

CHARLES DI TOCCA

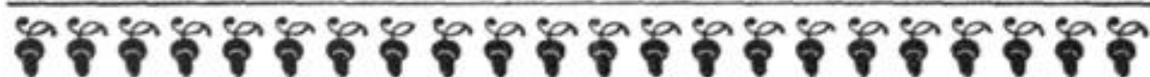
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CHARLES DI TOCCA

A Tragedy

By

Cale Young Rice



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To My Wife

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CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES DI TOCCA

A Tragedy

CHARLES DI TOCCA . . .	{ Duke of Leucadia, Tyrant of Arta, etc.
ANTONIO DI TOCCA . . .	His son.
HÆMON	A Greek noble.
BARDAS	His friend.
CARDINAL JULIAN . . .	The Pope's Legate.
AGABUS	A mad monk.
CECCO	Seneschal of the Castle.
FULVIA COLONNA . . .	Under the duke's protection.
HELENA	Sister to Hæmon.
GIULIA	Serving Fulvia.
PAULA	Serving Helena.
LYGIA	} Revellers.
PHAON	
ZOE	
BASIL	

NARDO, a boy, and DIOGENES, a philosopher.
A Captain of the Guard, Soldiers, Guests,
Attendants, etc.

Time: Fifteenth Century.

ACT ONE

Scene.—The Island Leucadia. A ruined temple of Apollo near the town of Pharo. Broken columns and stones are strewn, or stand desolately about. It is night—the moon rising. ANTONIO, who has been waiting impatiently, seats himself on a stone. By a road near the ruins FULVIA enters, cloaked.

ANTONIO (*turning*): Helen——!

FULVIA: A comely name, my lord.

ANTONIO: Ah, you?

My father's unforgetting Fulvia?

FULVIA: At least not Helena, whoe'er she be.

ANTONIO: And did I call you so?

FULVIA: Unless it is

These stones have tongue and passion.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Antonio !

ANTONIO : My Helena, what is it ? You are wan
And tremble as a blossom quick with fear
Of shattering. What is it ? Speak.

HELENA : Not true !

O, 'tis not true !

ANTONIO : What have you chanced upon ?

HELENA : Say no to me, say no, and no again !

ANTONIO : Say no, and no ?

HELENA : Yes ; I am reeling, wrung,
With one glance o'er the precipice of ill !
Say his incanted prophecies spring from
No power that's more than frenzied fantasy !

ANTONIO : Who prophesies ? Who now upon
this isle
More than visible and present day
Can gather to his eye ? Tell me.

HELENA : The monk—
Ah, chide me not !—mad Agabus, who can

CHARLES DI TOCCA

And mar of love : or the dim knell of death
Heard and revealed.

ANTONIO : A witless monk who thinks
God lives but to fulfil his prophecies !

HELENA : You know him not. 'Tis told in
 youth he loved
One treacherous, and in avenge made fierce
Treaty with Hell that lends him sight of all
Ills that arise from it to mated hearts !
Yet look not so, my lord ! I'll trust thine
 eyes
That tell me love is master of all times,
And thou of all love master !

ANTONIO : And of thee ?
Then will the winds return unto the night
And flute us lover songs of happiness !

HELENA : Nor dare upon a duller note while
 here
We tryst beneath the moon ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ANTONIO : My perfect Greek !

Athene looks again out of thy lids.

And Venus trembles in thy every limb !

HELENA : Not Venus, ah, not Venus !

ANTONIO : Now ; again ?

HELENA : 'Twas on this temple's ancient gate
she found

Wounded Adonis dead, and to forget,

Like Sappho leaped, 'tis said, from yonder cliff

Down to the waves' oblivion below.

ANTONIO : And will you read such terror in a
tale ?

HELENA : Forgive me, then.

ANTONIO : Surely you are unstrung,
And yet there is—— (*Turns away from her.*)

HELENA : Is what ? Antonio ?

ANTONIO : Nothing : I who must ebb with you
and flow

A little was moved.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Not you, not you! I'll change
My tears to laughter, if but fantasy
May so unmettle you! Not moved, indeed!
Not moved, Antonio?

ANTONIO : Well, let us off,
My Helena, with these numb awes that wind
About our joy.

HELENA : 'Thy kiss then, for it can
Drive all gloom out of the world!

ANTONIO : And thine, my own,
On Fate's hard brow would shame it of all
frown!

HELENA : Yet is thine mightier, for no frown
can be
When no more gloom's in the world!

ANTONIO : But 'tis thy lips
That lend it might. If I pressed other——

HELENA : Other!
You should not know that any other lips

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Could e'er be pressed ; I'll have no kiss but his
Who is all blind to every mouth but mine !

(Breaks from him.)

ANTONIO : Oh ?—Well.

HELENA : “ Oh—well ? ”—Then it is well I
go !

ANTONIO : Perhaps.

HELENA : “ Perhaps ! ” *(Makes to go.)*

ANTONIO : Good-night.

HELENA *(returning)* : Antonio——?

ANTONIO : Ah ! still——?

HELENA : There's gloom in the world again.

ANTONIO *(kissing her)* : 'Tis gone ?

HELENA : Not all, I think.

ANTONIO : Two for so small a gloom ?

(Kisses her again.)

HELENA : So small !

ANTONIO : And still you sigh ?

