup>29</sup> – *one* of Ben Jonson<sup>30</sup> – none of Webster<sup>31</sup> – none of Heywood:<sup>32</sup> and even in comedy, Congreve<sup>33</sup> is rarely acted, and that only in one of his plays. Neither is Joanna Baillie.<sup>34</sup> I am far from attempting to raise myself to a level with the least, even, of these names: I only wish to be exempted from a stage which is not theirs. Perhaps the whole question is best treated in Mr Lamb’s essay upon the effects of dramatic representation on an intelligent author.<sup>35</sup> If his remarks are just with regard to the plays of Shakespeare himself, they apply a hundredfold to those of his inferiors.

Feb. 1822.

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**The list B. now makes shows how few of the dramatists now recognised as standard were in the repertoire in his day, and how hard it was therefore to differentiate between fair and false reputations. He has seen very little of the work of the playwrights in his list.**

**26:** Nahum Tate (1652-1715); the only dramatic text of his which survives in performance is the libretto to Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*. Colley Cibber (1671-1757), famous for mutilating Shakespeare; none of his plays survive in the repertoire. James Thompson (1700-48), author of *The Seasons*; he wrote a tragedy called *Sophonisba*, never now performed.

**27:** Philip Massinger (1583-60) author of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (see BLJ VI 192, VI 206, VII 194, and *TVOJ*, 105, 8).

**28:** John Ford (1586-60?) author of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (see BLJ III 199 and VI 95).

**29:** Christopher Marlowe (1564-83); his plays are now often performed. B.’s *Manfred* derives from it in part – see essay on this website.

**30:** Ben Jonson (1572-1637); his plays, also, are now often performed. The *one* B. refers to is *Every Man in his Humour*. B. quotes from it (“by the foot of Pharaoh”), at BLJ III 122. See also BLJ VIII 57.

**31:** John Webster (1580-1634), author of *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, both now often performed. B. refers to *The White Devil* at BLJ VII 122-4; never to *The Duchess of Malfi*.

**32:** Thomas Heywood (1573?-1641) author of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, sometimes revived. This is B.’s only reference to him.

**33:** William Congreve (1670-1729); author of *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World*, both often revived. For B.’s high opinion of him, see BLJ III 249, VII 61, and VIII 57.

**34:** Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), whose tragedies on the passions were sometimes produced in her own lifetime, but never have been since. B. was in two minds about her: on April 23 1815 he wrote, “Women (saving Joanna Baillie) cannot write tragedy; they have not seen enough nor felt enough of life for it. I think Semiramis or Catherine II. Might have written (could they have been unqueened) a rare play” (BLJ IV 290). Later, on April 2 1817, he wrote, “Voltaire has asked *why* no woman has ever written even a tolerable tragedy? ‘Ah (said the Patriarch) the composition of a tragedy requires *testicles*.’ If this be true, Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does; I suppose she borrows them” (BLJ V 203).

**35:** B. refers to Charles Lamb, *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage-Representation* (1811), which contains the following:

“Never let me be so ungrateful as to forget the very high degree of satisfaction which I received some years back from seeing for the first time a tragedy of Shakespeare performed, in which these two great performers [*Kean and Siddons*] sustained the principal parts. It seemed to embody and realize conceptions which had hitherto assumed no distinct shape. But dearly do we pay all our life afterwards for this juvenile pleasure, this sense of distinctness. When the novelty is past, we find to our cost that, instead of realising an idea, we have only materialised and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood. We have let go a dream, in quest of an unattainable substance.”

and

“It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguished excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do”.

**WERNER:  
OR,  
THE INHERITANCE**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN:

Werner.

Ulric.

Stralenheim.

Idenstein

Gabor.

Erick.

Fritz.

Arnheim.

Meister.

Rodolph.

Ludwig.

WOMEN:

Josephine.

Ida Stralenheim.

SCENE – *Partly on the Frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle, near Prague. Time – The Close of the Thirty Years' War.*

## ACT I

Scene 1. – *The Hall of a decayed palace near a small town on the Northern frontier of Silesia – the night tempestuous. Werner and Josephine, his wife.*

Josephine: My love, be calmer!

Werner: I am calm.

Josephine: To me –  
But not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,  
And no-one walks a chamber like to ours,  
With steps like thine, when his heart is at rest.  
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,  
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower;  
But *here!*

Werner: 'Tis chill; the tapestry lets through  
The wind to which it waves: my blood is frozen.

Josephine: Ah, no!

Werner: (*smiling*): Why! wouldst thou have it so?

Josephine: I would  
Have it healthful current.

Werner: Let it flow 10  
Until 'tis spilt or checked – how soon, I care not.

Josephine: And I am I nothing in thy heart?

Werner: All – all.

Josephine: Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine?

Werner (*approaching her slowly*): But for *thee* I had been –  
no matter what –  
But much of good and evil; what I am,  
Thou knowest; what I might or should have been,  
Thou knowest not: but still I love thee, nor  
Shall aught divide us.

*Werner walks on abruptly, and then approaches Josephine.*

The storm of the night,  
Perhaps affects me; I'm a thing of feelings,  
And have of late been sickly, as, alas! 20  
Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love!  
In watching me.

Josephine: To see thee well is much –  
To see thee happy –

Werner: Where hast thou seen such?  
Let me be wretched with the rest!

Josephine: But think  
How many in this hour of tempest shiver  
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,  
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,  
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath  
Her surface.

Werner: And that's not the worst: who cares



For chambers? rest is all. The wretches whom  
 Thou namest – aye, the wind howls round them, and  
 The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones  
 The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,  
 A hunter, and a traveller, and am  
 A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk’st of.  
 Josephine: And art thou not now sheltered from them all?  
 Werner: Yes. And from these alone.  
 Josephine: And that is something.  
 Werner: True – to a peasant.  
 Josephine: Should the nobly born  
 Be thankless for that refuge which their habits  
 Of early delicacy render more  
 Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb  
 Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life?  
 Werner: It is not that, thou know’st it is not: we  
 Have borne all this, I’ll not say patiently,  
 Except in thee – but we have borne it.  
 Josephine: Well?  
 Something beyond our outward sufferings (though  
 These were enough to gnaw into our souls),  
 Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.  
 When, but for this untoward sickness, which  
 Seized upon me upon this desolate frontier, and  
 Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,  
 And leaves us – no! this is beyond me! – but  
 For this I had been happy – *thou* been happy –  
 The splendour of my rank sustained – my name –  
 My father’s name – been still upheld; and, more  
 Than those –  
 Josephine (*abruptly*): My son – our son – our Ulric,  
 Been clasped again in these long-empty arms,  
 And all a mother’s hunger satisfied.  
 Twelve years! he was but eight then – beautiful  
 He was, and beautiful he must be now,  
 Ulric! my adored!  
 Werner: I have been full oft  
 The chase of Fortune; now she hath o’ertaken  
 My spirit where it cannot turn at bay –  
 Sick, poor, and lonely.  
 Josephine: Lonely! my dear husband?  
 Werner: Or worse – involving all I love, in this  
 Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I’d died,  
 And all been over in a nameless grave.<sup>36</sup>  
 Josephine: And I had not outlived thee; but pray take  
 Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive  
 With Fortune win or weary her at last,  
 So that they find the goal or cease to feel

---

36: Werner longs for the unnamed grave of all true Byronic Heroes.

- Further. Take comfort – we shall find our boy.  
Werner: We were in sight of him, of every thing  
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow –  
And to be baffled thus!
- Josephine: We are not baffled.  
Werner: Are we not penniless?  
Josephine: We ne'er were wealthy.  
Werner: But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;  
Enjoyed them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,  
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,  
In my o'er-fervent youth: but for the abuse 80  
Long-sufferings have atoned. My father's death  
Left the path open, yet not without snares.  
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long  
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon  
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstepped me,  
Become the master of my rights, and lord  
Of that which lifts him up to princes in  
Dominion and domain.
- Josephine: Who knows? our son  
May have returned back to his grandsire, and  
Even now uphold thy rights for thee?<sup>37</sup>
- Werner: 'Tis hopeless, 90  
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,  
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon  
Himself,<sup>38</sup> no tidings have revealed his course.  
I parted with him to his grandsire, on  
The promise that his anger would stop short  
Of the third generation; but Heaven seems  
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit  
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.
- Josephine: I must hope better still – at least we have yet  
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim. 100
- Werner: We should have done, but for this fatal sickness;  
More fatal than a mortal malady,  
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace:  
Even now I feel my spirit girt about  
By the snares of this avaricious fiend:  
How do I know he hath not tracked us here?
- Josephine: He does not know thy person; and his spies,  
Who so long watched thee, have been left at Hamburg.  
Our unexpected journey, and this change  
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind: 110  
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.
- Werner: Save what we seem! Say what we *are* – sick beggars,  
Even to our very hopes. Ha! ha!
- Josephine: Alas!

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**37:** Establishes the play's main theme, the son compensating for the father's failure.

**38:** In *Werner*, the sins of the fathers are not visited on the children; the children commit the sins the fathers lack the nerve to commit.



Myself – to lose this for our son and thee!  
 Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring,  
 My father barred me from my father's house,  
 The last sole scion of a thousand sires  
 (For I was then the last), it hurt me less 160  
 Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother  
 Excluded in their innocence from what  
 My faults deserved – exclusion; although then  
 My passions were all living serpents, and  
 Twined like the Gorgon's round me.<sup>41</sup>

*A loud knocking is heard.*

Josephine: Hark!  
 Werner: A knocking!  
 Josephine: Who can it be at this lone hour? We have  
 Few visitors.  
 Werner: And poverty hath none,  
 Save those who come to make it poorer still.  
 Well – I am prepared.

*Werner puts his hand into his bosom, as if to search for some weapon.*

Josephine: Oh! do not look so. I  
 Will to the door. It cannot be of import 170  
 In this lone spot of wintry desolation:  
 The very desert saves man from mankind.

*She goes to the door. Enter Idenstein.*<sup>42</sup>

Idenstein: A fair good evening to my fair hostess  
 And worthy – what's your name, my friend?  
 Werner: Are you  
 Not afraid to demand it?  
 Idenstein: Not afraid?  
 Egad! I am afraid. You look as if  
 I asked for something better than your name,  
 By the face you put on it.  
 Werner: Better, sir!  
 Idenstein: Better or worse, like matrimony: what  
 Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month! 180  
 Here in the prince's palace (to be sure,  
 His Highness had resigned it to the ghosts  
 And rats these twelve years – but 'tis still a palace) –  
 I say you have been our lodger, and as yet,  
 We do not know your name.  
 Werner: My name is Werner.

**41:** The play's first 165 lines have been entirely expository, for the audience's benefit. Nothing has been said by either Werner or Josephine that they wouldn't have known already.

**42:** In Lee, Idenstein is not the Intendant, but a local lawyer.

- Idenstein: A goodly name, a very worthy name,  
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:  
I have a cousin in the lazaretto<sup>43</sup>  
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore  
The same. He is an officer of trust, 190  
A surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),  
And has done miracles i'the way of business.  
Perhaps you are related to my relative?
- Werner: To yours?
- Josephine: Oh, yes; we are, but distantly (*aside, to Werner*):  
Cannot you humour the dull gossip till  
We learn his purpose?
- Idenstein: Well, I'm glad of that;  
I thought so all along, such natural yearnings  
Played round my heart – blood is not water, cousin;  
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto  
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be 200  
Friends.
- Werner: You appear t'have drunk enough already;  
And if you have not, I've no wine to offer,  
Else it were yours: but this you know, or should know:  
You see I am poor, and sick, and will not see  
That I would be alone; but to your business!  
What brings you here?
- Idenstein: Why, what should bring me here?
- Werner: I know not, though I think that I could guess  
That which will send you hence.
- Josephine (*aside*): Patience, dear Werner!
- Idenstein: You don't know what has happened, then?
- Josephine: How should we?
- Idenstein: The river has o'erflowed.
- Josephine: Alas! we've known 210  
That to our sorrow for these five days; since  
It keeps us here.
- Idenstein: But what you don't know is,  
That a great personage, who fain would cross  
Against the stream and three postillions' wishes,  
Is drowned below the ford, with five post-horses,  
A monkey, and a mastiff – and a valet.<sup>44</sup>
- Josephine: Poor creatures! are you sure?
- Idenstein: Yes, of the monkey,  
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet  
We know not if his Excellency's dead  
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown, 220  
As it is fit that men in office should be,  
But what is certain is, that he has swallowed  
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;

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43: The quarantine area.

44: B.'s entourage normally included these three items.

And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,  
 Who, at their proper peril, snatched him from  
 The whirling river, have sent on to crave  
 A lodging, or a grave, according as  
 It may turn out with the live or dead body.

Josephine: And where will you receive him? Here, I hope,  
 If we can be of service – say the word. 230

Idenstein: Here? no; but in the Prince's own apartment,  
 As fits a noble guest – 'tis damp, no doubt,  
 Not having been inhabited these twelve years;  
 But then he comes from a much damper place,  
 So scarcely will catch cold in't, if he be  
 Still liable to cold – and if not, why  
 He'll be worse lodged tomorrow: ne'ertheless,  
 I've ordered fire and all appliances  
 To be got ready for the worst – that is,  
 In case he should survive.

Josephine Poor gentleman! 240  
 I hope he will, with all my heart.

Werner: Intendant,<sup>45</sup> you not learned his name?  
 (*aside to his wife*): My Josephine,  
 I'll sift this fool.

*Exit Josephine.*

Idenstein: His name? oh Lord!  
 Who knows if he hath now a name or no?  
 'Tis time enough to ask it when he's able  
 To give an answer; or if not, to put  
 His heirs upon his epitaph. Methought  
 Just now you chid me for demanding names?

Werner: True, true, I did so: you say well and wisely.

*Enter Gabor.*<sup>46</sup>

Gabor: If I intrude, I crave –

Idenstein: Oh, no intrusion! 250  
 This is the palace; this a stranger like  
 Yourself; I pray you make yourself at home:  
 But where's his Excellency? And how fares he ?

Gabor: Wetly and wearily, but out of peril:  
 He paused to change his garments in a cottage

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**45:** *Intendant* – one who ran a municipal department or province. A kind of mayor. In Lee, Idenstein and the Intendant are different people.

**46:** In Lee, this character is not named. Bethlem or Bethlehem Gabor was a Hungarian insurgent leader: Hare-Naylor I 96, Coxe IV 14. Lee's description runs, "The Hungarian was indeed devoid of those exterior advantages by which his countrymen are generally distinguished. He was low in stature and swarthy. His features were not plain, but their expression was disagreeable; and he had the air of a man who has seen and suffered much. His step and deportment, however, were military; and, together with his address, announced self-possession" (Lee, p.233).



- Idenstein: Well, what would I give to save a great man! 290  
 No doubt you'll have a swingeing sum as recompense.  
 Gabor: Perhaps.  
 Idenstein: Now, how much do you reckon on?  
 Gabor: I have not yet put up myself to sale:  
 In the mean time, my best reward would be  
 A glass of your Hockheimer<sup>48</sup> – a green glass,  
 Wreathed with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices,  
 O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage  
 For which I promise you, in case you e'er  
 Run hazard of being drowned (although I own  
 It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you), 300  
 I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,  
 And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,  
 A wave the less may roll above your head.  
 Idenstein (*aside*): I don't much like this fellow – close and dry  
 He seems – two things which suit me not; however,  
 Wine he shall have; if that unlocks him not,  
 I shall not sleep tonight for curiosity.

*Exit Idenstein.*

- Gabor (*to Werner*): This master of the ceremonies is  
 The Intendant of the palace, I presume:  
 'Tis a fine building, but decayed.  
 Werner: The apartment 310  
 Designed for him you rescued will be found  
 In fitter order for a sickly guest.  
 Gabor: I wonder then you occupied it not,  
 For you seem delicate in health.  
 Werner (*quickly*): Sir!  
 Gabor: Pray  
 Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?  
 Werner: Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.  
 Gabor: And that's the reason I would have us less so.  
 I thought our bustling guest without had said  
 You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart  
 Of me and my companions. 320  
 Werner: Very true.  
 Gabor: Then, as we never met before, and never,  
 It may be, may again encounter, why,  
 I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here  
 (At least to me) by asking you to share  
 The fare of my companions and myself.  
 Werner: Pray, pardon me; my health –  
 Gabor: Even as you please.  
 I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt  
 In bearing.

---

**48:** Hockheimer, as in “For Godssake, Hock and Soda-Water!”



- Werner: I have also served, and can  
Requite a soldier's greeting.
- Gabor: In what service?  
The Imperial?
- Werner (*quickly, and then, interrupting himself*): I commanded –  
no – I mean 330  
I served; but it is many years ago,  
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst  
The Austrian.<sup>49</sup>
- Gabor: Well, that's over now, and peace  
Has turned some thousand gallant hearts adrift  
To live as they best may: and, to say truth,  
Some take the shortest.
- Werner: What is that?
- Gabor: Whate'er  
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and  
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands  
Of the late troops, who levy on the country  
Their maintenance: the chatelains<sup>50</sup> must keep 340  
Their castle walls – beyond them 'tis but doubtful  
Travel for your rich Count or full-blown Baron.  
My comfort is that, wander where I may,  
I've little left to lose now.
- Werner: And I – nothing.
- Gabor: That's harder still. You say you were a soldier.
- Werner: I was.
- Gabor: You look one still. All soldiers are  
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.  
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim  
(While levelled) at each other's hearts; but when  
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits 350  
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep  
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.  
You are poor and sickly – I am not rich, but healthy;  
I want for nothing which I cannot want;  
You seem devoid of this – wilt share it?
- Gabor pulls out his purse.*
- Who
- Gabor: Told you I was a beggar?  
You yourself,  
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.
- Werner (*looking at him with suspicion*): You know me not.
- Gabor: I know no man, not even  
Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er  
Beheld till half an hour since?

**49:** He refers to the start of the Thirty Years' War, in 1618. See Lee p.63. Notice that Werner carefully avoids saying on which side he fought, whether Austrian / Imperial or Bohemian / rebellious.