HELENA : The vainest glooms

CHARLES DI TOCCA

To-night seem ominous—as cloud-flakes flung
Upward before the heaving of the west.

(In fright) Oh!

ANTONIO: Helena!

HELENA: See, see! 'tis Agabus!

Enter AGABUS unkempt and distracted.

AGABUS: O—lovers! lovers! Lord have none
of them!

ANTONIO: Good monk——

AGABUS: O—yes, yes, yes. You'd give me gold
To pray for your two souls. *(Crossing himself.)*

Not I! Not I!

Know you not love is brewed of lust and fire?
It gnaws and burns, until the Shadow—Sir,

(Searching about the air.)

Have you not seen a Shadow pass?

ANTONIO: A Shadow?

AGABUS: Silent and cold. A-times they call
him Death:

CHARLES DI TOCCA

I'd have him for my brain—it shakes with
fever.

(Goes searching anxiously.)

HELENA : Antonio——

ANTONIO : You're calm ?

HELENA : Yes, very calm——

Of impotence—as one who in a tomb

Awakes and waits ?

ANTONIO : He is but mad.

HELENA : But mad.

ANTONIO : Yet fear you ? still ?

(A shout is heard.)

HELENA : Who is it ? soldiers come
From Arta ?

ANTONIO : Yes.

HELENA : And by this road !—They must
Not see us !

ANTONIO : No. But quick, within this breach !

(They conceal themselves in the breach.)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

The soldiers pass across the stage. The last, as all shout "DI TOCCA!" strikes a column near him. It falls, and HELENA starts forward shuddering.)

HELENA : Fallen ! Ah, fallen ! See, Antonio !

ANTONIO : What now !

HELENA (*swaying*) : It is as if the earth were
wind

Under my feet !

ANTONIO : Are all things thus become
Omen and dread to you ?

HELENA : O, but it is
The pillar grieving Venus leant upon
Ere to forget she leapt, and wrote,
When falls this pillar tall and proud
Let surest lovers weave their shroud.

ANTONIO : Mere myth !

HELENA : The shroud ! It coldly winds about
us—coldly !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ANTONIO : Should a vain hap so desperately
move you ?

HELENA : The breath and secret soul of all this
night

Are burdened with foreboding ! And it seems—

ANTONIO : You must not, Helena !

HELENA : My love, my lord—
Touch me lest I forget my natural flesh
In this unnatural awe ! (*He takes her to him.*)

Ah how thy arms
Warm the cold moan and misery of fear
Out of my veins !

ANTONIO : You rave, but in me stir
Again the attraction of these dim portents.
Nay, quiver not ! 'tis but a passing mist,
And this that runs in us is worthless dread !

HELENA : But ah, the shroud ! the shroud !

ANTONIO : We'll weave no shroud,
But wedding robes and wreaths and pageantry !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Only a little step from your life's shore
Out on the infinite of love, whose air
Is awe and mystery.

HELENA : I go, my lord.

Think of me oft !

ANTONIO (*taking her in his arms*) : My Helena !

*(She goes with PAULA. He steps aside and
watches the approaching forms.)*

'Tis Hæmon !

My father !

Enter CHARLES friendly, with HÆMON.

CHARLES : So, no farther ? you'll stop here ?

HÆMON : Sir, if you grant it. I——

CHARLES (*twittingly*) : Some rendezvous ?
Who is she ? Ah, young blood and Spring and
night !

HÆMON : No rendezvous, my lord.

CHARLES : Some lay then you
Would muse on ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

You're heated with suspicion and old wrong,
But take my hand as pledge——

HÆMON (*refusing it*): That you'll be false?

Enter BARDAS.

BARDAS: I've sought you, Hæmon. Antonio?

We are

Well met then: to your doors my want was bent
With a request.

ANTONIO: Which gladly I shall hear
And if I can will grant.

BARDAS: My haste is blunt—
As is my tongue.

HÆMON: 'Then yield it us at once,
Our mood is so.

BARDAS: Hæmon, I love your sister.
Not love: I am idolatrous before
Her foot's least print, and cannot breathe or
pray

But where she's sometime been and left a heaven!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HÆMON : Therefore you'll cry it maudlin at the
streets ?

BARDAS : Necessity's not over delicate.

Antonio, sue for me. You have been apt
In all love's skill they say. My oath on it
Your words once sown upon her listening
Would not lie fruitless did they bid her yield
More than her most.

HÆMON : Bardas ! Do you—Does such
Unseemliness run in your thought ?

BARDAS : Peace, Hæmon.
Antonio, speak.

ANTONIO : You're strange in this request.
Helena, whom I've seen, would little thank
The eyes that told her own where they should
love.

BARDAS : I saved your life, my lord.

ANTONIO : And I've besought
Occasion oft for loaning of some chance

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Worthily to repay you. If 'tis this,
I am distrest. I cannot plead your suit.

BARDAS : You cannot or you will not ?

ANTONIO : I have said.

Ask me for service on your foes, for gold,
Faith or devotion, friendship you're aloof to,
For all that will and honor well may render
With nicety, and I'll be wings and heart,
More—drudge to your desire.

HÆMON : Nobly, my lord !

Bardas, you must atone——

BARDAS : Peace, Hæmon.

HÆMON : Peace

Is goad and gall ! Why do you burn my cheek
With this indignity ?