**50:** *chatelains* were commanders of castles.



- Gabor: Be spared – but never mind!
- Gabor: I don't. But who  
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing  
Above his outward fortunes.
- Idenstein: There I differ. 400  
He's poor as Job, and not so patient; but  
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,  
Except his name (and that I only learned  
Tonight), I know not.
- Gabor: But how came he here?
- Idenstein: In a most miserable old calèche<sup>52</sup>  
About a month since, and immediately  
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.
- Gabor: Tender and true! but why?
- Idenstein: Why, what is life  
Without a living? He has not a stiver.<sup>53</sup>
- Gabor: In that case, I much wonder that a person 410  
Of your apparent prudence should admit  
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.
- Idenstein: That's true: but pity, as you know, does make  
One's heart commit these follies; and beside,  
They had some valuables left at that time,  
Which paid their way up to the present hour;  
And so I thought they might as well be lodged  
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them  
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.  
They served to air them, at the least as long 420  
As they could pay for firewood.
- Gabor: Poor souls!
- Idenstein: Aye,  
Exceeding poor.
- Gabor: And yet unused to poverty  
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?
- Idenstein: Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to Heaven itself.  
Some days ago that looked the likeliest journey  
For Werner.
- Gabor: Werner! I have heard the name.  
But it may be a feigned one.
- Idenstein: Like enough!  
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and  
A blaze of torches from without. As sure  
As destiny, his Excellency's come. 430  
~  
I must be at my post; will you not join me,  
To help him from his carriage, and present  
Your humble duty at the door?
- Gabor: I dragged him  
From out that carriage when he would have given

**52:** Anachronism. A *calèche* was a two-wheel, single-horse carriage, developed in early nineteenth century France. The word occurs at Lee, p.9.

**53:** *stiver* – from a Dutch word for a low-value coin (“stuiver”).

His barony or county to repel  
 The rushing river from his gurgling throat.  
 He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,  
 Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,  
 All roaring "Help!" but offering none; and as  
 For *duty* (as you call it) I did mine *then*, 440  
 Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!  
 Idenstein: *I cringe! but I shall lose the opportunity*  
*Plague take it! he'll be here, and I not there!*

*Exit Idenstein hastily.*  
*Re-enter Werner.*

Werner (*to himself*): I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How  
 All sounds now jar me!<sup>54</sup> (*perceiving Gabor*): Still here! Is he not  
 A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer  
 So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore  
 The aspect of a secret enemy;  
 For friends are slow at such.

Gabor: Sir, you seem rapt;  
 And yet the time is not akin to thought.  
 These old walls will be noisy soon. The Baron,  
 Or count (or whatsoever this half-drowned noble  
 May be), for whom this desolate village and  
 Its lone inhabitants show more respect  
 Than did the elements, is come.

Idenstein (*without*): This way –  
 This way, your Excellency – have a care,  
 The staircase is a little gloomy, and  
 Somewhat decayed; but if we had expected  
 So high a guest – pray take my arm, my Lord!

*Enter Stralenheim, Idenstein, and attendants – partly his own, and partly retainers of  
 the domain of which Idenstein is Intendant.*

Stralenheim: I'll rest here a moment.  
 Idenstein (*to the servants*): Ho! a chair! 460  
 Instantly, knaves.

*Stralenheim sits down.*

Werner: 'Tis he!  
 Stralenheim: I'm better now.  
 Who are these strangers?  
 Idenstein: Please you, my good Lord,  
 One says he is no stranger.  
 Werner (*aloud and hastily*): Who says that?

---

54: Echoes Macbeth at II ii 58: *How is't with me, when every noise appals me?*

*They look at him with surprise.*

- Idenstein: Why, no one spoke of you, or to you! – but  
Here's one his Excellency may be pleased  
To recognise. (*pointing to Gabor*):
- Gabor: I seek not to disturb  
His noble memory.
- Stralenheim: I apprehend  
This is one of the strangers to whose aid  
I owe my rescue. (*pointing to Werner*): Is not that the other?  
My state when I was succoured must excuse 470  
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.
- Idenstein: He! no, my Lord! he rather wants for rescue  
Than can afford it. 'Tis a poor sick man,  
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed  
From whence he never dreamed to rise.
- Stralenheim: Methought  
That there were two.
- Gabor: There were, in company;  
But, in the service rendered to your Lordship,  
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.  
The chief part of whatever aid was rendered  
Was *his*: it was his fortune to be first. 480  
My will was not inferior, but his strength  
And youth outstripped me; therefore do not waste  
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second  
Under a nobler principal.
- Stralenheim: Where is he?  
An attendant: My Lord, he tarried in the cottage where  
Your Excellency rested for an hour,  
And said he would be here tomorrow.
- Stralenheim: Till  
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,  
And then –
- Gabor: I seek no more, and scarce deserve  
So much. My comrade may speak for himself. 490
- Stralenheim: (*fixing his eyes upon Werner, then aside*): It cannot be!  
and yet he must be looked to.  
'Tis twenty years since I beheld him with  
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept  
*Theirs* on him, policy has held aloof  
My own from his, not to alarm him into  
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave  
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance  
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,  
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted  
In haste, though even the elements appear 500  
To fight against me, and this sudden flood  
May keep me prisoner here till –



If I could aid you – journeying the same way?  
Werner (*quickly*): I am not journeying the same way!  
Stralenheim: How know ye  
That, ere you know my route?  
Werner: Because there is  
But one way that the rich and poor must tread  
Together. You diverged from that dread path  
Some hours ago, and I some days: henceforth 540  
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend  
All to one home.  
Stralenheim: Your language is above  
Your station.  
Werner (*bitterly*): Is it?  
Stralenheim: Or, at least, beyond your garb.  
Werner: 'Tis well that it is not beneath it,  
As sometimes happens to the better clad.  
But, in a word, what would you with me?  
Stralenheim (*startled*): I?  
Werner: Yes – you! You know me not, and question me,  
And wonder that I answer not – not knowing  
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,  
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me. 550  
Stralenheim: I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.  
Werner: Many have such – have you none?  
Stralenheim: None which can  
Interest a mere stranger.  
Werner: Then forgive  
The same unknown and humble stranger, if  
He wishes to remain so to the man  
Who can have nought in common with him.  
Stralenheim: Sir, I will not balk your humour, though untoward:  
I only meant you service – but good night!  
Intendant, show the way! (*to Gabor*): Sir, you will with me?

*Exeunt Stralenheim and attendants, Idenstein and Gabor.*

Werner (*solus*): 'Tis he! I am taken in the toils. Before  
I quitted Hamburg, Giulio,<sup>56</sup> his late steward,  
Informed me, that he had obtained an order  
From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest  
Of Kruitzner (such the name I then bore), when  
I came upon the frontier; the free city  
Alone preserved my freedom – till I left  
Its walls – fool that I was to quit them!  
But I deemed this humble garb, and route obscure,  
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.  
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;

---

**56:** The name Giulio occurs at Lee, p.128. It is that of a Piedmontese resident in Hamburg. B. had an Italian steward, Lega Zambelli.

Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,  
 Have recognised *him*, after twenty years  
 We met so rarely and so coldly in  
 Our youth. But those about him! Now I can  
 Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who  
 No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,  
 To sound and to secure me. Without means!  
 Sick, poor – begirt too with the flooding rivers,  
 Impassable even to the wealthy, with  
 All the appliances which purchase modes  
 Of overpowering peril, with men's lives –  
 How can I hope? An hour ago methought  
 My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,  
 The past seems paradise. Another day,  
 And I'm detected – on the very eve  
 Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,  
 When a few drops of gold might save me still  
 In favouring an escape.

580

*Enter Idenstein and Fritz*<sup>57</sup> *in conversation.*

Fritz: Immediately.

Idenstein: I tell you, 'tis impossible.

Fritz: It must

Be tried, however; and if one express  
 Fail, you must send on others, till the answer  
 Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

590

Idenstein: I will do what I can.

Fritz: And recollect  
 To spare no trouble; you will be repaid  
 Tenfold.

Idenstein: The Baron is retired to rest?

Fritz: He hath thrown himself into an easy chair  
 Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has ordered  
 He may not be disturbed until eleven,  
 When will take himself to bed.

Idenstein: Before  
 An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.  
 Remember!

600

*Exit Fritz.*

The devil take these great men! they  
 Think all things made for them. Now here must I  
 Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals  
 From their scant pallets, and, at peril of  
 Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards  
 Frankfort. Methinks the Baron's own experience

---

57: Fritz has no equivalent in Lee.



Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling  
 But no, “it *must*”, and there’s an end. How now?  
 Are you there, Mynheer Werner?<sup>58</sup>

Werner: You have left  
 Your noble guest right quickly.

Idenstein: Yes – he’s dozing, 610  
 And seems to like that none should sleep besides.  
 Here is a packet for the Commandant  
 Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;  
 But I must not lose time – good night!

*Exit Idenstein.*

Werner: “To Frankfort!”  
 So, so, it thickens! Aye, “the Commandant”!  
 This tallies well with all the prior steps  
 Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks  
 Between me and my father’s house. No doubt  
 He writes for a detachment to convey me  
 Into some secret fortress. Sooner than 620  
 This –<sup>59</sup>

*Werner looks around, and snatches up a knife lying on a table in a recess.*<sup>60</sup>

Now I’m master of myself at least.  
 Hark – footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim  
 Will wait for even the show of that authority  
 Which is to overshadow usurpation?  
 That he suspects me’s certain. I’m alone,  
 He with a numerous train: I weak – he strong  
 In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.  
 I nameless, or involving in my name  
 Destruction, till I reach my own domain;  
 He full-blown with his titles, which impose 630  
 Still further on these obscure petty burghers  
 Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!  
 I’ll to the secret passage, which communicates  
 With the – No! all is silent – ’twas my fancy!  
 Still as the breathless interval between  
 The flash and thunder – I must hush my soul  
 Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,

**58:** *Mynheer* is Dutch for “Mein Herr”, but B. is always cavalier about languages and cultures with which he’s not intimate, such as Russian or Polynesian.

**59:** Echoes Macbeth at III i 69-71: *Rather than so, / Come, Fate, into the list, and champion me / To th’ utterance!*

**60:** “In the last moment of desperation his eye glanced upon a large and sharp knife which lay on the table near, and with which she [*Josephine*] had been cutting bread for the child’s supper. Siegendorf seized it with an earnest grasp, as if with it he had seized his fate: then pausing irresolutely for a moment, he at length turned from the do towards which he had advanced, and past abruptly through another in the opposite direction: – not less determined than before, but like a man who feeling he has power in his hands, is become less desperate” (Lee, p.163).

To see if still be unexplored the passage  
 I wot of: it will serve me as a den  
 Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst. 640

*Werner draws a pannel, and exit, closing it after him.  
 Enter Gabor and Josephine.*

Gabor: Where is your husband?<sup>61</sup>  
 Josephine: *Here*, I thought: I left him  
 Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms  
 Have not many outlets, and he may be gone  
 To accompany the Intendant.  
 Gabor: Baron Stralenheim  
 Put many questions, to the Intendant on  
 The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,  
 I have my doubts if he means well.  
 Josephine: *Alas!*  
 What can there be in common with the proud  
 And wealthy Baron, and the unknown Werner?  
 Gabor: That you know best.  
 Josephine: Oh, if it were so, how 650  
 Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,  
 Rather than that of him whose life you saved?  
 Gabor: I helped to save him, as in peril; but  
 I did not pledge myself to serve him in  
 Oppression. I know well these nobles, and  
 Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.  
 I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when  
 I find them practising against the weak.  
 This is my only motive.  
 Josephine: It would be 660  
 Not easy to persuade my consort of  
 Your good intentions.  
 Gabor: Is he so suspicious?  
 Josephine: He was not once; but time and troubles have  
 Made him what you beheld.  
 Gabor: I'm sorry for it.  
 Josephine: Suspicion is a heavy armour, and  
 With its own weight impedes more than protects.  
 Good night! I trust to meet with him at day-break.

*Exit Gabor. Re-enter Idenstein with some peasants. Josephine retires up the hall.*

First peasant: But if I'm drowned?  
 Idenstein: Why, you will be well paid for't,  
 And have risked more than drowning for as much,  
 I doubt not.  
 Second Peasant: But our wives and families?

---

61: Echoes precisely *Macbeth*, IV ii 79.

Idenstein: Cannot be worse off than they are, and may  
Be better. 670

Third Peasant: I have neither, and will venture.

Idenstein: That's right. A gallant carle,<sup>62</sup> and fit to be  
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks  
In the Prince's body-guard – if you succeed:  
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,  
Two thalers.<sup>63</sup>

Third Peasant: No more?

Idenstein: Out upon your avarice!

Can that low vice alloy so much ambition?  
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in  
Small change will subdivide into a treasure;  
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily  
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler? 680  
And you would pause to do as much for *two*?  
When had you half the sum?

Third Peasant: Never – but ne'er  
The less I must have three.

Idenstein: Have you forgot  
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

Third Peasant: No – the Prince's,  
And not the stranger's.

Idenstein: Sirrah! in the Prince's  
Absence, I am sovereign; and the Baron is  
My intimate connection – “Cousin Idenstein!”  
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen vileins.” 690  
And so, you villains! Troop – march – march, I say;  
And if a single dog's ear of this packet  
Be sprinkled by the Oder – look to it!  
For every page of paper, shall a hide  
Of yours be stretched as parchment on a drum,  
Like Ziska's skin,<sup>64</sup> to beat alarm to all  
Refractory vassals, who can not effect  
Impossibilities. Away, ye earth-worms!

*Exit, driving them out.*

Josephine (*coming forward*): I fain would shun these scenes,  
too oft repeated,  
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;  
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.  
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot, 700  
The dimmest in the district's map, exist  
The insolence of wealth in poverty  
O'er something poorer still – the pride of rank  
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;

62: *carle* – churl, peasant.

63: *thaler* – German coin.

64: Johann Ziska, one-eyed Bohemian Hussite leader whose skin was in legend used to cover a drum.



now.

Josephine: I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

Werner: Dishonour!

Josephine: I have said it.

Werner: Let us hence:

'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

Josephine: And not the worst, I hope.

Werner: Hope! I make sure.

But let us to our chamber.

Josephine: Yet one question –

What hast thou *done*?<sup>67</sup>

Werner (*fiercely*): Left one thing *undone*, which

Had made all well:<sup>68</sup> let me not think of it!

Away!

Josephine: Alas that I should doubt of thee!

750

*Exeunt.*

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**67:** In Lee, we know what he's "done": "The spring, invisible on one side, was palpable at once on the other; encouraged by profound silence, he gently prest it, and found himself precisely where the previous calculation of a moment would have told him he would find himself – in the state chamber of the palace, with which that in his own house communicated, and the bed-room of Baron Stralenheim!

Astonishment, approaching to stupor, chained up the faculties of Siegendorf; yet an instinctive impulse of self-preservation made him grasp with ferocious boldness the knife he still held. The apartment was extremely spacious, and magnificently hung: a bed of purple velvet, fringed with silver, stood under a canopied recess on one side; on the other was a cabinet of curious wood, ornamented with precious stones, and richly mounted: lighted tapers were placed near, and letters, as well as other papers, confusedly scattered over it; but the object which at once arrested the attention of the Count was several rouleaus of gold that lay ranged beside them. – Lastly, near the fire, abhorred by his eyes, and now fearful indeed to his imagination, was Stralenheim himself, stretched in an easy chair, and buried in a deep sleep.

The dæmons of desperation and cupidity seized at once upon their victim in every form of temptation ingenuity could devise. Driven thus to the verge of a precipice, without one hand to save, one hope to soothe him, poverty – insult – a dungeon! a despoiled inheritance – a helpless child, and a despairing wife, passed at once in gloomy perspective before his imagination. How should he, who had never known what it was to contend with one imperious wish, now stem the torrent of all? He believed it almost a duty to free himself, for the sake even of others, from that abject penury which seemed to include every evil. – His hand was on the gold, when Stralenheim moved. Rendered desperate alike by shame and apprehension, Siegendorf fiercely raised the knife – happily the motion of the Baron brought with it no consciousness – he merely turned his face from the light which incommoded him. The Count, after gazing on him for a moment, hastily thrust into his bosom that portion of the gold which was nearest: – retreated – closed the door – and, in the dreadful perturbation and disgrace of the occasion, breathed out an imperfect ejaculation to that God who had providentially saved him from being a murderer!" (Lee, pp.170-3).

**68:** Werner knows he should have killed Stralenheim: the theft of the gold was a symbolic substitute.

## ACT II.

Scene I. – *A Hall in the same Palace.*

*Enter Idenstein and others.*

Idenstein: Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!  
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!  
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz: It hardly could, unless the rats despoiled  
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Idenstein: Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!  
The honour of our city's gone for ever. .

Fritz: Well, but now to discover the delinquent:  
The Baron is determined not to lose  
This sum without a search.

Idenstein: And so am I. 10

Fritz: But whom do you suspect?

Idenstein: Suspect! all people  
Without – within – above – below – Heaven help me!

Fritz: Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Idenstein: None whatsoever.

Fritz: Are you sure of that?

Idenstein: Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,  
And if there were such, must have heard of such,  
Or seen it.

Fritz: Then it must be some one who  
Had access to the antechamber. Doubtless.  
The man called *Werner's* poor!

Idenstein: Poor as a miser.<sup>69</sup>  
But lodged so far off, in the other wing, 20  
By which there's no communication with  
The Baron's chamber, that it can't be he.  
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,  
Almost a mile off, and which only leads  
To his own apartment, about the same time  
When this burglarious,<sup>70</sup> larcenous felony  
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz: There's another,  
The stranger –

Idenstein: The Hungarian?

Fritz: He who helped  
To fish the Baron from the Oder.

Idenstein: Not  
Unlikely. But, hold – might it not have been 30  
One of the suite?

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**69:** B. to Murray, May 29 1822: "Your printer has made one odd mistake "poor as a *Mouse*" instead of "poor as a *Miser*" the expression may seem strange – but it is only a translation of "Semper avarus egret". The quotation is HOR. EPIS. I ii 56.