BARDAS : Do you ask why ? (*to ANTONIO.*)
A little since one of your father's guard
Gave his command in seal to Helena
Upon the streets, to instantly repair

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Unto his halls—which she must henceforth *honor*.

You knew it not?

ANTONIO : My father?

BARDAS : O, well feigned.

Be sure none will suspect he is too old

For knightly feat like this—and that he has

A son!

ANTONIO : To Helena! my father! sealed!

HEMON : Bardas, you bring the truth?—And
so, my lord,

You stab me through another—you, my *friend*?

ANTONIO (*to* BARDAS) : Do you mean that——?

BARDAS : Until this hour I held
The race of Charles di Tocca bold, or other
But empty of all lies in deed or speech,
It grows—a little low?

ANTONIO : Why you are mad!
Are mad! I'm naked of this thing, and hide
No guilt behind the wonder of my face.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

For Paradises brimming with all Beauty
I would not lay one fancy's weight of shame
On her you name !

BARDAS : A pretty protest—but
A breath too heavenly.

ANTONIO : Leave sneering there !
You have repaid yourself—cast on me words
Intolerable more than loss of life.
You both shall learn this night's entangling.
But know, between her, Helena, and shame
I burn with flaming heart and fearless hand !

(Goes angrily.)

HÆMON : He can be false and wear this mien
of truth ?

BARDAS : I'll not believe !

HÆMON : But, what : my sister seized ?

BARDAS : Ah, what !—“ He burns with flaming
heart ! ”—have we

No flesh to understand this passion then ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

thirty nights puff her name out his window with as many honeyed drawls of passion as—as—as—June has buds? ‘Sweet Helena!’—la! ‘Fair Helena!’—O! ‘Dear Helena! my rose! my queen! my sun and moon and stars! Thy kiss is still at my lips, thy breast beats still on mine! my Helena!’—Um! Oh, ’t must be a rare damsel. I’ll make a sluice between her purse and mine, wench; do you hear?”

HEMON: Well—well?

BARDAS: No more. When I had struck him
down,

He swore it was unswerving all and truth.

Hasting to warn I found Helena ta’en

And sought you here.

HEMON (*grasping his brows*): Ah!

BARDAS: Helena who is
All purity!

HEMON: Ah sister, child!—Have I

CHARLES DI TOCCA

With strength been father and with tenderness
A mother been to her unfolding years
But to see now unchastest cruelty
Pluck her white bloom to ease his idle sense
One fragrant hour?—If it be so, no flowers
Should blossom; only weeds whose withering
Can hurt no heart!

BARDAS: These tears should seal fierce oaths
Against him!

HEMON: And they shall! until God wrecks
Him in the tempest raised of his outrage!

BARDAS: Then may I be the rock on which he
breaks!

But hear; who comes? (*Revellers are heard ap-
proaching.*)

We must aside until
This mirth is past. (*They conceal themselves.*)

*Enter revellers dressed as bacchanals and bac-
chantes, dancing and singing.*

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Bacchus, hey ! was a god, hei-yo !

The vine ! a fig for the rest !

With locks green-crowned and lips red-warm—

The vine ! the vine's the best !

He loved maids, O-o-ay ! hei-yo !

The vine ! a maiden's breast !

He pressed the grape, and kissed the maid!—

The cuckoo builds no nest !

*(All go dancing, except LYDIA and PHAON,
who clasps and kisses her passionately)*

LYDIA *(breaking from him)*: Do you think kisses are so cheap? You must know mine fill my purse! A pretty gallant from Naples, with laces and silks and jewels gave me this ring last year for but one. And another lover from Venice gave me this *(a bracelet)*—but he looked so sad when he gave it. Ah, his eyes! I'd not have cared if he had given me naught.

PHAON: Here, here, then! *(Offers jewel.)*

CHARLES DI TOCCA

LYDIA (*putting it aside*): They say the ladies in Venice ride with their lovers through the streets all night in boats: and the very moon shines more passionately there. Is it true?

PHAON: Yes, yes. But kiss me, Lydia! Take this jewel—my last. Be mine to-night, no other's! We'll prate of Venice another time.

LYDIA: Another time we'll prate of kisses. I'll not have the jewel.

PHAON: Not have it! Now you're turning nun! a soft and virgin, silly nun! With a gray gown to hide these shoulders that—shall I whisper it?

LYDIA: Devil! they're not! A nice lover called them round and fair last night. And I've been sick! And—I—cruel! cruel! cruel! (*Revellers are heard returning.*) There, they're coming.

PHAON: Never mind, my girl. But you mustn't scorn a man's blood when it's afire.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Re-enter Revellers singing

Bacchus, hey ! was a god, hei-yo ! etc.

(After which all go, except ZOE and BASIL.)

ZOE : O ! O ! O ! but 'tis brave ! Wine, Basil !
Wine, my knight, my Bacchus ! Ho ! ho ! my
god ! you wheeze like a cross-bow. Is it years,
my wooer, years ?—Ah ! *(She sighs.)*

BASIL : Sighs—sighs ! Now look for showers.

ZOE : Basil—you were my first lover—except
the duke Charles. Ah, did you see how that
Helena looked when they gave her the duke's
command ? I was like that once. *(HEMON starts
forward.)*

BASIL : Fiends, nymphs, and saints ! it's come !
tears in your eyes ! Zoe, stop it. Would you have
mine leak and drive me to a monastery for shelter !