**70:** For *burglariously*, see *Don Juan* I, 219, 6.

- Fritz: How? *We*, Sir!
- Idenstein: No – not *you*,  
 But some of the inferior knaves. You say  
 The Baron was asleep in the great chair –  
 The velvet chair – in his embroidered night-gown;  
 His toilet spread before him, and upon it  
 A cabinet with letters, papers, and  
 Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only  
 Has disappeared – the door unbolted,  
 No difficult access to any.
- Fritz: Good Sir,  
 Be not so quick; the honour of the corps, 40  
 Which forms the Baron's household, 's unimpeached  
 From steward to scullion, save in the fair way  
 Of peculation; such as in accompts,  
 Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,  
 Where all men take their prey;<sup>71</sup> as also in  
 Postage of letters, gathering of rents,  
 Purveying feasts, and understanding with  
 The honest trades who furnish noble masters:  
 But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,  
 We scorn it as we do board-wages: then 50  
 Had one of our folks done it, he would not  
 Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard  
 His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swooped all;<sup>72</sup>  
 Also the cabinet, if portable.
- Idenstein: There is some sense in that –
- Fritz: No, Sir; be sure  
 'Twas none of our corps; but some petty, trivial  
 Picker and stealer,<sup>73</sup> without art or genius.  
 The only question is – who else could have  
 Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?
- Idenstein: You don't mean me?
- Fritz: No, Sir; I honour more 60  
 Your talents –
- Idenstein: And my principles, I hope.
- Fritz: Of course. But to the point: What's to be done?
- Idenstein: Nothing – but there's a good deal to be said.  
 We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,  
 And the police (though there's none nearer than  
 Frankfort); post notices in manuscript  
 For we've no printer); and set by my clerk  
 To read them (for few can, save he and I).  
 We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and  
 Search empty pockets; also, to arrest 70

71: B. perhaps impugns the honesty of his own retinue, and of Lega Zambelli his steward. He wrote of Margarita Cogni in the Palazzo Mocenigo, "after she came into my house as *donna di governo*, the expences were reduced to less than half".

72: Even in theft, Werner was half-hearted.

73: Echoes *Hamlet*, III ii 327 app.

All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.  
 Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;  
 And for the Baron's gold – if 'tis not found,  
 At least he shall have the full satisfaction  
 Of melting twice its substance in the raising  
 The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchymy  
 For your lord's losses!

Fritz: He hath found a better.

Idenstein: Where?

Fritz: In a most immense inheritance.  
 The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,  
 Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord  
 Is on his way to take possession.

80

Idenstein: Was there

No heir?

Fritz: Oh, yes; but he has disappeared  
 Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.  
 A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban  
 For the last twenty years; for whom his sire  
 Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,  
 If living, he must chew the husks still. But  
 The Baron would find means to silence him,  
 Were he to re-appear: he's politic,  
 And has much influence with a certain court.

90

Idenstein: He's fortunate.

Fritz: 'Tis true, there is a grandson,  
 Whom the late Count reclaimed from his son's hands,  
 And educated as his heir; but then  
 His birth is doubtful.

Idenstein: How so?

Fritz: His sire made  
 A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,  
 With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:  
 Noble, they say, too; but no match for such  
 A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill  
 Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought  
 To see the parents, though he took the son.

100

Idenstein: If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet  
 Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may  
 Puzzle your baron to unravel.

Fritz: Why,  
 For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,  
 He forms a happy mixture of his sire  
 And grandsire's qualities – impetuous as  
 The former, and deep as the latter; but  
 The strangest is, that he too disappeared  
 Some months ago.

Idenstein: The devil he did!

Fritz: Why, yes:

It must have been at his suggestion, at

110



- An hour so critical as was the eve  
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.
- Idenstein: Was there no cause assigned?
- Fritz: Plenty, no doubt,  
And none perhaps the true one. Some averred  
It was to seek his parents; some because  
The old man held his spirit in too strictly  
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);  
A third believed he wished to serve in war,  
But peace being made soon after his departure,  
He might have since returned, were that the motive; 120  
A fourth set charitably have surmised,  
As there was something strange and mystic in him,  
That in the wild exuberance of his nature,  
He had joined the black bands,<sup>74</sup> who lay waste Lusatia,  
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,  
Since the last years of war had dwindled into  
A kind of general *condottiero*<sup>75</sup> system  
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,  
And all against mankind.
- Idenstein: That cannot be. 130  
A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,  
To risk his life and honours with disbanded  
Soldiers and desperadoes!
- Fritz: Heaven best knows!  
But there are human natures so allied  
Unto the savage love of enterprise,  
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.  
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,  
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy  
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,  
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,  
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,<sup>76</sup> 140  
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;  
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaimed,  
They who would follow the same pastime must  
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes  
The Baron; and the Saxon stranger, who  
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,  
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder  
Until this morning.

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**74:** In 1809, Duke Frederick William of Brunswick, intent on Napoleon's defeat, founded a corps which he dressed entirely in black, causing him to be nicknamed the Black Duke, and them as the Black Band. They passed through the Isle of Wight in 1809, on their way to Portugal. B. refers to a common phenomenon in time of warfare, and the contemporary reference may be accidental. See also *The Deformed Transformed* II, i, 65: *Bourbon's black banditti*.

**75:** The *condottieri* were free-booting bands of unemployed soldiers who ravaged medieval Italy.

**76:** Swedish and Imperial generals in the Thirty Years' War. Wallenstein and Tilly (Hare-Naylor I 220 and 228), were Catholics. Gustavus Adolphus King of Sweden, William Duke of Weimar, Bannier (or Banner) and Torstenson (Hare-Naylor I 300, 656, 661, and II 413), were protestants.



You are nobly born?  
 Ulric: I've heard my kinsmen say so.  
 Stralenheim: Your actions show it. Might I ask your name?  
 Ulric: Ulric.  
 Stralenheim: Your house's?  
 Ulric: When I'm worthy of it, 190  
 I'll answer you.  
 Stralenheim (*aside*): Most probably an Austrian,  
 Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast  
 His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,  
 Where the name of his country is abhorred.  
 (*Aloud to Fritz and Stralenheim*): So, Sirs! how have ye sped in your  
 researches?  
 Idenstein: Indifferent well, your excellency.  
 Stralenheim: Then I am to deem the plunderer is caught?  
 Idenstein: Humph! not exactly.  
 Stralenheim: Or at least suspected?  
 Idenstein: Oh! for that matter very much suspected.  
 Stralenheim: Who may he be?  
 Idenstein: Why, don't *you* know, my lord? 200  
 Stralenheim: How should I? I was fast asleep.  
 Idenstein: And so  
 Was I, and that's the cause I know no more  
 Than does your excellency.  
 Stralenheim: Dolt!  
 Idenstein: Why, if  
 Your lordship, being robbed, don't recognise  
 The rogue; how should I, not being robbed, identify  
 The thief among so many? In the crowd,  
 May it please your excellency, your thief looks  
 Exactly like the rest, or rather better:  
 'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon  
 That wise men know your felon by his features; 210  
 But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,  
 Whether he be found criminal or no,  
 His face shall be so.  
 Stralenheim (*to Fritz*): Prithee, Fritz, inform me  
 What hath been done to trace the fellow?  
 Fritz: Faith!  
 My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.  
 Stralenheim: Besides the loss, (which, I must own, affects me  
 Just now materially), I needs would find  
 The villain out of public motives; for  
 So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep  
 Through my attendants, and so many peopled 220  
 And lighted chambers on my rest, and snatch  
 The gold before my scarce closed eyes, would soon  
 Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!  
 Idenstein: True;  
 If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

- Ulric: What is all this?
- Stralenheim: You joined us but this morning,  
And have not heard that I was robbed last night.
- Ulric: Some rumour of it reached me as I passed  
The outer chambers of the palace, but  
I know no further.
- Stralenheim: It is a strange business:  
The Intendant can inform you of the facts. 230
- Idenstein: Most willingly. You see –
- Stralenheim (*impatiently*): Defer your tale,  
Till certain of the hearer's patience.
- Idenstein: That  
Can only be approved by proofs. You see –
- Stralenheim (*again interrupting him, and addressing Ulric*):  
In short, I was asleep upon a chair,  
My cabinet before me, with some gold  
Upon it, (more than I much like to lose,  
Though in part only): some ingenious person  
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,  
Besides those of the place, and bore away  
A hundred golden ducats, which to find 240  
I would be fain, and there's an end; perhaps  
You (as I still am rather faint), would add  
To yesterday's great obligation, this,  
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men  
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?
- Ulric: Most willingly, and without loss of time  
(*to Idenstein*): Come hither, Mynheer!
- Idenstein: But so much haste bodes  
Right little speed, and –
- Ulric: Standing motionless  
None; so let's march, we'll talk as we go on.
- Idenstein: But –
- Ulric: Show the spot, and then I'll answer you. 250
- Fritz: I will, Sir, with his excellency's leave.
- Stralenheim: Do so, and take yon old ass with you.
- Fritz: Hence!
- Ulric: Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

*Exit with Idenstein and Fritz.*

- Stralenheim (*solus*): A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,  
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,  
And with a brow of thought beyond his years  
When in repose, till his eye kindles up  
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:  
I have need of some such spirits near me now,  
For this inheritance is worth a struggle. 260  
And though I am not the man to yield without one,  
Neither are they who now rise up between me

And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;  
 But he hath played the truant in some hour  
 Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to  
 Champion his claims: that's well. The father, whom  
 For years I've tracked, as does the blood-hound, never  
 In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me  
 To fault, but *here I have* him, and that's better.  
 It must be *he!* All circumstance proclaims it; 270  
 And careless voices, knowing not the cause  
 Of my inquiries, still confirm it – Yes!  
 The man, his bearing, and the mystery  
 Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,  
 The Intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)  
 Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;  
 Besides the antipathy with which we met,  
 As snakes and lions shrink back from each other  
 By secret instinct that both must be foes  
 Deadly, without being natural prey to either; 280  
 All – all – confirm it to my mind: however,  
 We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours  
 The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters  
 Rise not the higher, (and the weather favours  
 Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe  
 Within a dungeon, where he may avouch  
 His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,  
 Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery,  
 (Save for the actual loss), is lucky also:  
 He's poor, and that's suspicious – he's unknown, 290  
 And that's defenceless – true, we have no proofs  
 Of guilt, but what hath he of innocence?  
 Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,  
 In other bearings, I should rather lay  
 The inculpation on the Hungarian, who  
 Hath something which I like not; and alone  
 Of all around, except the Intendant, and  
 The prince's household and my own, had ingress  
 Familiar to the chamber.

*Enter Gabor.*

Friend, how fare you?  
 Gabor: As those who fare well every where, when they 300  
 Have supped and slumbered, no great matter how –  
 And you, my lord?  
 Stralenheim: Better in rest than purse:  
 Mine inn is like to cost me dear.  
 Gabor: I heard  
 Of your late loss; but 'tis a trifle to  
 One of your order.  
 Stralenheim: You would hardly think so,

- Were the loss yours.
- Gabor: I never had so much  
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not  
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.  
Your couriers are turned back – I have outstripped them,  
In my return.
- Stralenheim: You! Why?
- Gabor: I went at day-break, 310  
To watch for the abatement of the river,  
As being anxious to resume my journey.  
Your messengers were all checked like myself;  
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await  
The current's pleasure.
- Stralenheim: Would the dogs were in it!  
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?  
I ordered this at all risks.
- Gabor: Could you order  
The Oder to divide, as Moses did  
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood  
Of the swoln stream), and be obeyed, perhaps 320  
They might have ventured.
- Stralenheim: I must see to it:  
The knaves! the slaves! but they shall smart for this.

*Exit Stralenheim.*

- Gabor (*solus*): There goes my noble, feudal, self-willed baron!  
Epitome of what brave chivalry  
The *preux chevaliers*<sup>79</sup> of the good old times  
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given  
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,  
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air  
As would have filled a bladder,<sup>80</sup> while he lay  
Gurgling and foaming half way through the window 330  
Of his o'erset and water-logged conveyance,  
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches  
Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:  
'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them  
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!  
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest!

*Exit Gabor.*

**79:** *preux chevaliers*: "gallant knights"; see *Don Juan* VII, 33, 2, and XIII, 86, 3.

**80:** Compare Scott, *The Antiquary*: "Good man," said Sir Arthur, "can you think of nothing?—of no help?—I'll make you rich—I'll give you a farm—I'll"—

"Our riches will soon be equal," said the beggar, looking out upon the strife of waters—"they are sae already; for I hae nae land; and you would give your fair bounds and barony for a square yard of rock that would be dry for twal hours." (p.58)

**ACT II scene ii.**

*The apartment of Werner, in the palace.  
Enter Josephine and Ulric.*

Josephine: Stand back, and let me look on thee again!  
My Ulric! my beloved! can it be  
After twelve years?

Ulric: My dearest mother!

Josephine: Yes! My dream is realized – how beautiful –  
How more than all I sighed for! Heaven receive  
A mother's thanks! A mother's tears of joy!  
This is indeed thy work! At such an hour, too,  
He comes not only as a son but saviour.

Ulric: If such a joy await me, it must double  
What I now feel, and lighten, from my heart, 10  
A part of the long debt of duty, not  
Of love (for that was ne'er withheld); forgive me!  
This long delay was not my fault.

Josephine: I know it,  
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt  
If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from  
My memory, by this oblivious transport!  
My son!

*Enter Werner.*

Werner: What have we here, more strangers?

Josephine: No! Look but upon him! What do you see?

Werner: A stripling.  
For the first time –

Ulric (*kneeling*): For twelve long years, my father!

Werner: Oh, God!

Josephine: He faints!

Werner: No – I'm better now – 20  
Ulric! (*embraces him*)

Ulric: My father, Siegendorf!

Werner (*starting*): Hush! boy –  
The walls may hear that name!

Ulric: What then?

Werner: Why, then –

But we will talk of that anon. Remember,  
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!  
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all  
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!  
Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;  
But had I seen that form amid ten thousand  
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen  
This for my son!

Ulric: And yet you knew me not! 30

- Werner: Alas! I have had that upon my soul  
Which makes me look on all men with an eye  
That only knows the evil at first glance.
- Ulric: My memory served me far more fondly: I  
Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times in  
The proud and princely halls of (I'll not name them,  
As you say that 'tis perilous,) but i' the pomp  
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I looked back  
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,  
And wept to see another day go down 40  
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.  
They shall not part us more.
- Werner: I know not that.  
Are you aware my father is no more?
- Ulric: Oh heavens! I left him in a green old age,  
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady  
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees  
Fell fast around him. 'Twas scarce three months since.
- Werner: Why did you leave him?
- Josephine (*embracing Ulric*): Can you ask that question?  
Is he not *here*?
- Werner: True; he hath sought his parents,  
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state! 50
- Ulric: All shall be bettered. What we have to do  
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,  
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless  
Your father has disposed in such a sort  
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,  
So that I must prefer my claim for form:  
But I trust better, and that all is yours.
- Werner: Have you not heard of Stralenheim?
- Ulric: I saved  
His life but yesterday: he's here.
- Werner: You saved  
The serpent who will sting us all!
- Ulric: You speak  
Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?
- Werner: Everything. One who claims our fathers' lands:  
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.
- Ulric: I never heard his name till now. The Count,  
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,  
If his own line should fail, might be remotely  
Involved in the succession; but his titles  
Were never named before me – and what then?  
His right must yield to ours.
- Werner: Aye, if at Prague:  
But here he is all powerful; and has spread 70  
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto  
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not  
By favour.



Ulric: Doth he personally know you?  
Werner: No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,  
As he betrayed last night; and I, perhaps,  
But owe my temporary liberty  
To his uncertainty.

Ulric: I think you wrong him,  
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim  
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,  
He owes me something both for past and present: 80  
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me;  
He hath been plundered too, since he came hither;  
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now  
Able to trace the villain who hath robbed him:  
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business  
Which brought me here was chiefly that: but I  
Have found, in searching for another's dross,  
My own whole treasure – you, my parents!

Werner (*agitatedly*): Who  
Taught you to mouth that name of “villain”?<sup>81</sup>

Ulric: What  
More noble name belongs to common thieves? 90

Werner: Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being  
With an infernal stigma?

Ulric: My own feelings  
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Werner: Who taught you, long-sought, and ill-found boy! that  
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Ulric: I named a villain. What is there in common  
With such a being and my father?

Werner: Everything!  
That ruffian is thy father!

Josephine: Oh, my son!  
Believe him not – and yet! (*her voice falters*)

Ulric (*starts, looks earnestly at Werner, and then says slowly*):  
And you avow it?

Werner: Ulric, before you dare despise your father, 100  
Learn to divine and judge his actions. Young,  
Rash, new to life, and reared in luxury's lap,  
Is it for you to measure passion's force,  
Or misery's temptation? Wait (not long,  
It cometh like the night, and quickly) Wait!  
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted – till

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**81:** Werner feels that in committing a common theft he has betrayed his noble name. “At the word *villain*, his lips quivered, and his eyes flashed fire. It was the vice of his character, ever to convert the subjects of self-reproach into those of indignation”

“And who,” said he, starting furiously from his seat, “has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who,” he added with increased agitation, “has taught you that it would be safe even for my son to insult me?”

“It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian,” replied Conrad indignantly, “to give him the appellation he merits: – and what is there in common between my father and such a character?”

“*Every thing*,” said Siegendorf, bitterly – “for that ruffian was your father!” (Lee pp.185-6).

Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;  
 Famine and poverty your guests at table;  
 Despair your bed-fellow – then rise, but not  
 From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive – 110  
 Should you see then the serpent, who hath coiled  
 Himself around all that is dear and noble  
 Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,  
 With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,  
 When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,  
 Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with  
 Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;  
 The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,  
 Even to your deadliest foe; and he as 'twere  
 Inviting death, by looking like it, while 120  
 His death alone can save you – thank your God!  
 If then, like me, content with petty plunder,  
 You turn aside – I did so.<sup>82</sup>

Ulric: But –  
 Werner (*abruptly*): Hear me!  
 I will not brook a human voice – scarce dare  
 Listen to my own (if that be human still)  
 Hear me! you do not know this man – I do.  
 He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You  
 Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn  
 None are secure from desperation, few  
 From subtlety. My worst foe, Stralenheim, 130  
 Housed in a prince's palace, couched within  
 A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!  
 An instant – a mere motion – the least impulse –  
 Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.  
 He was within my power – my knife was raised –  
 Withdrawn – and I'm in his – are you not so?  
 Who tells you that he knows you *not*? Who says  
 He hath not lured you here to end you? or  
 To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon?<sup>83</sup>

**82:** Byron versifies Lee's prose: "Conrad," exclaimed the latter [*Siegendorf*], interpreting his looks, and in a tone that ill disguised the increasing anguish of his own soul, "before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye learn to understand my actions! – Young and inexperienced in the world – reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for *you* to judge the force of the passions, or the temptations of misery? – Wait till like me you have blighted your fairest hopes – have endured humiliation and sorrow – poverty and famine – before you pretend to judge of their effect on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive – should *you* see the being at your mercy who stands between you, and every thing that is dear and noble in life! – Who is ready to tear from you your name – your inheritance – your very life itself – congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder, and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent, who now lives, perhaps, to sting us all!" (Lee, pp.187-8).