ZOE *(sings sadly and absently)* :

She lay by the river, dead,

A broken reed in her hand—

CHARLES DI TOCCA

A nymph whom an idle god had wed
And led from her maidenland.

BASIL: O, had I been born a heathen!

ZOE: He told me, Basil, I should live, a great
lady, at his castle. And they should kiss my
hand and courtesy to me. He meant but jest—
I feared—I feared! But—I loved him!

BASIL: Now, my damsel—!

ZOE (*sings*):

The god was the great god Jove,
Two notes would the bent reed blow,
The one was sorrow, the other love
Enwove with a woman's woe.

BASIL: Songs and snakes! Give me instead
a Dominican's funeral! I'd as lief crawl bare-
kneed to Rome and mouth the Pope's heel. O
blessed Turks with their remorseless harems!—
Zoe!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ZOE (*sings*) :

She lay by the river dead :

And he at feasting forgot.

The gods, shall they be disquieted

By dread of a mortal's lot ?

*(She wipes her eyes, trembles, looks at him
and laughs hysterically.)*

Bacchus ! my Bacchus ! with wet eyes ! Up,
up, lad ! there's many a cup for us yet !

(They go, she leading and singing.

He loved maids, O-o-ay ! hei-yo !

The vine ! a maiden's breast ! etc.

*(HEMON and BARDAS look at each other, then
start after them terribly moved.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT TWO

Scene.—An audience hall in the castle of CHARLES DI TOCCA; the next afternoon. The dark stained walls have been festooned with vines and flowers. On the left is the ducal throne. On the right sunlight through high-set windows. In the rear heavily draped doors. Enter CHARLES, who looks around and smiles with subtle content, then summons a servant.

Enter servant.

CHARLES: The princess Fulvia.

SERVANT: She comes, sir, now.

(Goes.

Enter FULVIA.

FULVIA: My lord, flowers and vines upon these
walls

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : No.

CHARLES : We'll have her. (*Motions servant.*)

Go. Say that we wait her here,
The lady Helena. (*Servant goes.*)

She's frightened—thinks
'Tmay be her father found too deep a rest
Within our care : yet has a hope that holds
The tears still from her lids. I've smiled on
her,

Smiled, Fulvia, and she—Why do you cloud ?

FULVIA : I would this were undone.

CHARLES : Undone ? Undone ?
You would it were—— ?

Enter HELENA.

Ah, Greek ! Our Fulvia,
Who is as heart and health about our doors,
Has speech for you. And politics
Untended groan for me. (*He goes.*)

FULVIA (*looking sadly at her*) : Girl—child—

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Yes !
A dumb dread trembles from you sufferingly.

FULVIA : It is not fear. Or—no!—has vanished quite,
Ashamed of its too naked idleness.

HELENA (*shuddering*) : He cannot, will not !—
Yet you feared !

FULVIA : Be calm :
Beauty is better so.

HELENA : Ah, you are cold !
See a great shadow reach and wrap at me,
Yet lend no light ! By gentleness I pray you,
What said he ?

FULVIA : Child——

HELENA : Child !—Ah, a moment's dread
Brings age on us !—If not by gentleness,
Then by that love that women bear to men,
By happiness too fleeting to tread earth,
I pray you tell the fear your heart so hides !

FULVIA : You are the guest of Charles di Tocca.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Guest ?

Ah, guests are bidden, not commanded.—Where,
Where can Antonio be gone. All day
No token, quieting !

FULVIA : Antonio, girl ?

Antonio ?—Is it true ?

Re-enter CHARLES.

CHARLES : So eager ?—Truth

Has brewed more tears than lies. But, Fulvia,
Why doth it mated with Antonio's name
Wring thus your troubled hands ?

FULVIA : My lord——

CHARLES : You falter ?

No matter—now. (*To HELENA.*) But you, my
fair one, put

More merriment upon your lips and lids,
And this (*giving pearls*) upon the lustre of your
throat.

Hither our guests come soon. Be with us then,

CHARLES DI TOCCA

And at your beauty's best. Now; trembling so?—
Yet is the lily lovelier in the wind!

(He looks after, musingly, as she goes.)

FULVIA: My lord——

CHARLES: True, Fulvia—as titles go.

FULVIA: My lord——

CHARLES: Twice—but I'm not two lords.

FULVIA: To-night
I think you are. But quench your jests.

CHARLES: In tears?
And groans? Where borrow them?

FULVIA (*turning away*): So let it be.

CHARLES: Why do you say so be it and sigh as
Nought could again be well?

FULVIA: O——

CHARLES: Now you frown?

FULVIA: The hope you nurse, then, if it prove
a pang
Of serpent bitterness——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : You will—— ?

CHARLES : Yes—yes ! About her brow shall curl
The coronet ! Her wishes shall be sceptres
Waving a swift fulfilment to her feet !
Her pity shall leave ready graves unfilled,
Her anger open earth for all who offend !
She shall——

FULVIA : Ah cease, infatuate man ! Will you
Build kingdoms on the wind, and empires on
A girl's ungiven heart ?

CHARLES (*slowly*) : Unto such love
As mine all things are given.

FULVIA : All things but love.