**83:** [*Lee's passage continues*] "... You do not know this man," continued he with the same incoherent eagerness, and impetuously silencing Conrad who would have spoken – "I do! – I believe him to be mean – sordid – deceitful! – You will conceive yourself safe because you are young and brave! – Learn, however, from the two instances before you, none are so secure but desperation and subtilty may reach them! – Stralenheim in the palace of a prince was in my power! – my knife was held over him! – a single moment would have swept him from the face of the earth, and with him all my future

*He pauses.*

- Ulric: Proceed – proceed!
- Werner: *Me* he hath ever known, 140  
 And hunted through each change of time – name – fortune –  
 And why not *you*? Are you more versed in men?  
 He wound snares round me; flung along my path  
 Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurned  
 Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,  
 Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be  
 More patient? Ulric! Ulric! there are crimes  
 Made venial by the occasion, and temptations  
 Which nature cannot master or forbear.
- Ulric (*looks, first at him, and then at Josephine*): My mother!
- Werner: Aye! I thought so; you have now 150  
 Only one parent. I have lost alike  
 Father and son, and stand alone.
- Ulric: But stay!

*Werner rushes out of the chamber.*<sup>84</sup>

- Josephine (*to Ulric*): Follow him not, until this storm of passion  
 Abates. Think'st thou that it were well for him  
 I had not followed?
- Ulric: I obey you, mother,  
 Although reluctantly. My first act shall not  
 Be one of disobedience.
- Josephine: Oh! he is good!  
 Condemn him, not from his own mouth, but trust  
 To me, who have borne so much with him, and  
 That this is but the surface of his soul, 160  
 And that the depth is rich in better things.
- Ulric: These then are but my father's principles?  
 My mother thinks not with him?
- Josephine: Nor doth he  
 Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief  
 Have made him sometimes thus.
- Ulric: Explain to me  
 More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,  
 That, when I see the subject in its bearings,

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fears: – I forbore – I am now in his. – Are you certain that you are not so too? Who assures you he does not know you? Who tells you that he has not lured you into his society, either to rid himself of you for ever, or to plunge you with your family into a dungeon?" (Lee, p.188).

**84:** [Lee's passage continues] "*Me*, it is plain, he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name – and why not you? – *Me* he has enrapt – are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of Idenstein round me: – of a reptile, whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom: – Will *you* be more patient? – Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered more venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or endure." The Count passionately struck his hand on his forehead as he spoke, and rushed out of the room (Lee, pp.188-9).

I may prepare to face him, or at least  
 To extricate you from your present perils.  
 I pledge myself to accomplish this – but would  
 I had arrived a few hours sooner! 170

Josephine: Aye!  
 Hadst thou but done so!

*Enter Gabor and Idenstein, with attendants.*

Gabor (*to Ulric*): I sought you, comrade.  
 So this is my reward!

Ulric: What do you mean?

Gabor: 'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this!  
 (*to Idenstein*): But for your age and folly, I would –

Idenstein: Help!  
 Hands off! Touch an Intendant!

Gabor: Do not think  
 I'll honour you so much as save your throat  
 From the Ravenstone,<sup>85</sup> by choking you myself.

Idenstein: I thank you for the respite; but there  
 Those who have greater need of it than me. 180

Ulric: Unriddle this vile wrangling, or –

Gabor: At once, then,  
 The Baron has been robbed, and upon me  
 This worthy personage has deigned to fix  
 His kind suspicions – me! whom he ne'er saw  
 Till yester' evening.

Idenstein: Wouldst have me suspect  
 My own acquaintances? You have to learn  
 That I keep better company.

Gabor: You shall  
 Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,  
 The worms! you hound of malice!

*Gabor seizes on him.*

Ulric (*interfering*): Nay, no violence:  
 He's old, unarmed – be temperate, Gabor!

Gabor (*letting go Idenstein*): True: 190  
 I am a fool to lose myself because  
 Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulric (*to Idenstein*): How  
 Fare you?

Idenstein: Help!

Ulric: I *have* helped you.

Idenstein: Kill him! Then  
 I'll say so.

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85: BYRON'S NOTE: The Ravenstone, "Ravenstein", is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it. See *Manfred*, rejected III i 59 and n.

Gabor: I am calm – live on!  
 Idenstein: That's more  
 Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment  
 In Germany. The Baron shall decide!  
 Gabor: Does *he* abet you in your accusation?  
 Idenstein: Does he not?  
 Gabor: Then next time let him go sink  
 Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.  
 But here he comes!

*Enter Stralenheim.*

Gabor (*goes up to him*): My noble lord, I'm here! 200  
 Stralenheim: Well, Sir!  
 Gabor: Have you aught with me?  
 Stralenheim: What should I  
 Have with you?  
 Gabor: You know best, if yesterday's  
 Flood has not washed away your memory;  
 But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,  
 In phrases not equivocal, by yon  
 Intendant, of the pillage of your person,  
 Or chamber – is the charge your own, or his?  
 Stralenheim: I accuse no man.  
 Gabor: Then you acquit me, Baron?  
 Stralenheim: I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,  
 Or scarcely to suspect.  
 Gabor: But you at least 210  
 Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted,  
 Oppressed here by these menials, and I look  
 To you for remedy – teach them their duty!  
 To look for thieves at home were part of it,  
 If duly taught; but, in one word, if I  
 Have an accuser, let it be a man  
 Worthy to be so of a man like me.  
 I am your equal.  
 Stralenheim: You!  
 Gabor: Aye, Sir; and, for  
 Aught that you know, superior; but proceed –  
 I do not ask for hints, and surmises, 220  
 And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough  
 Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,  
 To have at least waited your payment rather  
 Than paid myself, had I been eager of  
 Your gold. I also know that were I even  
 The villain I am deemed, the service rendered  
 So recently would not permit you to  
 Pursue me to the death, except through shame,  
 Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.  
 But this is nothing; I demand of you 230

Justice upon your unjust servants, and  
 From your own lips a disavowal of  
 All sanction of their insolence: thus much  
 You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,  
 And never thought to have asked so much.

Stralenheim: This tone  
 May be of innocence.

Gabor: 'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,  
 Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stralenheim: You  
 Are hot, Sir.

Gabor: Must I turn an icicle  
 Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stralenheim: Ulric! you know this man; I found him in 240  
*Your* company.

Gabor: We found *you* in the Oder:  
 Would we had left you there!

Stralenheim: I give you thanks, Sir.

Gabor: I've earned them; but might have earned more from others,  
 Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stralenheim: Ulric! you know this man?

Gabor: No more than you do.  
 If he avouches not my honour.

Ulric: I  
 Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my  
 Own brief connexion led me, honour.

Stralenheim: Then<sup>86</sup>  
 I'm satisfied.

Gabor (*ironically*): Right easily, methinks.  
 What is the spell in his asseveration 250  
 More than in mine?

Stralenheim: I merely said, that *I*  
 Was satisfied – not that you were absolved.

Gabor: Again! Am I accused or no?

Stralenheim: Go to!  
 You wax too insolent: if circumstance  
 And general suspicion be against you,  
 Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I  
 Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

Gabor: My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage,<sup>87</sup>  
 A vile equivocation: you well know  
 Your doubts are certainties to all around you – 260  
 Your looks a voice – your frowns a sentence; you  
 Are practising your power on me – because  
 You have it; but beware, you know not whom  
 You strive to tread on.

**86:** Twice in three lines B. terminates a split pentameter with an isolated monosyllable, as if his scansion is motivated by arithmetic, not drama.

**87:** Echoes Bardolph at *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV v 58: *Out, alas, Sir, cozenage, mere cozenage.*

Stralenheim: Threat'st thou?  
 Gabor: Not so much  
 As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,  
 And I retort it with an open warning.  
 Stralenheim: As you have said, 'tis true I owe you  
 For which you seem disposed to pay yourself'.  
 Gabor: Not with your gold.  
 Stralenheim: With bootless insolence. 269  
 (*to his attendants and Idenstein*): You need not further to molest this man,  
 But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!

*Exeunt Stralenheim, Idenstein, and attendants.*

Gabor (*following*): I'll after him, and –  
 Ulric (*stopping him*): Not a step.  
 Gabor: Who shall  
 Oppose me?  
 Ulric: Your own reason, with a moment's  
 Thought.  
 Gabor: Must I bear this?  
 Ulric: Pshaw! We all must bear  
 The arrogance of something higher than  
 Ourselves – the highest cannot temper Satan,  
 Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.  
 I've seen you brave the elements, and bear  
 Things which had made this silk-worm cast his skin –  
 And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words? 280  
 Gabor: Must I bear to be deemed a thief? If 'twere  
 A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it –  
 There's something daring in it – but to steal  
 The monies of a slumbering man! –  
 Ulric: It seems, then,  
 You are not guilty?  
 Gabor: Do I hear aright?  
 You too!  
 Ulric: I merely asked a simple question.  
 Gabor: If the judge asked me – I would answer "No" –  
 To you I answer *thus*. (*He draws.*)  
 Ulric (*drawing*): With all my heart!  
 Josephine: Without there! Ho! help! help! Oh, God! here's murder!

*Exit Josephine, shrieking. Gabor and Ulric fight. Gabor is disarmed just as  
 Stralenheim, Josephine, Idenstein, &c., re-enter.*

Josephine: Oh! glorious Heaven! He's safe!  
 Stralenheim (*to Josephine*): Who's safe?  
 Josephine: My –  
 Ulric (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards to  
 Stralenheim*): Both! 290  
 Here's no great harm done.







(I have the authority to do so by  
 An order of the house of Brandenburg)  
 For a fit escort – but this cursed flood  
 Bars all access, and may do for some hours. 360

Ulric: It is abating.  
 Stralenheim: That is well.  
 Ulric: But how  
 Am I concerned?  
 Stralenheim: As one who did so much  
 For me, you cannot be indifferent to  
 That which is of more import to me than  
 The life you rescued. Keep your eye on *him!*  
 The man avoids me, knows that I now know him.  
 Watch him! as you would watch the wild boar when  
 He makes against you in the hunter's gap –  
 Like him, he must be speared.

Ulric: Why so?  
 Stralenheim: He stands 370  
 Between me and a brave inheritance!  
 Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulric: I hope so.  
 Stralenheim: It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,  
 Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near  
 The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword  
 Have skimmed it lightly: so that now, besides  
 Its own exuberance, it bears double value  
 Confronted with whole realms afar and near  
 Made deserts.

Ulric: You describe it faithfully.  
 Stralenheim: Aye – could you see it, you would say so – but,  
 As I have said, you shall.

Ulric: I accept the omen. 380  
 Stralenheim: Then claim a recompense from it and me,  
 Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance  
 And services to me and mine for ever.

Ulric: And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch –  
 This way-worn stranger – stands between you and  
 This Paradise? (*aside*) (As Adam did between  
 The devil and his.)

Stralenheim: He doth.  
 Ulric: Hath he no right?  
 Stralenheim: Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,  
 Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage  
 In all his acts – but chiefly by his marriage, 390  
 And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,  
 And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

Ulric: He has a wife, then?  
 Stralenheim: You'd be sorry to  
 Call such your mother. You have seen the woman  
 He *calls* his wife.

- Ulric: Is she not so?
- Stralenheim: No more  
 Than he's your father – an Italian girl,  
 The daughter of a banished man, who lives  
 On love and poverty with this same Werner.<sup>88</sup>
- Ulric: They are childless, then?
- Stralenheim: There is or was a bastard,  
 Whom the old man – the grandsire (as old age  
 Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom, 400  
 As it went chilly downward to the grave:  
 But the imp stands not in my path – he has fled,  
 No one knows whither; and if he had not,  
 His claims alone were too contemptible  
 To stand. Why do you smile?
- Ulric: At your vain fears:  
 A poor man almost in his grasp – a child  
 Of doubtful birth – can startle a grandee!
- Stralenheim: All's to be feared, where all is to be gained.
- Ulric: True; and aught done to save or to obtain it. 410
- Stralenheim: You've harped the very string next to my heart.<sup>89</sup>  
 I may depend upon you?
- Ulric: 'Twere too late  
 To doubt it.
- Stralenheim: Let no foolish pity shake  
 Your bosom (for the appearance of the man  
 Is pitiful); he is a wretch, as likely  
 T'have robbed me as the fellow more suspected,  
 Except that circumstance is less against him;  
 He being lodged far off, and in a chamber  
 Without approach to mine; and, to say truth,  
 I think too well of blood allied to mine, 420  
 To deem he would descend to such an act;  
 Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one  
 Once – though too rash.
- Ulric: And they, my lord, we know  
 By our experience, never plunder till  
 They knock the brains out first – which makes them heirs,  
 Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,  
 Nor e'er be robbed: their spoils are a bequest –  
 No more.
- Stralenheim: Go to! you are a wag. But say  
 I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,  
 And let me know his slightest movement towards  
 Concealment or escape?
- Ulric: You may be sure  
 You yourself could not watch him more than I  
 Will be his sentinel.

**88:** Teresa Guiccioli's father was "a banished man", though she did not exactly live "in poverty" with B.

**89:** Echoes *Macbeth*, IV i 74: ... *thou hast harped my fear aright* ...



### Act III scene i.

Scene I. – *A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret passage leads.*

*Enter Werner and Gabor.*

- Gabor: Sir, I have told my tale; if it so please you  
To give me refuge for a few hours, well –  
If not – I'll try my fortune elsewhere.
- Werner: How  
Can I, so wretched, give to misery  
A shelter? wanting such myself as much  
As e'er the hunted deer a covert –
- Gabor: Or  
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks  
You rather look like one would turn at bay,  
And rip the hunter's entrails.
- Werner: Ah?
- Gabor: I care not  
If it be so, being much disposed to do  
The same myself; but will you shelter me? 10  
I am oppressed like you – and poor like you –  
Disgraced –
- Werner (*abruptly*): Who told you that I was disgraced?
- Gabor: No one; nor did I say *you* were so: with  
Your poverty my likeness ended; but  
I said *I* was so – and would add, with truth,  
As undeservedly as *you*.
- Werner: Again!  
As *I*?
- Gabor: Or any other honest man.  
What the devil would you have? You don't believe me  
Guilty of this base theft?
- Werner: No, no – I cannot. 20
- Gabor: Why, that's my heart of honour! yon young gallant –  
Your miserly Intendant and dense noble –  
All – all suspected me; and why? Because  
I am the worst-clothed, and least named amongst them,  
Although, were Momus'<sup>91</sup> lattice in our breasts,  
My soul might brook to open it more widely  
Than theirs; but thus it is – you poor and helpless –  
Both still more than myself.
- Werner: How know you that?
- Gabor: You're right; I ask for shelter at the hand

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**91:** “According to the myth, Athene, Poseidon, and Hephaestus had a match in inventiveness. Poseidon made a bull, Athene planned a house, Hephaestus constructed a man; when they came before Momus, who was to judge, he examined their productions; I need not trouble you with his criticisms of the other two; but his objection to the man, and the fault he found with Hephaestus, was this: he should have made a window [*B.*'s “*lattice*”] in his chest, so that, when it was opened, his thoughts and designs, his truth or falsehood, might have been apparent” – Lucian, *Hermotimos*.

- Which I call helpless; if you now deny it, 30  
 I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved  
 The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,  
 By sympathy, that all the outspread gold  
 Of the New World, the Spaniard boasts about,  
 Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,  
 Weighed at its proper value in the balance,  
 Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,  
 Because I feel it) as may leave no nightmare  
 Upon his heart o' nights.
- Werner: What do you mean?  
 Gabor: Just what I say; I thought my speech was plain: 40  
 You are no thief – nor I – and, as true men,  
 Should aid each other.
- Werner: It is a damned world, sir.  
 Gabor: So is the nearest of the two next, as  
 The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),  
 Therefore I'll stick by this – as being loth  
 To suffer martyrdom, at least with such  
 An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.  
 It is but a night's lodging which I crave;  
 Tomorrow I will try the waters, as  
 The dove did, trusting that they have abated. 50
- Werner: Abated? Is there hope of that?  
 Gabor: There was  
 At noontide.
- Werner: Then we may be safe.  
 Gabor: Are you  
 In peril?
- Werner: Poverty is ever so.  
 Gabor: That I know by long practice. Will you not  
 Promise to make mine less?
- Werner: Your poverty?  
 Gabor: No – you don't look a leech for that disorder;  
 I meant my peril only; you've a roof,  
 And I have none; I merely seek a covert.
- Werner: Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I  
 Have gold?
- Werner: Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't, 60  
 Although I almost wish you had the Baron's.
- Werner: Dare you insinuate?  
 Gabor: What?  
 Werner: Are you aware  
 To whom you speak?
- Gabor: No; and I am not used  
 Greatly to care. (a noise heard without) But hark! they come!
- Werner: Who come?  
 Gabor: The Intendant and his man-hounds after me:  
 I'd face them – but it were in vain to expect  
 Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?

- But show me any place. I do assure you,  
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:  
Think if it were your own case!
- Werner: (*aside*): Oh, just God! 70  
Thy hell is not hereafter!<sup>92</sup> Am I dust still?
- Gabor: I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:  
I may live to requite it.
- Werner: Are you not  
A spy of Stralenheim's?
- Gabor: Not I! and if  
I were, what is there to espy in you?  
Although I recollect his frequent question  
About you and your spouse, might lead to some  
Suspicion; but you best know – what – and why:  
I am his deadliest foe.
- Werner: You?<sup>93</sup>
- Gabor: After such 80  
A treatment for the service which in part  
I rendered him – I am his enemy;  
If you are not his friend, you will assist
- Werner: I will.
- Gabor: But how?
- Werner (*showing the pannel*): There is a secret spring;  
Remember, I discovered it by chance,  
And used it but for safety.
- Gabor: Open it,  
And I will use it for the same.
- Werner: I found it,  
As I have said: it leads through winding walls,  
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,  
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness),  
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to 90  
I know not whither; you must not advance:  
Give me your word.
- Gabor: It is unnecessary:  
How should I make my way in darkness, through  
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?
- Werner: Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?  
I know not (mark you!) but who knows it might not  
Lead even into the chambers of your foe?  
So strangely were contrived these galleries  
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,  
When man built less against the elements 100  
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance  
Beyond the two first windings; if you do  
(Albeit I never passed them), I'll not answer  
For what you may be led to.

<sup>92</sup>: Compare *Manfred*, I i 250-1: *I call upon thee! and compell / Thyself to be thy proper Hell!*

<sup>93</sup>: Werner had assumed that he was himself Stralenheim's worst enemy.

Gabor: But I will.  
 A thousand thanks!  
 Werner: You'll find the spring more obvious  
 On the other side; and, when you would return,  
 It yields to the least touch.  
 Gabor: I'll in – farewell!

*Gabor goes in by the secret pannel.*

Werner (*solus*): What have I done? Alas! what *had* I done  
 Before to make this fearful? Let it be  
 Still some atonement that I save the man, 110  
 Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own –  
 They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

*Enter Idenstein and others.*

Idenstein: Is he not here? He must have vanished then  
 Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid  
 Of pictured saints, upon the red and yellow  
 Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise  
 On long pearl-coloured beards and crimson crosses,  
 And gilded crosiers, and crossed arms, and cowls,  
 And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,  
 All the fantastic furniture of windows, 120  
 Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose  
 Likeness and fame alike rest on some panes  
 Of chrystal, which each rattling wind proclaims  
 As frail as any other life or glory.<sup>94</sup>  
 He's gone, however.

Werner: Whom do you seek?  
 Idenstein: A villain!  
 Werner: Why need you come so far, then?  
 Idenstein: In the search  
 Of him who robbed the Baron.  
 Werner: Are you sure  
 You have divined the man?  
 Idenstein: As sure as you  
 Stand there; but where's he gone?  
 Werner: Who?  
 Idenstein: He we sought.<sup>95</sup>  
 Werner: You see he is not here.  
 Idenstein: And yet we traced him 130  
 Up to this hall: are you accomplices,  
 Or deal you in the black art?  
 Werner: I deal plainly,  
 To many men the blackest.

<sup>94</sup>: This speech (a) is difficult for the actor to breathe in and (b) does not seem characteristic of Idenstein.

<sup>95</sup>: Should be "Him we sought".





- Ulric: Can you not guess?  
Werner: I cannot.  
Ulric: That is strange.  
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night*?  
Werner: I understand you not.  
Ulric: Then we shall never  
More understand each other. But to change  
The topic –  
Werner: You mean, to *pursue* it, as  
'Tis of our safety.  
Ulric: Right; I stand corrected. 170  
I see the subject now more clearly, and  
Our general situation in its bearings.  
The waters are abating; a few hours  
Will bring his summoned myrmidons<sup>97</sup> from Frankfort,  
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,  
And I an outcast, bastardized by practice  
Of this same baron to make way for him.  
Werner: And now your remedy! I thought to escape  
By means of this accursed gold, but now  
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.  
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt  
For motto, not the mintage of the state;  
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt  
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,  
And cry to all beholders – lo! a villain! 180  
Ulric: You must not use it, at least, now; but take  
This ring.
- He gives Werner a jewel.*
- Werner: A gem! It was my father's!  
Ulric: And  
As such is now your own. With this you must  
Bribe the Intendant for his old calèche  
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise, 190  
Together with my mother.  
Werner: And leave you,  
So lately found, in peril too?  
Ulric: Fear nothing!  
The only fear were if we fled together,  
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.  
The waters only lie in flood between  
This burgh and Frankfort; so far's in our favour.  
The route on to Bohemia, though encumbered,  
Is not impassable; and when you gain  
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be  
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond 200

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**97:** *myrmidons* – hired thugs, so named from Achilles' private army in the *Iliad*.

- The frontier, and you're safe.
- Werner: My noble boy!
- Ulric: Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge in them  
 In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:  
 Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,  
 And have looked through him):<sup>98</sup> it will answer thus  
 A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold* –  
*No* jewel: therefore, it could not be his;  
 And then the man, who was possessed of this,  
 Can hardly be suspected of abstracting  
 The Baron's coin, when he could thus convert 210  
 This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost  
 By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid  
 In your address, nor yet too arrogant,  
 And Idenstein will serve you.
- Werner: I will follow  
 In all things your direction.
- Ulric: I would have  
 Spared you the trouble; but had I appeared  
 To take an interest in you, and still more  
 By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,  
 All had been known at once.
- Werner: My guardian angel!  
 This overpays the past. But how wilt thou 220  
 Fare in our absence?
- Ulric: Stralenheim knows nothing  
 Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.  
 I will but wait a day or two with him  
 To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.
- Werner: To part no more!
- Ulric: I know not that; but at  
 The least we'll meet again once more.
- Werner: My boy –  
 My friend – my only child, and sole preserver!  
 Oh, do not hate me!
- Ulric: Hate my father!
- Werner: Aye,  
 My father hated me. Why not my son?
- Ulric: Your father knew you not as I do.
- Werner: Scorpions 230  
 Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise  
 Thou canst not know me, I am not myself,  
 Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.
- Ulric: I'll *wait!*  
 In the mean time be sure that all a son  
 Can do for parents shall be done for mine.
- Werner: I see it, and I feel it, yet I feel  
 Further – that you despise me.

---

98: Idenstein has "a lattice in his breast" (see above, this scene, 25n).

- Ulric: Wherefore should I?  
Werner: Must I repeat my humiliation?  
Ulric: No!  
I have fathomed it and you. But let us talk  
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever, 240  
Not now; your error has redoubled all  
The present difficulties of our house  
At secret war with that of Stralenheim;  
All we have now to think of, is to baffle  
Him. I have shown *one* way.
- Werner: The only one,  
And I embrace it, as I did my son,  
Who showed *himself* and father's *safety* in  
One day.
- Ulric: You *shall* be safe: let that suffice.  
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia  
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were 250  
Admitted to our lands?
- Werner: Assuredly,  
Situate as we are now, although the first  
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,  
Especially the next in blood.
- Ulric: *Blood!* 'tis  
A word of many meanings; in the veins  
And out of them, it is a different thing  
And so it should be, when the same in blood  
(As it is called) are aliens to each other,  
Like Theban brethren:<sup>99</sup> when a part is bad,  
A few spilt ounces purify the rest. 260
- Werner: I do not apprehend you.
- Ulric: That may be –  
And should, perhaps – and yet – but get ye ready:  
You and my mother must away tonight.  
Here comes the Intendant; sound him with the gem,  
'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead  
Into the deep, and bring up slime, and mud,  
And ooze, too, from the bottom, as the lead doth  
With its greased understratum;<sup>100</sup> but no less  
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.  
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time! 270  
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,  
My father! –
- Werner: Let me embrace thee!  
Ulric: We may be  
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!  
Keep off from me as from your foe!
- Werner: Accursed

**99:** Eteocles and Polynices, the sons of Oedipus, king of Thebes, slew each other in civil war.

**100:** An image from sounding the depth of the sea: the lead was greased with tallow to ascertain what kind of seabed the ship was over.

Be he, who is the stifling cause, which smothers  
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts,  
At such an hour too!

Ulric: Yes, curse – it will ease you!  
Here is the Intendant.

*Enter Idenstein.*

Master Idenstein,  
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught  
The rogue?

Idenstein: No, faith!

Ulric: Well, there are plenty more: 280  
You may have better luck another chase.

Where is the Baron?

Idenstein: Gone back to his chamber:  
And now I think on't, asking after you  
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulric: Your great men  
Must be answered on the instant, as the bound  
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:  
'Tis well they have horses, too; for if they had not,  
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as  
They say kings did Sesostris.<sup>101</sup>

Idenstein: Who was he?

Ulric: An old Bohemian – an imperial gipsy. 290

Idenstein: A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the same,  
For they pass by both names. And was he one?

Ulric: I've heard so; but I must take leave. Intendant,  
Your servant! Werner, (*to Werner, slightly*) if that be  
your name,  
Yours.

*Exit Ulric.*

Idenstein: A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!  
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,  
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due  
Precedence!

Werner: I perceived it, and applaud  
His just discernment and your own.

Idenstein: That's well –  
That's very well. You also know your place, too, 300  
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

Werner (*showing the ring*): Would this assist your knowledge?

Idenstein: How! – What! – Eh!

A jewel!

Werner: 'Tis your own on one condition.

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**101:** *Sesostris* – mythical king of Egypt who conquered the whole world and had kings draw his chariot, as Tamburlaine did. Mentioned in Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. See *AoB* 45.



Werner, or what else?<sup>102</sup>  
 Werner: Call me Werner still,  
 You may yet know me by a loftier title.  
 Idenstein: I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit  
 Of whom I long have dreamed, in a low garb –  
 But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free  
 As air,<sup>103</sup> despite the waters; let us hence,  
 I'll show thee I am honest (oh, thou jewel!)  
 Thou shalt be furnished, Werner, with such means 350  
 Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds  
 Should overtake thee. Let me gaze again!  
 I have a foster-brother in the mart  
 Of Hamburgh, skilled in precious stones – how many  
 Carats may it weigh? Come, Werner, I will wing thee.

*Exeunt.*

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**102:** This is one of the best speeches in the play, and the way the character suddenly comes to life shows how good a dramatist B. might have become had he lived. All Lee gives is, “He produced the jewel. Idenstein started with astonishment! Chance, and some commercial connexions, made him a judge of its value. He looked earnestly at it, and considered long” (Lee, p.206).

**103:** An inappropriate echo of Prospero’s words to Ariel at *The Tempest* I ii 499.

**ACT III scene ii.**

*Stralenheim's chamber.  
Stralenheim and Fritz.*

- Fritz: All's ready, my good lord!
- Stralenheim: I am not sleepy,  
And yet I must to bed; I fain would say  
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,  
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,  
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,  
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet  
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself  
'Twi'x earth and heaven, like envy between man  
And man, an everlasting mist – I will  
Unto my pillow.
- Fritz: May you rest there well! 10
- Stralenheim: I feel, and fear, I shall.
- Fritz: And wherefore fear?
- Stralenheim: I know not why, and therefore do fear more,  
Because an undescrivable – but 'tis  
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)  
Changed, today, of this chamber? For last night's  
Adventure makes it needful.
- Fritz: Certainly,  
According to your order, and beneath  
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon  
Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric".
- Stralenheim: You *think!* you supercilious slave! What right 20  
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be  
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the name  
Of him who saved your master, as a litany  
Whose daily repetition marks your duty  
Get hence! "*you think*", indeed! you who stood still  
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I  
Lay dying, and the stranger dashed aside  
The roaring torrent, and restored me to  
Thank him – and despise you. "*You think!*" and scarce  
Can recollect his name! I will not waste 30  
More words on you. Call me betimes.
- Fritz: Good night!  
I trust tomorrow will restore your lordship  
To renovated strength and temper.

*The scene closes.*



### Act III scene iii.

*The secret passage.*

Gabor (*solus*): Four –<sup>104</sup>  
 Five – six hours have I counted, like the guard  
 Of outposts on the never-merry clock:  
 That hollow tongue of time, which, even when  
 It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment  
 With every clang. 'Tis a perpetual knell,  
 Though for a marriage feast it rings: each stroke  
 Peals for a hope the less: the funeral note  
 Of love deep-buried without resurrection  
 In the grave of possession; while the knoll 10  
 Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo  
 To triple time in the son's ear.<sup>105</sup>  
 I'm cold –  
 I'm dark – I've blown my fingers – numbered o'er  
 And o'er my steps – and knocked my head against  
 Some fifty buttresses and roused the rats  
 And bats in general insurrection, till  
 Their cursed pattering feet and whirring wings  
 Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.  
 A light! It is at distance (if I can  
 Measure in darkness distance); but it blinks 20  
 As though a crevice or a key-hole, in  
 The inhibited direction; I must on,  
 Nevertheless, from curiosity,  
 A distant lamp-light is an incident  
 In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me  
 To nothing that may tempt me! Else – Heaven aid me  
 To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!  
 Were it the Star of Lucifer himself,  
 Or he himself girt with its beams, I could  
 Contain no longer. Softly! mighty well! 30  
 That corner's turned – So – Ah! no – right! it draws  
 Nearer. Here is a darksome angle – so,  
 That's weathered. Let me pause. Suppose it leads  
 Into some greater danger than that which  
 I have escaped – no matter, 'tis a new one;  
 And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,  
 Wear more magnetic aspects. I will on,  
 And be it where it may – I have my dagger,  
 Which may protect me at a pinch. Burn still,  
 Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus*!<sup>106</sup> 40

**104:** B.'s splitting a pentameter across a scene-change seems to show that he doesn't understand what split pentameters are for.

**105:** The split pentameter within the soliloquy presumably indicates a pause.

**106:** The *ignis fatuus* or will'o'th'wisp is one of B.'s favourite images – compare *PoC* 35, *Manfred*, 1 i 195, *Don Juan*, XI, 27, 6-8, *TVoJ* 105, 5, and *Island* IV 86.

My stationary will o' the wisp! So! so!  
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

*The scene closes.*

### Act III scene iv.

*A garden. Enter Werner.*

Werner: I could not sleep – and now the hour's at hand;  
 All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;  
 And, stationed in the outskirts of the town,  
 Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle  
 Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin  
 To pale in Heaven; and far the last time I  
 Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never, never  
 Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,  
 But not dishonoured: and I leave them with  
 A stain – if not upon my name, yet in 10  
 My heart! A never-dying canker-worm,  
 Which all the coming splendour of the lands,  
 And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf,  
 Can scarcely lull a moment: I must find  
 Some means of restitution, which would ease  
 My soul in part; but how without discovery?  
 It must be done, however: and I'll pause  
 Upon the method the first hour of safety.  
 The madness of my misery led to this  
 Base infamy; repentance must retrieve it: 20  
 I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon  
 My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine;  
 Lands, freedom, life – and yet he sleeps! as sound  
 Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains  
 Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,  
 Such as when – Hark! what noise is that? Again!  
 The branches shake; and some loose stones have fallen  
 From yonder terrace.

*Ulric leaps down from the terrace.*

Ulric! ever welcome!  
 Thrice welcome now! this filial –  
 Ulric: Stop! Before  
 We approach, tell me –  
 Werner: Why look you so?  
 Ulric: Do I 30  
 Behold my father, or –  
 Werner: What?  
 Ulric: An assassin?  
 Werner: Insane or insolent!  
 Ulric: Reply, sir, as  
 You prize your life or mine!  
 Werner: To what must I  
 Answer?  
 Ulric: Are you or are you not the assassin

- Of Stralenheim?
- Werner: I never was as yet  
The murderer of any man. What mean you?
- Ulric: Did you not *this* night (as the night before)  
Retrace the secret passage? Did you not  
*Again* revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and –
- Ulric pauses.*
- Werner: Proceed.
- Ulric: *Died* he not by your hand?<sup>107</sup>
- Werner: Great God! 40
- Ulric: You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!  
Embrace me! Yes – your tone – your look – yes, yes –  
Yet *say* so!
- Werner: If I e'er, in heart or mind,  
Conceived deliberately such a thought,  
But rather strove to trample back to hell  
Such thoughts – if e'er they glared a moment through  
The irritation of my oppressed spirit,  
May Heaven be shut for ever from my hopes  
As from mine eyes!<sup>108</sup>
- Ulric: But Stralenheim is dead.
- Werner: 'Tis horrible! 'tis hideous, as 'tis hateful! 50  
But what have I to do with this?
- Ulric: No bolt  
Is forced; no violence can be detected,  
Save on his body. Part of his own household  
Have been alarmed; but as the Intendant is  
Absent, I took upon myself the care  
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,  
Past doubt, been entered secretly. Excuse me,  
If nature –
- Werner: Oh, my boy! what unknown woes  
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering  
Above our house!
- Ulric: My father! I acquit you! 60

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**107:** “Stop!” said the latter [*Conrad / Ulric*], in an imperious, though smothered tone, and while they were yet at some paces’ distance, “Before we approach each other, tell me whether I see my father or a murderer?” – Siegendorf paused in astonishment; but unable to understand him, again advanced near enough to perceive that he was extremely pale and agitated beyond all convolutions of the soul.

“Answer, as you value the life of either!” again exclaimed Conrad, motioning his father from him.

“Insolent young man! To what would you have me answer?”

“Are you, or are you not, the murderer of Baron Stralenheim?”

“I was never yet the murderer of any man,” replied the Count fiercely; and starting in his turn some paces back; – “What is it you mean?”

“Did you not last night enter the secret gallery? – Did you not penetrate the chamber of Stralenheim? – Did he” — and his voice suddenly faltered, – “Did he not die privately by your hand?” (Lee, pp.250-1).

**108:** “You are then innocent?” said Conrad, emphatically. – In terms fearfully solemn, the Count uttered an imprecation on himself, if his hand had ever executed, or his heart conceived, a project of deliberate assassination (Lee, p.252).

But will the world do so? Will even the judge,  
 If – but you must away this instant.  
 Werner: No! I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?  
 Ulric: Yet  
 You had *no* guests – *no* visitors – no life  
 Breathing around you, save my mother's?  
 Werner: Ah!  
 The Hungarian!  
 Ulric: He is gone! he disappeared  
 Ere sunset.  
 Werner: No; I hid him in that very  
 Concealed and fatal gallery.  
 Ulric: *There* I'll find him.<sup>109</sup>

*Ulric is going.*

Werner: It is too late: he had left the palace ere  
 I quitted it. I found the secret pannel  
 Open; and the doors which lead from that hall  
 Which masks it: I but thought he had snatched the silent  
 And favourable moment to escape  
 The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were  
 Dogging him yestereven. 70  
 Ulric: You re-closed  
 The pannel?  
 Werner: Yes; and not without reproach  
 (And inner trembling for the avoided peril)  
 At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus  
 His shelterer's asylum to the risk  
 Of a discovery.  
 Ulric: You are sure you closed it? 80  
 Werner: Certain.  
 Ulric: That's well: but had been better, if  
 You ne'er had turned it to a den for –

*He pauses.*

Werner: Thieves!  
 Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and deserve it;  
 But not –  
 Ulric: No, Father; do not speak of this;  
 This is no hour to think of petty crimes,

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**109:** Siegendorf suddenly struck his hands together, and repeated the name of the Hungarian.