CHARLES : Stood she not as in pleading ? Yes
—and to

Her cheeks came hurried roses from her heart.
And her large eyes, did they not drift to mine
Caressing ?—yet as if in them they found
The likeness of some visitant dear dream.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : The likeness of some dream ?

CHARLES : Question no more.

She is set in the centre of my need
As youth and fiercest passion could not set her.
Supernally as May she has burst on
My barren age. Pain, envious decay,
And doubt that mystery wounds us with, and
wrong,

Flee from the gleam and whisper of her name.

FULVIA : And if your coronet and heat avail
Not with her as might charm of equal years
And beauty ?

CHARLES : Then—why then—why there may slip
An avalanche of raging and despair
Out of me ! Hope of her once taken, all
The thwarted thunders of my want would rush
Into the void with lightnings for revenge !

Enter ANTONIO.

ANTONIO : Sir, I'm returned.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : With lightnings that shall—(*Sees him.*) You ?

Antonio ? My eyes had other thought.

Open your news—but mind 'tis not of failure.

ANTONIO : We seized the murderous robbers in
their cove

And o'er the cliff, as our just law commands,
To death flung them.

CHARLES : So with all traitors be it.

ANTONIO : So should it.

CHARLES : Well, 'twas swift. In you there is
More than your mother's gentleness.

ANTONIO : Else were
My name di Tocca, sir, and not myself.

CHARLES : You have my love.—But as you
came met you

The cardinal ?

ANTONIO : So close he should by this
Be at our gates.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : He'll miss no welcome, and—
Perhaps—we shall— (*Smiles on them.*) Give me
that cross you wear,

My Fulvia. It may——

ANTONIO : Sir, this is good !
We earnestly beseech of you to hear
The Pope's ambassador with yielding.

CHARLES : Ah ?—
But you, boy, draw out of this solitude
And musing moodiness. You should think but
On silly sighs and kisses, rhymes and trysts !
Must I yet teach your coldness youth ?

(*A trumpet, and sound of opening gates.*)

Draw out !

ANTONIO : I have to-day desired some words of
this.

Enter CECCO.

CHARLES : Well, who——?

CECCO : The Cardinal, your grace.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Then go,
And bid our guests. Bring too Diogenes,
Our most amusing traveller of all
Philosophies. Say that the duke, his brother,
Humbly desires it ! (CECCO goes.)

FULVIA : And Helena ?

CHARLES (*to ANTONIO*) : Why do
You start, sir ?—Fulvia, we must look to
This callow god our son. Yet, had our court
Two eyes of loveliness to drown his heart,
I'd think on oath 'twere done.

(Goes to the throne.)

FULVIA (*low to ANTONIO*) : Listen. No word
Of Helena !

CHARLES : Now ! is it secrets ?

FULVIA : Sir,
He scorns to spill a drop of confidence
On my too thirsty questions.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Does he so
Tightly seal up his spirits ?

FULVIA : Put the rogue
To prison on stale bread, my lord : I half
Believe he's full of treasons.

CHARLES (*laughing*) : Do you hear !
Because you are the son and scout our foes
Justice is not impossible upon you !

*The guests enter, among them HEMON and BAR-
DAS, following the CARDINAL JULIAN and his
suite, and last HELENA, whom FULVIA leads
aside.*

CARDINAL : Peace, worthy duke !

CHARLES : And more, lord Cardinal,
We would to-day enlarge our worthiness
With you and with great Rome.

CARDINAL : Firmly I crave
It may be so.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Here unto all our guests
We then do disavow our heresies——
For faith's as air, as ease to life—and seek
At your absolving lips release from our
Rough disobedience. Nor shall we shun
The lash and needed weight of penitence.

(A murmur of approval.)

JULIAN: These words, great lord, fall wise and
soothing well.

Who so confesses, plants beneath his foot
A step to scale all impotence and wrong.
Our royal Pope's conditions shall be told,
Pledge them consenting seal and you shall be
Briefly and fully free. *(Motions his secretary.)*

SECRETARY *(opens and reads)*: “Whereas the
duke
Di Tocca has offended——”

CARDINAL : Pass the offence.
Be it oblivion's. On, the penalty.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

SECRETARY : “Therefore the duke di Tocco
humbling himself

Must pay into our vaults two hundred ducats—”

CHARLES : It shall be three.

SECRETARY : “And send a hundred men
Armed ’gainst the foes that threaten Italy.”

CHARLES : See to it, yes, Antonio, ere a dawn.

SECRETARY : “He must also yield up the prin-
cess Fulvia

Who’s fled her father’s house and rightful mar-
riage.”

FULVIA (*to JULIAN*) : You told me not of this
—no word, my lord !

CARDINAL : My silence as my speech is not my
own.

CHARLES : We’ll more of it—a measure more.
Read on.

SECRETARY : “And for the better amity and
weal

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Of Italy and Christ's most Holy Church,
He is enjoined to wed with Beatrice
Of Florence. If his wilful boldness grants
Obedience, his sins shall melt to rest
Under the calm of full forgiveness. He——"

CHARLES : A mild, a courteous, O a modest
Pope !

I must tear from my happiness a friend
Who fled a father's searing cruelty,
And cast her back in the flames ! And I must bind
My crippled years that fare toward the grave
In the cold clasp of an unloving hand !

No ! No !

Then, sir, and Cardinal, 'tis not enough !
I pray you swift again to Rome and plead
Most suppliantly that I for penance may
Swear my true son is shame-begot, or lend
My kin to drink clean of its fouling damp
Some pestilent prison ! And 'tis impious too

CHARLES DI TOCCA

That any still should trust my love. Beseech
His Holiness' command for death upon them!

CARDINAL: This is your answer?

CHARLES (*rises*): A mite! a mite of it!
The rest is I will wed where I will wed
Though every hill of earth raise up its pope
To bellow at me thunderous damnation!
I will—I will— (*Falls back convulsed.*)

FULVIA (*hastening to him*): Charles, ah! Wine
for him, wine! (*It is brought.*)

ANTONIO: Lord Cardinal, spare yourself more
and go.

You shall learn if a change may loose this strain.
(*The CARDINAL goes with his suite amid
timid reverence.*)

CHARLES (*struggling*): I will—this frenzy—off
my throat—! I— (*Recovering.*) Ah,
Thou, Fulvia? 'Twas as a fiend swung on me.
And shame! fear oozes out upon my brow,

CHARLES DI TOCCA

And I——. (*Rises and calms himself.*) Forgive,
friends, this so sudden wrench

Upon your pleasure. One too quick made saint,
Stands feebly : but at once will I atone.

Where is Diogenes—where is he ? His
Tangled fantastic wisdom shall divert us.

(*DIOGENES, who has stood unconscious of all
that has passed, is pushed forward.*)

Ah, peer of Socrates and perfect Plato,
Leave your unseeing silence now and tell us——

*Enter AGABUS gazing anxiously and wildly before
him.*

Who's this ?

AGABUS (*hoarsely*): Where went he—the Shadow ?
—whither ?

CHARLES : Who's this broke from his grave upon
us ?

AGABUS (*searching still*) : Where ?
I followed him—he sped and there was cold !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Behind him blows a horror!

(Stops in fascinated awe before HELENA.)

Ah, on her head!

His touch! his earthless finger!—and she rots
To dust! to dust!

ANTONIO : Ill monk! are there no men
That you must wring a woman so with fear?

AGABUS : Ha, men? Christ save all men but
lovers! all! *(Crosses himself.)*

CHARLES : Antonio, how speaks he?

ANTONIO : Sir, most mad
With the pestilence of evil prophecy.
(To guards.) Forth with him!

CHARLES : Stay.

ANTONIO : Let him not, for he will
Beguile you to some ravening belief.

AGABUS *(going up to CHARLES, staring at him
in suppressed excitement)* : A lover! a
lover! and he loves in vain!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Wilt go? There is a cave—(*taking his hand*),
we'll curse her—come!

CHARLES: Out! out! (*Throws him from the
dais.*)

AGABUS: Christ save all men but— (*Seeking
vacantly.*) Ah, the Shadow!

Has no one seen him? none?—the Shadow?
none?

(*Goes dazed. Guests whisper, awed.*)

CHARLES: He is obsessed—vile utterly!

A GUEST: O duke,

I pray, good-night.

ANOTHER: And I, my lord.

ANOTHER: And I——

ANOTHER: And——

CHARLES: Friends, you shall not—no. This
pall will pass,

My hospitality is up, you shall not!

ANOTHER: Pardon, O duke, we——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Though some grudging wind
Blows us away from mirth, 'tis still in view,
We've lute and dance that yet shall bring us in.

1ST LADY : O, dance!

CHARLES : Cecco, our Circes from the Nile.

(CECCO goes.)

2D LADY : The Nile! Ah, Cleopatra's Nile?

CHARLES : Her own ;
And sinuous as Nile water is their grace.

Enter two Egyptian girls, who dance, then go.

GUESTS (*applauding*) : Bravely!—O, brave!

CHARLES : Do they not whirl it lithe?
With limbs like swallow wings upon the blue?

1ST LADY : 'Twas witchery!

3D LADY : Such eyes! such hair!

2D LADY : And thus,
Did Cleopatra thus steal Antony?
Wrap him about with motion that would seize

CHARLES DI TOCCA

His senses to an ecstasy? O, oh,
To dance so!

CHARLES: And so steal an Antony?
We'll frame a law on thieving of men's heart's!

2D LADY: Then, vainly! 'tis a theft men like
the most.

CHARLES: When in its stead the thief has left
her own—
But shall we woo no boon of mirth save
dance?

A lute! a lute! (*One is gone for.*) Some new lay,
Hæmon, come!

And every word must dip its syllables
In Pindar's spring to trip so lightly forth.

HÆMON: I have no lay.

CHARLES: The lute! (*It is offered HÆMON.*)
Sing us of love
That builds a Paradise of kisses, thinks
The Infinite bound up in an embrace.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Since might is yours, strip from me wealth and life
And more, and all—but let her not, no, no,
Meet here the touch and leprosy of shame!

CHARLES (*laughing*): Said I not, said I, friends,
we should have mirth?

You shall laugh with me laughter bright as wine.

ANTONIO: But, sir, this is not good for laugh-
ter! Sir!

HEMON (*to ANTONIO*): Ah, put the lamb on—
bleat mock sympathy!

CHARLES (*still laughing*): Fulvia, O, he foots it
in the tracks

Of your own fear! and wanders to delusion!

HEMON: Will you laugh at me, fiend!

CHARLES: Boy!