“He is gone – he went yesterday!”

“No – he returned!”

“When? – At what time?”

“Last night!”

“And he slept —”

“In the only chamber I had to offer him – the last, and dangerous one!” – Conrad, without speaking, made a hasty impatient motion towards the house (Lee, p.254).



Ulric: I will provide against  
 Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here  
 As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein  
 Suspects, 'tis *but suspicion*, and he is  
 A fool: his folly shall have such employment, 130  
 Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way  
 To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er  
 Laws reached this village) are all in abeyance  
 With the late general war of thirty years,<sup>110</sup>  
 Or crushed, or rising slowly from the dust,  
 To which the march of armies trampled them.  
 Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded  
*Here*, save as *such* – without lands, influence,  
 Save what hath perished with him; few prolong  
 A week beyond their funeral rites their sway 140  
 O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest  
 Is roused: such is not here the case; he died  
 Alone, unknown – a solitary grave,  
 Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,  
 Is all he'll have, or wants.<sup>111</sup> If *I* discover  
 The assassin, 'twill be well – if not, believe me  
 None else; though all the full fed train of menials  
 May howl above his ashes (as they did  
 Around him in his danger on the Oder),  
 Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*. 150  
 Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer – look!  
 The stars are almost faded, and the gray  
 Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.  
 You shall not answer – pardon me, that I  
 Am peremptory, 'tis your son that speaks,  
 Your long-lost, late-found son – Let's call my mother!  
 Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest  
 To me; I'll answer for the event as far  
 As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,  
 As my first duty, which shall be observed. 160  
 We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf – once more  
 Our banners shall be glorious! Think of that  
 Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,  
 Whose youth may better battle with them – Hence!  
 And may your age be happy! I will kiss  
 My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you!

Werner: This counsel's safe – but is it honourable?  
 Ulric: To save a father is a child's chief honour.

*Exeunt.*

**110:** The Thirty Years' War not yet being over, Ulric's description of it is premature.

**111:** Stralenheim is yet another Byronic hero to be improperly buried.





Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears  
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

Henrick: No one's, I grant you: do not fear, if war  
Be long in coming, he is of that kind  
Will make it for himself, if he hath not  
Already done as much.

Eric: What do you mean?

Henrick: You can't deny his train of followers  
(But few our fellow native vassals born 40  
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves  
As – (*pauses*)

Eric: What?

Henrick: The wars (you love so much) leaves living;  
Like other parents, she spoils her worst children!

Eric: Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,  
Such as old Tilly loved.

Henrick: And who loved Tilly?  
Ask that at Magdeburg<sup>113</sup> – or for that matter  
Wallenstein either – they are gone to –

Eric: Rest;  
But what beyond 'tis not ours to pronounce.  
The country (nominally now at peace) 50  
Is overrun with – God knows who – they fly  
By night, and disappear with sunrise; but  
Leave no less desolation, nay, even more  
Than the most *open* warfare.

Eric: But Count Ulric –  
What has all this to do with him?

Henrick: With him!  
He – might prevent it. As you say, he's fond  
Of war; why makes he it not on those marauders?

Eric: You'd better ask himself.

Henrick: I would as soon  
Ask of the lion why he laps not milk.

Eric: And here he comes!

Henrick: The devil! you'll hold your tongue? 60

Eric: Why do you turn so pale?

Henrick: 'Tis nothing – but  
Be silent!

Eric: I will upon what you've said.

Henrick: I assure you I meant nothing, a mere sport  
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,  
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness  
Ida of Stralenheim, the late Baron's heiress,  
And she no doubt will soften whatsoever  
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars  
Have given all natures, and most unto those

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**113:** B. would have read about the cruelty of Tilly's troops at Magdeburg at Hare-Naylor, I 498-507, or Coxe, IV 101-3.

Who were born in them, and bred up upon  
The knees of homicide; sprinkled, as it were,  
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace  
On all that I have said!

*Enter Ulric and Rodolph.*<sup>114</sup>

Ulric: Good morrow, Count!  
Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is  
All ready for the chase?

Eric: The dogs are ordered  
Down to the forest, and the vassals out  
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.  
Shall I call forth your Excellency's suite?  
What courser will you please to mount?

Ulric: The dun,  
Walstein.<sup>115</sup>

Eric: I fear he scarcely has recovered  
The toils of Monday: 'twas a noble chase,  
You speared *four* with your own hand.

Ulric: True, good Eric, I had forgotten – let it be the grey then,  
Old Ziska:<sup>116</sup> he has not been out this fortnight.

Eric: He shall be strait caparisoned. How many  
Of your immediate retainers shall  
Escort you?

Ulric: I leave that to Weilburg, our  
Master of the Horse.

*Exit Eric.*

Rodolph: Rodolph!  
My lord?

Ulric: The news  
Is awkward from the –

*Rodolph points to Henrick.*

Henrick: How now, Henrick, why  
Loiter you here?  
For your commands, my lord.

Ulric: Go to my father, and present my duty,  
And learn if he would aught with me before  
I mount.

*Exit Henrick.*

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**114:** Rodolph was the name of the Austrian Emperor who succeeded Maximilian II: Hare-Naylor I 10. Coxe spells him "Rhodolph".

**115:** The horse is named after Wallenstein. "Walstein" is a corruption of "Waldstein" or "Wallenstein".

**116:** The horse is named after the Hussite leader referred to at I i 695.

- Rodolph, our friends have had a check  
 Upon the frontiers of Franconia,<sup>117</sup> and  
 'Tis rumoured that the column sent against them  
 Is to be strengthened. I must join them soon.
- Rodolph: Best wait for further and more sure advices.
- Ulric: I mean it – and indeed it could not well  
 Have fallen out at a time more opposite  
 To all my plans.
- Rodolph: It will be difficult 100  
 To excuse your absence to the Count, your father.
- Ulric: Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain  
 In high Silesia will permit and cover  
 My journey. In the mean time, when we are  
 Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men  
 Whom Wolffe leads – keep the forests on your route:  
 You know it well?
- Rodolph: As well as on that night  
 When we –
- Ulric: We will not speak of that until  
 We can repeat the same with like success;  
 And when you have joined, give Rosenberg this letter. 110

*Gives a letter.*

- Add further, that I have sent this slight addition  
 To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of  
 My coming, though I could but spare them ill  
 At this time, as my father loves to keep  
 Full numbers of retainers round the castle,  
 Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,  
 Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.
- Rodolph: I thought you loved the lady Ida?
- Ulric: Why I do so – but it follows not from that  
 I would bind in my youth and glorious years, 120  
 So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,  
 Although 'twere that of Venus – but I love her,  
 As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.
- Rodolph: And constantly?
- Ulric: I think so; for I love  
 Nought else. But I have not the time to pause  
 Upon these gewgaws of the heart.<sup>118</sup> Great things

**117:** Hare-Naylor has “After various skirmishes with the enemy on the borders of Franconia ...” (II 49).

**118:** Ulric does not seem whole-heartedly committed to heterosexuality; though the fact that he killed the father of his proposed fiancée would make him pause. Lee describes him (as Conrad), thus: “Conrad, ever meditative and silent ... manifested the same reserve, the same abstraction, the same haughty distrust. He neither appeared to give, nor take joy: every eye had sunk before his, and every voice had been hushed into silence. Neither his youth, the grandeur of his person, nor that lustre which attends the rights of an heir, had created any exultation in his presence. Even the most indulgent of his parents had discovered that he was not beloved; and the feelings of both had secretly assigned the reason – he was not capable of loving” (Lee, p.297).

- We have to do ere long. Speed! Speed! good Rodolph!
- Rodolph: On my return, however, I shall find  
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?
- Ulric: Perhaps: my father wishes it, and, sooth, 130  
'Tis no bad policy; this union with  
The last bud of the rival branch at once  
Unites the future and destroys the past.<sup>119</sup>
- Rodolph: Adieu!
- Ulric: Yet hold – we'd better keep together  
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,  
And do as I have said.
- Rodolph: I will. But to  
Return – 'twas a most kind act in the Count,  
Your father, to send up to Königsberg  
For this fair orphan of the Baron, and  
To hail her as his daughter.
- Ulric: Wondrous kind! 140  
Especially as little kindness till  
Then grew between them.
- Rodolph: The late Baron died  
Of a fever, did he not?
- Ulric: How should I know?
- Rodolph: I have heard it whispered there was something strange  
About his death – and even the place of it  
Is scarcely known.
- Ulric: Some obscure village on  
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.
- Rodolph: He  
Has left no testament – no farewell words?
- Ulric: I am neither confessor nor notary,  
So cannot say.
- Rodolph: Ah! here's the lady Ida. 150

*Enter Ida Stralenheim.*<sup>120</sup>

- Ulric: You are early, my sweet cousin!
- Ida: Not *too* early,  
Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.  
Why do you call me "*Cousin*"?
- Ulric (*smiling*): Are we not so?
- Ida: Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks  
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon  
Our pedigree, and only weighed our blood.
- Ulric (*starting*): Blood!<sup>121</sup>
- Ida: Why does yours start from your cheek?
- Ulric: Ay – doth it?

**119:** A remote echo of B.'s love for Mary Chaworth, whose grandfather had been killed in a duel by his great-uncle.

**120:** Stralenheim's daughter is in neither Lee nor GDD: she is B.'s invention.

**121:** Recollecting that he killed her father.

- Ida: It doth – but no! it rushes like a torrent  
Even to your brow again.
- Ulric (*recovering himself*): And if it fled,  
It only was because your presence sent it  
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin! 160
- Ida: “Cousin” again!
- Ulric: Nay, then I’ll call you sister.
- Ida: I like that name still worse – would we had ne’er  
Been aught of kindred!
- Ulric (*gloomily*): Would we never had!
- Ida: Oh heaven! and can *you wish that?*
- Ulric: Dearest Ida!  
Did I not echo your own wish?
- Ida: Yes, Ulric,  
But then I wished it not with such a glance,  
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be  
Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that  
I still to you am something.
- Ulric: You shall be 170  
All – all –
- Ida: And you to *me are* so already;  
But I can wait.
- Ulric: Dear Ida!
- Ida: Call me Ida,  
*Your* Ida, for I would be yours, none else’s;  
Indeed, I have none else left, since my poor father –
- She pauses.*
- Ulric: You have mine – you have *me*.
- Ida: Dear Ulric, how I wish  
My father could but view our happiness,  
Which wants but this!
- Ulric: Indeed! You would have loved him,  
He you; for the brave ever love each other:  
His manner was a little cold, his spirit  
Proud (as is birth’s prerogative), but under 180  
This grave exterior – would you had known each other!  
Had such as you been near him on his journey,  
He had not died without a friend to soothe  
His last and lonely moments.
- Ulric: Who says *that?*
- Ida: What?
- Ulric: That he *died alone*.
- Ida: The general rumour,  
And disappearance of his servants, who  
Have ne’er returned: that fever was most deadly  
Which swept them all away.
- Ulric: If they were near him,  
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida: Alas! what is a menial to a death-bed, 190  
 When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what  
 It loves? they say he died of a fever.

Ulric: *Say!*  
 It *was* so.

Ida: I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulric: All dreams are false.

Ida: And yet I see him as  
 I see you.

Ulric: *Where?*<sup>122</sup>

Ida: In sleep – I see him lie  
 Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife  
 Beside him.

Ulric: But you do not see his *face*?

Ida (*looking at him*): No! Oh, my God! do you?

Ulric: Why do you ask?

Ida: Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

Ulric (*agitatedly*): Ida, this is mere childishness; your weakness 200  
 Infects me, to my shame; but as all feelings  
 Of yours are common to me, it affects me.  
 Prithee, sweet child, change –

Ida: Child, indeed! I have  
 Full fifteen summers!

*A bugle sounds.*

Rodolph: Hark, my lord, the bugle!

Ida (*peevishly to Rodolph*): Why need you tell him that? Can he not  
 hear it

Without your echo?

Rodolph: Pardon me, fair Baroness!

Ida: I will not pardon you, unless you earn it  
 By aiding me in my dissuasion of  
 Count Ulric from the chase today.

Rodolph: You will not,  
 Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulric: I must not now 210  
 Forego it.

Ida: But you shall!

Ulric: *Shall!*

Ida: Yes, or be  
 No true knight. Come, dear Ulric! yield to me  
 In this, for this one day; the day looks heavy,  
 And you are turned so pale and ill.

Ulric: You jest.

Ida: Indeed I do not – ask of Rodolph.

Rodolph: Truly,  
 My lord, within this quarter of an hour

---

122: Compare *Hamlet*, I ii 184-5.

- You have changed more than I e'er saw you change  
In years.
- Ulric: 'Tis nothing; but if 'twere, the air  
Would soon restore me. I'm the trueameleon,  
And live but on the atmosphere;<sup>123</sup> your feasts 220  
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not  
My spirit – I'm a forester and breather  
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all  
The eagle loves.
- Ida: Except his prey, I hope.
- Ulric: Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I  
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.
- Ida: And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!  
Come! I will sing to you.<sup>124</sup>
- Ulric: Ida, you scarcely  
Will make a soldier's wife.
- Ida: I do not wish  
To be so; for I trust these wars are over, 230  
And you will live in peace on your domains.
- Enter Werner as Count Siegendorf.*
- Ulric: My father, I salute you, and it grieves me  
With such brief greeting. You have heard our bugle;  
The vassals wait.
- Siegendorf: So let them – you forget  
Tomorrow is the appointed festival  
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow  
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce  
Permit you to return today, or if  
Returned, too much fatigued to join tomorrow  
The nobles in our marshalled ranks.
- Ulric: You, Count, 240  
Will well supply the place of both – I am not  
A lover of these pageantries.
- Siegendorf: No, Ulric;  
It were not well that you alone of all  
Our young nobility –
- Ida: And far the noblest  
In aspect and demeanour.
- Siegendorf (*to Ida*): True, dear child,  
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel.  
But, Ulric, recollect too our position,  
So lately re-instated in our honours.  
Believe me, 'twould be marked in any house,  
But most in ours, that ONE should be found wanting 250  
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven

**123:** Compare *Hamlet* III ii 91-2.

**124:** Compare Lady Mortimer singing to Hotspur et al at *Henry IV* I, III i 245 (Hotspur does not welcome it); or Medora offering to sing to Conrad at *The Corsair* 436 (he doesn't want to hear her).





And readiest means let Rosenberg reply. 280  
 Rodolph: Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I am bound  
 Upon a journey past the frontier.  
 Siegendorf (*starts*): Ah!  
 Where? on *what* frontier?  
 Rodolph: The Silesian, on  
 My way – (*aside to Ulric*): *Where* shall I say?  
 Ulric (*aside to Rodolph*): To Hamburg.  
 (*aside to himself*): That  
 Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on  
 His further inquisition.  
 Rodolph: Count, to Hamburg.  
 Siegendorf (*agitated*): Hamburg! no, I have nought to do there, nor  
 Am aught connected with that city. Then  
 God speed you!  
 Rodolph: Fare ye well, Counts Siegendorf!

*Exit Rodolph.*

Siegenderf: Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is 290  
 One of those strange companions, whom I fain  
 Would reason with you on.<sup>127</sup>  
 Ulric: My lord, he is  
 Noble by birth, of one of the first houses  
 In Saxony.  
 Siegenderf: I talk not of his birth,  
 But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.  
 Ulric: So they will do of most men. Even the monarch  
 Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or  
 The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made  
 Great and ungrateful.  
 Siegenderf: If I must be plain,  
 The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph; 300  
 They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who still  
 Ravage the frontier.  
 Ulric: And will you believe  
 The world?  
 Siegenderf: In this case – yes.  
 Ulric: In *any* case,  
 I thought you knew it better than to take  
 An accusation for a sentence.  
 Siegenderf: Son!  
 I understand you: you refer to – but  
 My destiny has so involved about me  
 Her spider-web, that I can only flutter  
 Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,  
 Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me; 310  
 Twenty long years of misery, and famine

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127: Compare the King's disquiet over Hal's companions in *Henry IV*.

- Quenched them not – twenty thousand more, perchance,  
 Hereafter (or even here in *moments* which  
 Might date for years, did anguish make the dial),  
 May not obliterate or expiate  
 The madness and dishonour of an instant.  
 Ulric, be warned by a father! – I was not  
 By mine, and you behold me!
- Ulric: I behold  
 The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,  
 Lord of a prince's appanage,<sup>128</sup> and honoured 320  
 By those he rules, and those he ranks with.
- Siegendorf: Ah!  
 Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear  
 For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!  
 All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me –  
 But if my son's is cold! –
- Ulric: Who *dare* say that?  
 Siegendorf: None else but I, who see it *feel* it – keener  
 Than would your adversary, who dared say so,  
 Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives  
 The wound.
- Ulric: You err. My nature is not given 330  
 To outward fondling; how should it be so,  
 After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?
- Siegendorf: And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years  
 In a like absence? But 'tis vain to urge you –  
 Nature was never called back by remonstrance.  
 Let's change the theme. I wish you to consider  
 That these young violent nobles of high name,  
 But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all rumour  
 Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,  
 Will lead thee –
- Ulric (*impatiently*): I'll be *led* by no man.  
 Siegendorf: Nor 340  
 Be leader of such, I would hope: at once  
 To wean thee from the perils of thy youth  
 And haughty spirit, I have thought it well  
 That thou should'st wed the lady Ida – more,  
 As thou appear'st to love her.
- Ulric: I have said  
 I will obey your orders, were they to  
 Unite with Hecate<sup>129</sup> – can a son say more?
- Siegendorf: He says too much in saying this. It is not  
 The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,  
 Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,  
 Or act so carelessly, in that which is 350  
 The bloom or blight of all men's happiness,

**128:** *appanage* – a parcel of land, often given by the monarch (in Siegendorf's case, the Austrian Emperor), which could be bequeathed to an heir.