HEMON: Had I but

Omnipotence a moment and could dash

Annihilation on you and your race!

(*Throws his glove in ANTONIO's face.*)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Hæmon !

FULVIA (*restraining her*) : No, Helena.

CHARLES : Omnipotence ?

And could Omnipotence make such a fool ?

There must be two Gods in the world to do it.

HÆMON : She shall not—— !

(*Attempts to kill HELENA.*)

ANTONIO (*preventing*) : Fury !—Ah ! what would
you do ?

CHARLES : Such things can be ? A sister, yet
he strikes ? (HÆMON *is seized.*)

HELENA : O let me speak with him, sir, let me
speak !

CHARLES : Not now, girl, no, not now—lest in
his breath

Be venom for thee ! (*To soldiers.*) Shut him
from our gates

Till he repent this fever.

(HÆMON *goes quietly out.*)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

(To guests who are suspicious and undetermined.) If you stare so

Will the skies stop! Have I not arm in arm
Friended this youth and meant him honor still?
Leave me. I had a thing to tell; but it
Must wait more seasonable festivity.

(To PAULA.) See to thy mistress, child. Antonio, stay.

(All go but ANTONIO and CHARLES, who leaves his chair slowly and with dejection.)

ANTONIO : Father——

CHARLES *(unheeding)* : Did I not humble me?

ANTONIO : Father——?

CHARLES : Or ask more than a brevity of joy
To bud on my life's withering close?

ANTONIO : But, sir——!

CHARLES : If it bud not——!

ANTONIO : What thought impels and wrings
These angers from your eyes?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES (*slowly, gazing at him*): You're like
your mother.

ANTONIO: In trouble for your peace, more than
in feature.

CHARLES: Peace—peace? Antonio, a dream
has come:

To stir—to wake—to learn it is a dream—
I must not, will not look on such abyss.
You love me, boy?

ANTONIO: Sir, well: you cannot doubt it.

CHARLES: There has been darkness in me—
and it seems

Such night as would put out a heaven of hope,
Quench an eternity of flaming joy!
I have sunk down under the world and hit
On nethermost despair: flown blind across
An infinite unrest!

ANTONIO: Forget it, now.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Had I drunk Lethe's all 'twould
not have stilled

The crying of my desolation's want.
Within me tenderness to iron turned,
Gladness to worm and gloom.—But 'tis o'erpast.
A rift, a smile, a breath has come—blown me
From torture to an ecstasy.

ANTONIO : To——?

CHARLES : Ecstasy!

Such as surrounds Hyperion on his sun,
Or Pleiads sweeping seven-fold the night.

ANTONIO : And you—this breath——?

CHARLES : Is—you are pale!
And press your lips from trembling!

ANTONIO : No—yes—well—
This ecstasy?

CHARLES : Is love! is love that— How?
You feign! distress and groaning tear in you!

ANTONIO : No. She you love——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : O, Eve new-burst on Eden,
All pure with the prime beauty of God's breath,
Was not so!

ANTONIO : She is Helena?—the Greek?

CHARLES : She—Still you do not ail?—Yes,
Helena,

Who—But you are not well and cannot share
This ravishment!—I will not ask it—now.

This ravishment!—Ah, she has stayed the tread
And stilled the whispering of death : has called
Echoes of youth from me ! and all I feared. . . .
I think—you are not well. Shall we go in?

CURTAIN.

ACT THREE

Scene.—The gardens of the castle. Paths meet under a large lime in the centre, where seats are placed. The wall of the garden crosses the rear, and has a postern. It is night of the same day, and behind a convent on a near hill the moon is rising. A nightingale sings.

Enter GIULIA, CECCO, and NALDO.

GIULIA : That bird! Always so noisy, always
vain

Of gushing. Sing, and sing, sing, sing, it must!
As if nobody else would speak or sleep.

CECCO : Let the bird be, my jaunty. 'Tis no lie
The shrew and nightingale were never friends.

GIULIA : No more were shrew and serpent.

CECCO : Well what would
You scratch from me?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Should you, he must not come till two. For 'tis
At twelve the Greek will meet Antonio.

(NALDO goes, through the postern: GIULIA
to the castle.

*Enter HELENA and PAULA from another part of
the gardens.*

HELENA : At twelve, said he, at twelve, beside
the arbor ?

PAULA : Yes, mistress.

HELENA : I were patient if the moon
Would slip less sadly up. She is so pale—
With longing for Endymion her lover.

PAULA : Has she a lover? Oh, how strange.
Is it
So sweet to love, my lady? I have heard
Men die and women for it weep themselves
Into the grave—yet gladly.

HELENA : Sweet? Ah, yes,

CHARLES DI TOCCA

To terror! for the edge of fate cares not
How quick it severs.

PAULA : On my simple hills
They told of one who slew herself on her
Dead lover's breast. Would you do so?
Would you, my lady?

HELENA : There's no twain in love.
My heart is in my lord Antonio's
To beat, Paula, or cease with it.

PAULA : But died
He far away?

HELENA : Far sunders flesh not souls.
Across all lands the hush of death on him
Would sound to me; and, did he live, denial,
Though every voice and silence spoke it, could
Not reach my rest!—But he is near.

PAULA : O no,
Not yet, my lady.

HELENA : Then some weariness

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Has pluckt the minutes' wings and they have
crept.