**129:** Hecate – goddess of witches (though she was not always that).

(For glory's pillow is but restless if  
 Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,  
 Some master fiend is in thy service to  
 Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,  
 And makes his every thought subservient;<sup>130</sup> else  
 Thou'dst say at once, "I love young Ida, and  
 Will wed her", or, "I love her not, and all  
 The powers of earth shall never make me". So  
 Would I have answered.

Ulric: Sir, *you wed* for love. 360

Siegenderf: I did, and it has been my only refuge  
 In many miseries.

Ulric: Which miseries  
 Had never been but for this love-match.

Siegenderf: Still  
 Against your age and nature! who at twenty  
 E'er answered thus till now?

Ulric: Did you not warn me  
 Against your own example?

Siegenderf: Boyish sophist!  
 In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida?

Ulric: What matters it, if I am ready to  
 Obey you in espousing her?

Siegenderf: As far  
 As you feel, nothing, but all life for her. 370

She's young – all-beautiful – adores you – is  
 Endowed with qualities to give happiness,  
 Such as rounds common life into a dream  
 Of something which your poets cannot paint,  
 And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)  
 For which philosophy might barter wisdom;  
 And giving so much happiness, deserves  
 A little in return. I would not have her  
 Break her heart for a man who has none to break,  
 Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose  
 Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,  
 According to the orient tale.<sup>131</sup> She is –

Ulric: The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:  
 I'll wed her, ne'ertheless; though, to say truth,  
 Just now I am not violently transported  
 In favour of such unions.

Siegenderf: But she loves you.

Ulric: And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.

Siegenderf: Alas! Love never *did* so.

Ulric: Then 'tis time  
 He should begin, and take the bandage from

**130:** Like Macbeth, who thinks he commands the witches but is in fact ruled by them.

**131:** See *The Giaour*, 22, B's note: *The attachment of the nightingale to the rose is a well-known Persian fable – if I mistake not, the "Bulbul of a thousand tales" is one of his appellations.* The love of the bird for the flower is indeed a well-known Persian myth: see *Vathek* (ed. Lonsdale, p.143 / 58n2).

His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now  
 He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark. 390

Siegenderf: But you consent?  
 Ulric: I did and do.  
 Siegenderf: Then fix the day.  
 Ulric: 'Tis usual,  
 And, certes, courteous, to leave that to the lady.  
 Siegenderf: *I will engage for her.*  
 Ulric: So will not *I*  
 For any woman; and as what I fix,  
 I fain would see unshaken, when she gives  
 Her answer, I'll give mine.  
 Siegenderf: But 'tis your office  
 To woo.  
 Ulric: Count, 'tis a marriage of your making,  
 So be it of your wooing; but to please you  
 I will now pay my duty to my mother, 400  
 With whom, you know, the lady Ida is –  
 What would you have? You have forbid my stirring  
 For manly sports beyond the castle walls,  
 And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,  
 To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,<sup>132</sup>  
 And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,  
 And smile at pretty prattle, and look into  
 The eyes of feminie, as though they were  
 The stars receding early to our wish  
 Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle – 410  
 What can a son or man do more?

*Exit Ulric.*

Siegenderf (*solus*): Too much!  
 Too much of duty and too little love!  
 He pays me in the coin he owes me not:  
 For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not  
 Fulfil a parent's duties by his side  
 Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts  
 Ne'er left him, nor my eyes longed without tears  
 To see my child again, and now I've found him!  
 But how! obedient, but with coldness; duteous  
 In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious, 420  
 Abstracted – distant – much given to long absence,  
 And where – none know – in league with the most riotous  
 Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,  
 He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;<sup>133</sup>  
 Yet there's some tie between them which I cannot  
 Unravel. They look up to him – consult him –

**132:** Compare *Beppo*, 40, 7-8: *Coach, Servants, Gondola, he goes to call, / And carries fan and tippet, gloves, and shawl.*

**133:** Compare again the King's disquiet over Hal's companions in *Henry IV*.





Prior Albert: Whose then? you said it was no legacy.  
 Siegendorf: No matter whose – of this be sure, that he  
                   Who owned it never more will need it, save  
                   In that which it may purchase from your altars:                   500  
                   'Tis yours, or theirs.

Prior Albert:                                   Is there no blood upon it?  
 Siegendorf: No; but there's worse than blood – eternal shame!  
 Prior Albert: Did he who owned it die in his *bed*?  
 Siegendorf:                                   Alas!  
                   He did.

Prior Albert:        Son! you relapse into revenge,  
                   If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.  
 Siegendorf: His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.  
 Prior Albert: You said he died in his bed, not battle.  
 Siegendorf:                                   He  
                   Died, I scarce know – but – he was stabbed i' the dark,  
                   And now you have it – perished on his pillow  
                   By a cut-throat! Aye! you may look upon me!                   510  
                   I am *not* the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,  
                   As I can one day, God's.

Prior Albert:                                   Nor did he die  
                   By means, or men, or instrument of yours?  
 Siegendorf: No! by the God who sees and strikes!  
 Prior Albert:                                   Nor know you  
                   Who slew him?

Siegendorf:                                   I could only guess at one,  
                   And he to me a stranger, unconnected,  
                   As unemployed. Except by one day's knowledge,  
                   I never saw the man who was suspected.

Prior Albert: Then you are free from guilt.  
 Siegendorf (*eagerly*):                                   Oh! *am* I? say!  
 Prior Albert: You have said so, and know best.  
 Siegendorf:                                   Father! I've spoken                   520  
                   The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole*:  
                   Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood  
                   Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,  
                   Though by the Power who abhorreth human blood,  
                   I did not! nay, once spared it, when I might  
                   And *could* – aye, perhaps, *should*, (if our self-safety  
                   Be e'er excusable in such defences  
                   Against the attacks of over-potent foes);  
                   But pray for him, for me, and all my house;  
                   For, as I said, though I be innocent,                   530  
                   I know not why, a like remorse is on me,  
                   As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,  
                   Father! I have prayed myself in vain.

Prior Albert:                                   I will.  
                   Be comforted! You are innocent, and should  
                   Be calm as innocence.

Siegendorf:                                   But calmness is not

Always the attribute of innocence:  
I feel it is not.

Prior Albert:                   But it will be so,  
When the mind gathers up its truth within it.  
Remember the great festival tomorrow,  
In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,                   540  
As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect;  
Nor in the general orison of thanks  
For bloodshed stopped, let blood, you shed not, rise  
A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be  
Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget  
Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty.

*Exeunt.*



## ACT V scene i.

*A large and magnificent gothic hall in the castle of Siegendorf, decorated with trophies, banners, and arms of that family. Enter Arnheim<sup>137</sup> and Meister, attendants of Count Siegendorf.*

Arnheim: Be quick! the Count will soon return: the ladies  
 Already are at the portal. Have you sent  
 The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meister: I have, in all directions, over Prague,  
 As far as the man's dress and figure could  
 By your description track him. The devil take  
 These revels and processions! All the pleasure  
 (If such there be) must fall to the spectators.  
 I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arnheim: Go to! my lady Countess comes.

Meister: I'd rather 10  
 Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,  
 Than follow in the train of a great man  
 In these dull pageantries.

Arnheim: Begone! and rail  
 Within.

*Exeunt. Enter the Countess Josephine Siegendorf and Ida.*

Josephine: Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!

Ida: How can you say so! Never have I dreamt  
 Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,  
 The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,  
 The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,  
 The coursers, and the incense, and the sun  
 Streaming through the stained windows, even the tombs, 20  
 Which looked so calm, and the celestial hymns,  
 Which seemed as if they rather came from heaven  
 Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal  
 Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;<sup>138</sup>  
 The white robes, and the lifted eyes; the World  
 At peace! and all at peace with one another!<sup>139</sup>  
 Oh, my sweet mother!

*Embracing Josephine.*

Josephine: My beloved child!  
 For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida: Oh!  
 I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

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**137:** The name Arnheim occurs at Hare-Naylor II 62 and Coxe IV 109.

**138:** Compare Blake, *Holy Thursday*, 10: ... like harmonious thunderings ...

**139:** A woman, implies B., loves peace more than a man does. The passage conveys a love of the theatricality of Catholic worship. Compare *The Winter's Tale*, III i.



Ida: I thought too  
Of Heaven, although I looked on Ulric.

Josephine: Come,  
Let us retire; they will be here anon  
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay  
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains. 70

Ida: And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,  
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb  
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.  
Dear Mother, I am with you.

*Exeunt. Enter Count Siegendorf, in full dress, from the solemnity, and Ludwig.*

Siegendorf: Is he not found?

Ludwig: Strict search is making every where; and if  
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

Siegendorf: Where's Ulric?

Ludwig: He rode round the other way  
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;  
And, if I err not, not a minute since  
I heard his Excellency, with his train, 80  
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

*Enter Ulric, splendidly dressed.*

Siegendorf (to Ludwig): See they cease not  
Their quest of him I have described.

*Exit Ludwig.*

Oh! Ulric,  
How have I longed for thee!

Ulric: Your wish is granted –  
Behold me!

Siegendorf: I have seen the murderer.

Ulric: Whom? Where?

Siegendorf: The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

Ulric: You dream.

Siegendorf: I live! and as I live, I saw him –  
Heard him! He dared to utter even my name.

Ulric: What name?

Siegendorf: Werner! 'twas mine.

Ulric: It must be so  
No more: forget it.

Siegendorf: Never! never! All  
My destinies were woven in that name: 90  
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,  
But it may lead me there.

Ulric: To the point – the Hungarian?

Siegendorf: Listen! The church was thronged, the hymn was raised;

- Te Deum* pealed from nations, rather than  
From choirs, in one great cry of “God be praised”  
For one day’s peace, after thrice ten dread years,<sup>140</sup>  
Each bloodier than the former; I arose,  
With all the nobles, and as I looked down  
Along the lines of lifted faces, from  
Our bannered and escutcheoned gallery, I  
Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw  
A moment, and no more), what struck me sightless  
To all else – the Hungarian’s face; I grew  
Sick; and when I recovered from the mist  
Which curled about my senses, and again  
Looked down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving  
Was over, and we marched back in procession.<sup>141</sup>
- Ulric: Continue.
- Siegendorf: When we reached the Moldau’s bridge,  
The joyous crowd above, the numberless  
Barks manned with revellers in their best garbs,<sup>142</sup>  
Which shot along the glancing tide below,  
The decorated street, the long array,  
The clashing music, and the thundering  
Of far artillery, which seemed to bid  
A long and loud farewell to its great doings,  
The standards o’er me, and the tramlings round,  
The roar of rushing thousands – all – all could not  
Chase this man from my mind; although my senses  
No longer held him palpable.
- Ulric: You saw him  
No more, then?
- Siegendorf: I looked, as a dying soldier  
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;  
But still I saw him not; but in his stead –
- Ulric: What in his stead?
- Siegendorf: My eye for ever fell  
Upon your dancing crest; the loftiest,  
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head  
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,

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**140:** The implication is that the peace being celebrated is the Treaty of Prague (1635). If this is so, the Thirty Years’ War has another thirteen years to run. Lee (p.276n) has *The Peace of Prague, signed May 1635*.

**141:** “From the posture in which he had mechanically continued, the Count was at length roused by the rush of the multitude around, and the grand burst of the *Te Deum*. He arose with the rest: when, casting his eye, from the elevated situation in which he stood, upon the long though distant line of human faces beneath, he suddenly fancied he saw that of the Hungarian amongst them. – A mist obscured the sight of Siegendorf, and a shock like that of electricity ran through his frame. So deep, indeed, had been the abstraction of his mind, that the revulsion of the senses was almost too mighty for his bodily strength. By a vigorous effort he recovered his powers of perception, and again eagerly looked forward. But the crowd had in the interim moved toward the gates. The sway and pressure caused every space to be immediately occupied by new-comers, nor could the most penetrating gaze ascertain the place or features of an individual!” (Lee, p.313).

**142:** “The broad expanse of the Moldau was covered with innumerable boats and vessels ...” (Lee, p.314).

Which overflowed the glittering streets of Prague.  
 Ulric: What's this to the Hungarian?  
 Siegendorf: Much; for I  
 Had almost then forgot him in my son,  
 When just as the artillery ceased, and paused 130  
 The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu  
 Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,  
 Distinct, and keener far upon my ear  
 Than the late cannon's volume, this word – "*Werner!*"  
 Ulric: Uttered by –  
 Siegendorf: HIM! I turned – and saw – and fell.<sup>143</sup>  
 Ulric: And wherefore? Were you seen?  
 Siegendorf: The officious care  
 Of those around me dragged me from the spot,  
 Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;  
 You, too, were too remote in the procession  
 (The old nobles being divided from their children) 140  
 To aid me.  
 Ulric: But I'll aid you now.  
 Siegendorf: In what?  
 Ulric: In searching for this man, or – when he's found,  
 What shall we do with him?  
 Siegendorf: I know not that.  
 Ulric: Then wherefore seek?  
 Siegendorf: Because I cannot rest  
 Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,  
 And ours, seem intertwined; nor can be  
 Unravelled, till –

*Enter an Attendant.*

Attendant: A stranger, to wait on  
 Your Excellency.  
 Siegendorf: Who?  
 Attendant: He gave no name.  
 Siegendorf: Admit him, ne'ertheless.

*The attendant introduces Gabor, and afterwards exit.*

Ah!

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**143:** Werner / Siegendorf reacted as though it had been he, not Gabor, who killed Stralenheim. "The name of *Kruitzner*, articulated precisely at this moment, in that low, deep, and deliberate tone which makes itself heard even amidst general clamour, suddenly arrested the attention of the Count. Without sufficient presence of mind to recollect that by recognising the name he identified himself, Siegendorf turned hastily towards the speaker, and within the distance of a very few paces beheld the features of the Hungarian. He was not to be mistaken. He wore the dress of his country, and fixed upon the Count a glance so worldly and alarming as caused the latter to stand upon the defensive. Siegendorf perceiving him again about to escape among the multitude, stretched out his arm to detain him: but the strong emotion of his own mind caused him at the same moment to stagger; and as the accompanying change of countenance announced an indisposition that almost approached to swooning, the action was misconstrued (Lee, p.315-17).

Gabor: 'Tis, then, Werner!<sup>144</sup>  
 Siegendorf (*haughtily*): The same you knew, Sir, by that name; and *you!* 150  
 Gabor (*looking round*): I recognise you both; father and son,  
 It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,  
 Have lately been in search of me: I am here.<sup>145</sup>  
 Siegendorf: I have sought you, and have found you; you are charged  
 (Your own heart may inform you why) with such  
 A crime as – (*he pauses*)  
 Gabor: Give it utterance, and then  
 I'll meet the consequences.  
 Siegendorf: You shall do so –  
 Unless –  
 Gabor: First, who accuses me?  
 Siegendorf: All things,  
 If not all men: the universal rumour –  
 My own presence on the spot – the place – the time – 160  
 And every speck of circumstance unite  
 To fix the blot on you.  
 Gabor: And on *me only*?  
 Pause ere you answer: is no other name,  
 Save mine, stained in this business?  
 Siegendorf: Trifling villain!  
 Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe  
 Thou best dost know the innocence of him  
 'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.  
 But I will talk no further with a wretch,  
 Further than justice asks. Answer at once,  
 And without quibbling, to my charge.  
 Gabor: 'Tis false! 170  
 Siegendorf: Who says so?  
 Gabor: I.  
 Siegendorf: And how disprove it?  
 Gabor: By  
 The presence of the murderer.  
 Siegendorf: Name him!  
 Gabor: He  
 May have more names than one. Your lordship had so  
 Once on a time.  
 Siegendorf: If you mean me, I dare  
 Your utmost.  
 Gabor: You may do so, and in safety.  
 I know the assassin.  
 Siegendorf: Where is he?  
 Gabor (*pointing to Ulric*): Beside you!<sup>146</sup>

144: “‘*It is Krutzner,*’ again repeated the latter, in a tone of slow and deliberate interrogation” (Lee, p.322).

145: “‘Your people,’ said he, ‘I understand, have made enquiries concerning me: – I am here!’” – (Lee, p.323).

146: “I deny the crime altogether!”  
 “Upon what ground?”

*Ulric rushes forward to attack Gabor; Siegendorf interposes.*

Siegendorf: Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;  
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.

*He turns to Ulric.*

Ulric, repel this calumny, as I  
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous, 180  
I could not deem it earth-born; but, be calm;  
It will refute itself. But touch him not.

*Ulric endeavours to compose himself.*

Gabor: Look at *him*, Count, and then *hear me*.  
Siegendorf (*first to Gabor, and then looking at Ulric*): I hear thee.  
My God! you look –

Ulric: How?

Siegendorf: As on that dread night  
When we met in the garden.

Ulric (*composes himself*): It is nothing.

Gabor: Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither  
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down  
Amidst the people in the church, I dreamed not  
To find the beggared Werner in the seat  
Of senators and princes; but you have called me, 190  
And we have met.

Siegendorf: Go on, Sir.

Gabor: Ere I do so,  
Allow me to inquire who profited  
By Stralenheim's death? Was't I – as poor  
And poorer by suspicion on my name.  
The Baron lost in that last outrage neither  
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought,  
A life which stood between the claims of others  
To honours and estates, scarce less than princely.

Siegendorf: These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less  
To me than to my son.<sup>147</sup>

Gabor: I can't help that. 200  
But let the consequence alight on him  
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.  
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because  
I know you innocent, and deem you just.  
But ere I can proceed – *Dare* you protect me? –

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“Because I know the criminal.”

“Name him!”

“He stands beside you!” – and he pointed to Conrad (Lee, p.325).

147: “‘These,’ said the Count, again fired by interrogations which he felt to be equally fallacious and inconclusive, ‘are surmises that attach no less to myself than to me son’” (Lee, p.327).

*Dare you command me?*<sup>148</sup>

*Siegenderf first looks at the Hungarian, and then at Ulric, who has unbuckled his sabre and is drawing lines with it on the floor – still in its sheath.*<sup>149</sup>

Ulric (*looks at his father and says*): Let the man go on!

Gabor: I am unarmed, Count – bid your son lay down  
His sabre.

Ulric (*offers it to him contemptuously*): Take it.

Gabor: No, Sir, 'tis enough

That we are both unarmed – I would not choose  
To wear a steel which may be stained with more  
Blood than came there in battle. 210

Ulric (*casts the sabre from him in contempt*): It – or some  
Such other weapon, in my hands – spared yours  
Once when disarmed and at my mercy.

Gabor: True –

I have not forgotten it: you spared me for  
Your own especial purpose – to sustain  
An ignominy not my own.

Ulric: Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.  
(*to Siegenderf*) But is it of my father to hear further?

Siegenderf (*takes his son by the hand*): My son! I know my own  
innocence – and doubt not  
Of yours – but I have promised this man patience; 220  
Let him continue.

Gabor: I will not detain you  
By speaking of myself much; I began  
Life early – and am what the world has made me.  
At Frankfort on the Oder, where I passed  
A winter in obscurity, it was  
My chance at several places of resort  
(Which I frequented sometimes but not often)  
To hear related a strange circumstance  
In February last. A martial force,  
Sent by the state, had after strong resistance 230  
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed  
Marauders from the hostile camp. They proved,  
However, not to be so – but *banditti*,  
Whom either accident or enterprise  
Had carried from their usual haunt – the forests  
Which skirt Bohemia – even into Lusatia.  
Many amongst them were reported of  
High rank – and martial law slept for a time.  
At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,

148: “ ... *Dare you protect me? – Dare you enjoin me to proceed?*” (Lee, p.328).

149: “He had detached his sabre from his side, and occupied himself in forming fantastic lines with it on the marble below. Now and then he half unsheathed it, and seemed curiously to examine its polish” (Lee, p.329).



- And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction  
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate,  
I know no more. 240
- Siegenderf: And what is this to Ulric?  
Gabor: Amongst them there was said to be one man  
Of wonderful endowments – birth and fortune,  
Youth, strength and beauty, almost superhuman,  
And courage as unrivalled, were proclaimed  
His by the public rumour; and his sway  
Not only over his associates, but  
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft.  
Such was his influence – I have no great faith 250  
In any magic save that of the mine –  
I therefore deemed him wealthy. But my soul  
Was roused with various feelings to seek out  
This prodigy, if only to behold him.
- Siegenderf: And did you so?  
Gabor: You'll hear. Chance favoured me:  
A popular affray in the public square  
Drew crowds together – it was one of those  
Occasions, where men's souls look out of them,  
And show them as they are – even in their faces:  
The moment my eye met his, I exclaimed 260  
“This is the man!” though he was then, as since,  
With the nobles of the city. I felt sure  
I had not erred, and watched him long and nearly:  
I noted down his form – his gesture – features,  
Stature and bearing – and amidst them all,  
Midst every natural and acquired distinction,  
I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye  
And gladiator's heart.<sup>150</sup>
- Ulric (*smiling*): The tale sounds well.  
Gabor: And may sound better. He appeared to me  
One of those beings to whom fortune bends 270  
As she doth to the daring – and on whom  
The fates of others oft depend; besides,  
An indescribable sensation drew me  
Near to this man, as if my point of fortune  
Was to be fixed by him. There I was wrong.
- Siegenderf: And may not be right now.  
Gabor: I followed him,  
Solicited his notice – and obtained it  
Though not his friendship – it was his intention  
To leave the city privately – we left it  
Together – and together we arrived 280  
In the poor town where Werner was concealed,  
And Stralenheim was succoured – now we are on

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**150:** “... I noted down in my memory all those minute characteristics which pass unobserved by common perception; and amid every natural or acquired distinction, I believed I discerned the feelings of a gladiator and the eye of an assassin” (Lee, p.334).

- The verge – *dare* you hear further?  
 Siegendorf: I must do so –  
 Or I have heard too much.
- Gabor: I saw in you  
 A man above his station – and if not  
 So high, as now I find you, in my then  
 Conceptions – 'twas that I had rarely seen  
 Men such as you appeared in height of mind,  
 In the most high of worldly rank; you were  
 Poor – even to all save rags – I would have shared 290  
 My purse, though slender, with you – you refused it.
- Siegendorf: Doth my refusal make a debt to you,  
 That thus you urge it?
- Gabor: Still you owe me something,  
 Though not for that – and I owed you my safety,  
 At least my seeming safety – when the slaves  
 Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds  
 That *I* had robbed him.
- Siegendorf: I concealed you – I,  
 Whom, and whose house, you arraign, reviving viper!
- Gabor: I accuse no man – save in my defence.  
 You, Count! have made yourself accuser – judge – 300  
 Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.  
 Be just, and *I'll* be merciful.
- Siegendorf: You merciful!  
 You! Base caluminator!
- Gabor: I. 'Twill rest  
 With me at last to be so. You concealed me –  
 In secret passages known to yourself,  
 You said, and to none else. At dead of night,  
 Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious  
 Of tracing back my way – I saw a glimmer  
 Through distant crannies of a twinkling light.  
 I followed it, and reached a door – a secret 310  
 Portal – which opened to the chamber, where,  
 With cautious hand and slow, having first undone  
 As much as made a crevice of the fastening,  
 I looked through, and beheld a purple bed,  
 And on it Stralenheim!
- Siegendorf: Asleep! And yet  
 You slew him – wretch!
- Gabor: He was already slain,  
 And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own  
 Blood became ice.<sup>151</sup>
- Siegendorf: But he was all alone!  
 You saw none else? You did not see the –

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**151:** "... my hair stood erect on my head, and my blood froze in my veins, when ... I saw the body of Stralenheim!" (Lee, pp.341-2).

*He pauses from agitation.*

- Gabor: No,  
*He*, whom you dare not name – nor even I  
 Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in  
 The chamber. 320
- Siegenderf (*to Ulric*): Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still –  
 Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once – Oh! now  
 Do thou as much!
- Gabor: Be patient! I can *not*  
 Recede now, though it shake the very walls  
 Which frown above us. You remember, or  
 If not, your son does – that the locks were changed  
 Beneath *his* chief inspection – on the morn  
 Which led to this same night: how he had entered,  
 He best knows – but within an antechamber,  
 The door of which was half ajar – I saw  
 A man who washed his bloody hands, and oft  
 With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon  
 The bleeding body – but it moved no more. 330
- Siegenderf: Oh! God of Fathers!
- Gabor: I beheld his features  
 As I see yours – but yours they were not, though  
 Resembling them – behold them in Count Ulric's!  
 Distinct – as I beheld them – though the expression  
 Is not now what it then was – but it was so  
 When I first charged him with the crime – so lately. 340
- Siegenderf: This is so –
- Gabor (*interrupting him*): Nay – but hear me to the end!  
*Now* you must do so. I conceived myself  
 Betrayed by you and *him* (for now I saw  
 There was some tie between you) into this  
 Pretended den of refuge, to become  
 The victim of your guilt; and my first thought  
 Was vengeance: but though armed with a short poignard  
 (Having left my sword without) I was no match  
 For him at any time, as had been proved  
 That morning – either in address or force. 350  
 I turned, and fled – i'the dark: chance rather than  
 Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall,  
 And thence the chamber where you slept – if I  
 Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell  
 What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted;  
 But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.
- Siegenderf: And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief sleep –  
 The stars had not gone down when I awoke –  
 Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father  
 And now my dream is out!
- Gabor: 'Tis not my fault,  
 If I have read it. Well! I fled and hid me – 360

Chance led me here after so many moons  
 And showed me Werner in Count Siegendorf!  
 Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,  
 Inhabited the palace of a sovereign!  
 You sought me, and have found me – now you know  
 My secret, and may weigh its worth.

Siegendorf: (*after a pause*): Indeed!

Gabor: Is it revenge or justice which inspires  
 Your meditation?

Siegendorf: Neither – I was weighing  
 The value of your secret.

Gabor: You shall know it 370

At once – when you were poor, and I, though poor,  
 Rich enough to relieve such poverty  
 As might have envied mine, I offered you  
 My purse – you would not share it. I'll be franker  
 With you; you are wealthy, noble, trusted by  
 The Imperial powers – you understand me?

Siegendorf: Yes –

Gabor: Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true:  
 'Tis no less true, however, that my fortunes  
 Have made me both at present; you shall aid me, 380  
 I would have aided you – and also have  
 Been somewhat damaged in my name to save  
 Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.

Siegendorf: Dare you await the event of a few minutes'  
 Deliberation?

Gabor (*casts his eyes on Ulric, who is leaning against a pillar*):<sup>152</sup> If I  
 should do so?

Siegendorf: I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into  
 This tower.

*Opens a turret door.*

Gabor (*hesitatingly*): This is the second *safe* asylum  
 You have offered me.

Siegendorf: And was not the first so?

Gabor: I know not that even now – but will approve  
 The second. I have still a further shield. 390  
 I did not enter Prague alone – and should I  
 Be put to rest with Stralenhelm – there are  
 Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.  
 Be brief in your decision!

Siegendorf: I will be so.

My word is sacred and irrevocable  
 Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

Gabor: I'll take it for so much.

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**152:** “Conrad, whom it seemed to have roused, awakened to curiosity by the whole of this extraordinary exordium, leant with an undaunted and contemptuous air against the pillar near which he stood” (Lee, p.329 – in the story, this is *before* Gabor's tale is told).

Siegendorf (*points to Ulric's sabre, still upon the ground*): Take also *that* –  
I saw you eye it eagerly, and him  
Distrustfully.

Gabor (*takes up the sabre*): I will; and so provide  
To sell my life – not cheaply.

*Gabor goes into the turret, which Siegendorf closes.*

Siegendorf (*advances to Ulric*): Now, Count Ulric!  
For son I dare not call thee<sup>153</sup> – what say'st thou? 400

Ulric: His tale is true.

Siegendorf: True, monster!

Ulric: Most true, Father;

And you did well to listen to it: what  
We know, we can provide against. He must  
Be silenced.

Siegendorf: Aye, with half of my domains;  
And with the other half, could he and thou  
Unsay this villainy.

Ulric: It is no time  
For trifling or dissembling. I have said  
His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

Siegendorf: How so?

Ulric: As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull  
As never to have hit on this before? 410

When we met in the garden, what except  
Discovery in the act could make me know  
His death? Or had the prince's household been  
Then summoned, would the cry for the police  
Been left to such a stranger? Or should I  
Have loitered on the way? Or could *you, Werner*,  
The object of the Baron's hate and fears,  
Have fled – unless by many an hour before  
Suspicion woke? I sought and fathomed you  
Doubting if you were false or feeble; I 420  
Perceived you were the latter; and yet so  
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted  
At times your weakness.

Siegendorf: Parricide!<sup>154</sup> no less  
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,  
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit  
For your accomplice?

Ulric: Father, do not raise  
The devil you cannot lay, between us. This  
Is time for union and for action, not  
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured  
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard 430

153: Compare Polixenes to Florizel at *The Winter's Tale* IV iv 409 (app.): *Whom son I dare not call ...*

154: A Freudian slip. It was his father's enemy, not his father, whom Ulric slew.

This fellow's tale without some feeling? You  
 Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;  
 For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Siegenderf: Oh! my dead father's curse! 'tis working now.

Ulric: Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!  
 Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy  
 To baffle such, than countermining a mole,  
 Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.  
 Yet hear me still! If *you* condemn me, yet  
 Remember *who* hath taught me once too often 440  
 To listen to him! *Who* proclaimed to me  
 That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?  
 That passion was our nature? That the goods  
 Of heaven waited on the goods of fortune?  
*Who* showed me his humanity secured  
 By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of  
 All power to vindicate myself and race  
 In open day? By his disgrace which stamped  
 (It might be) bastardy on me, and on  
 Himself – a *felon's* brand! The man who is 450  
 At once both warm and weak, invites to deeds  
 He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange  
 That I should *act* what you could *think*? We've done  
 With right and wrong; and now must only ponder  
 Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,  
 Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *unknown*,  
 I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew  
*Known* as our foe – but not from vengeance. He  
 Was a rock in our way which I cut through,  
 As doth the bolt, because it stood between us 460  
 And our true destination – but not idly.  
 As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*  
 His *life*; when due, I but resumed the debt.  
 He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein  
 I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first  
 The torch – *you* showed the path; now trace me that  
 Of safety – or let me!<sup>155</sup>

Siegenderf: I have done with life!

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**155:** "If your present condemnation of me be just, I have listened to you at least once too often! – Remember *who* told me, when at M—, that there were crimes rendered venial by the occasion: *who* painted the excesses of passion as the trespasses of humanity: *who* held the balance suspended before my eyes between the goods of fortune and those of honour: *who* aided the mischief-stirring spirit within me, by showing me a specious probity, secured only by an infirmity of nerves. Had not your own conduct, by stamping you with disgrace, and your son with illegitimacy, deprived me of all power openly to defy Stralenheim, and were you so little skilled in human nature as not to know that the man who is at once intemperate and feeble sanctions the crimes he does not commit? Was it wonderful than that *I* should dare to act what *you* dared to meditate? I have nothing now to with its guilt or innocence. It is our mutual interest to avert its consequences. We stood on a precipice down which one of three must inevitably have plunged: for I knew my own situation with the state to be as critical as yours. – I therefore precipitated Stralenheim! – *You* held the torch! – *You* pointed out the path! – Show me now that of safety; or let me show it you!" (Lee, pp.357-8).

Ulric: Let us have done with that which cankers life –  
 Familiar feuds and vain recriminations  
 Of things which cannot be undone. We have 470  
 No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,  
 And have within these very walls men whom  
 (Although you know them not) dare venture all things.  
 You stand high with the state; what passes here  
 Will not excite her too great curiosity:  
 Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,  
 Stir not, and speak not – leave the rest to me:  
 We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.

*Exit Ulric.*

Siegenderdorf (*solus*): Am I awake? are these my father's halls?  
 And *yon* – my son? *My son! mine!* who have ever 480  
 Abhorred both mystery and blood, and yet  
 Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!  
 I must be speedy, or more will be shed –  
 The Hungarian's! Ulric – he hath partisans,  
 It seems: I might have guessed as much. Oh fool!  
 Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key  
 (As I too) of the opposite door which leads  
 Into the turret. Now then! or once more  
 To be the father of fresh crimes – no less  
 Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor! 490

*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

## Act V scene ii.

*The Interior of the turret. Gabor and Siegendorf.*

Gabor: Who calls?  
 Siegendorf: I – Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!  
 Lose not a moment!

*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into Gabor's hand.*

Gabor: What am I to do  
 With these?  
 Siegendorf: Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,  
 And prosper; but delay not – or you are lost!  
 Gabor: You pledged your honour for my safety!  
 Siegendorf: And  
 Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,  
 It seems, of my own castle – of my own  
 Retainers – nay, even of these very walls,  
 Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!  
 Or you will be slain by –  
 Gabor: Is it even so? 10  
 Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,  
 You sought this fatal interview!  
 Siegendorf: I did. Let it not be more fatal still! – Begone!  
 Gabor: By the same path I entered?  
 Siegendorf: Yes; that's safe still:  
 But loiter not in Prague – you do not know  
 With whom you have to deal.  
 Gabor: I know too well –  
 And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!  
 Farewell!

*Exit Gabor.*

Siegendorf (*solus and listening*): He hath cleared the staircase. Ah! I  
 hear  
 The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!  
 Safe! Oh, my father's spirit! I am faint – 20

*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the tower, in a drooping posture.  
 Enter Ulric, with others armed, and with weapons drawn.*

Ulric: Despatch! – he's there!  
 Ludwig: The Count, my Lord!  
 Ulric (*recognising Siegendorf*): You here, Sir!  
 Siegendorf: Yes: if you want another victim, strike!  
 Ulric (*seeing him stripped of his jewels*): Where is the ruffian who hath  
 plundered you?  
 Vassals, dispatch in search of him! You see



'Twas as I said – the wretch hath stripped my father  
Of jewels which might form a prince's heirloom!  
Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

*Exeunt all but Siegendorf and Ulric.*

What's this?

Where is the villain?

Siegendorf: There are two, Sir; which  
Are you in quest of?

Ulric: Let us hear no more  
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him  
Escape? 30

Siegendorf: He's gone.

Ulric: With your connivance?

Siegendorf: With  
My fullest, freest aid.

Ulric: Then fare you well!

*Ulric is going.*

Siegendorf: Stop! I command – entreat – implore! Oh, Ulric!  
Will you then leave me?

Ulric: What! remain to be  
Denounced – dragged, it may be, in chains; and all  
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,  
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,  
That sacrifices your whole race to save  
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, Count,  
Henceforth you have no son!

Siegendorf: I never had one; 40  
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!  
Where will you go? I would not send you forth  
Without protection.

Ulric: Leave that unto me.  
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir  
Of your domains: a thousand, aye, ten thousand  
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.

Siegendorf: The foresters!  
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort?

Ulric: Yes – men – who are worthy of the name! Go tell  
Your senators that they look well to Prague;  
Their feast of peace was early for the times; 50  
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid  
With Wallenstein!

*Enter Josephine and Ida.*

Josephine: What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!  
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!

Siegendorf: Safe!  
 Ida: Yes, dear father!  
 Siegendorf: No, no; I have no children: never more  
 Call me by that worst name of parent.  
 Josephine: What  
 Means my good lord?  
 Siegendorf: That you have given birth  
 To a demon!  
 Ida (*taking Ulric's hand*): Who shall dare say this of Ulric?  
 Siegendorf: Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.  
 Ida (*stooping to kiss it*): I'd kiss it off, though it were mine!  
 Siegendorf: It is so!  
 Ulric: Away! it is your father's!

*Exit Ulric.*

Ida: Oh, great God! 60  
 And I have loved this man!<sup>156</sup>

*Ida falls senseless – Josephine stands speechless with horror.*

Siegendorf: The wretch hath slain  
 Them both! My Josephine! we are now alone!  
 Would we had ever been so! All is over  
 For me! Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;  
 Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son  
 In mine! The race of Siegendorf is past!

***THE END.***

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**156:** Ida's lightning intuition as to what Ulric means enables B. to avoid a page or so of recapitulation.

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