PAULA : But 'tis not twelve, else would we hear
the band

Of holy Basil from their convent peace
Dreamily chant.

HELENA : Nay, hearts may hear beyond
The hark of ears! Listen! to me his step
Thrills thro' the earth.

(ANTONIO approaches and enters the postern.)

'Tis he! Go Paula, go :
But sleep not.

(PAULA hastens out.)

(Going to him.) My Antonio, I breathe,
Now no betiding fell athwart thy path
To stay thee from me!

ANTONIO : Stronger than all betiding
This hour has reached and drawn me yearning to
thee! (Takes her in his arms.)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : And may all hours !

ANTONIO : All ! tho' we two will still
Be more than destiny—which cannot grasp
Beyond the grave.

HELENA : 'Tis sadly put, my lord.

ANTONIO : Ah, sadly, loathly ; but, my Helena—

HELENA : I would not sink from it, the simple
sun—

Fade to a tomb ! What dirging hast thou heard
To mind thee of it ?

ANTONIO : Love is a bliss too bright
To rest on earth. With it God should give us
Ever to soar above mortality.
But you must know—— !

HELENA : Not yet, tell me not yet !
Dimly I see the burden in your eyes,
But dare not take it yet into my own.
Let us a little look upon the moon,
Forgetting. (*They seat themselves.*)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : Say, say it not! To him I but
smiled up—

But smiled!

ANTONIO : He knew not that such smiles could
dawn

In a bare world. And now is flame; would
take

Your tenderness into his arms and hear

Seized to him the warm music of your heart.

O, I could be for him—he is my father—

Prometheus stormed and gnawed on Caucasus,

Tantalus ever near the slipping wave,

Or torn and tossed to burning martyrdom—

But not—not this!

HELENA : Then, flight! In it we may
Find haven and new nurture for our bliss.

ANTONIO : Snap from his hunger this one hope,
so he

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Must starve? Push him who has but learned
there's light

Back into yawning blindness? Ah, not flight!

HELENA: I know he is your father, and my days
Have been all fatherless, tho' I have made
Me child to every wind that had caress
And to each lonely tree of the deep wood—
Oft envious of those who touch gray hairs,
Or spend desire on filial grief and pang.
And most have you a softness in him kept,
Been to him more than empire's tyranny—
But baffled none can measure him nor trust!

ANTONIO: Yet must we wait.

HELENA: When waiting shall but goad
The speed of peril?

ANTONIO: Still: and strain to win
Him from this brink.—If vainly, then birth, pity,
And memory shall fall from me!—all, all,
But fierceness for thy peace!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HELENA : My Antony !

ANTONIO : And fierceness without falter !

HELENA : I am thine,
Thine more than immortality is God's !
Hear, does the nightingale not tell it thee ?
The stars do they not tremble it, the moon
Murmur it argently into thine eyes ?

ANTONIO : Ah, sorceress ! You need but breathe
to put
Abysm from us ; but build words to float us
On infinite ecstacy. (*Kisses her.*)

HELENA : How, how thy kisses
Sing in me !

ANTONIO : From my heart they do but send
Echoes born of thy beauty mid its strings !

HELENA : Then would I lean forever at thy lips,
Lose no reverberance, no ring, no waft,
Hear nothing everlastingly but them !

(*A mournful chant is borne from the Con-
vent. They slowly unclasp, awed.*)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ANTONIO: Weary with vigil does it swell and
sink,

Moaning the dead.

HELENA: Ah, no! There are no dead
To-night in all the world. Could God see
them

Lie cold and wondrous still, while we are rich
In warmth and throb!

ANTONIO: Yet, hear. The funeral tread
Of the old sea sighs in each strain, and breaks.

HELENA: As I were drowned and heard it over
me,
It cometh—cometh!

*(Her head droops back on his arm. A
pause.)*

ANTONIO *(touching her face)*: Cold! cold!—
your lips—your brow!
And you are pale as with a prophecy!

HELENA: Oh—oh!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ANTONIO : Your spirit is not in you but
Afar and suffering !

HELENA : A vision sweeps me.

ANTONIO : Awake from it !

HELENA (*recovering*) : A waste of waves that
 beat

Upon a cliff—and beat ! Yet thou and I
Had place in it.

ANTONIO : Come to yon harbour, come.
The moon has looked too long on the sad earth,
And can reflect but sorrow.

HELENA : Ah, I fear !

(They go clinging passionately together.)

Enter CHARLES and CECCO.

CHARLES : And yet it is a little thing to sleep—
Just to lie down and sleep. A child may do it.

CECCO : If my lord would, here's sleep for him
 wrapped in
A quiet powder.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Sleep is ever mate
Of peace and should go with it. I have slept
In the wild arms of battle when the winds
Of souls departing fearfully shook by,
And on the breast of dizzy danger cradled
Softly been lulled. Potions should be for them
Who wrestle and are thrown by misery.

CECCO : And is my lord at peace?

CHARLES : Strangely.—Yet seem
For sleep too coldly calm.

CECCO : So were you, sir—
I keep your words lest you may need of them—
On the same night young Hæmon's father went
The secret way to death.

CHARLES : Of that!—of that?—

CECCO : Pardon, I but——

CHARLES : Smirker!—Yet, was it so?
That night indeed?

CECCO : Sir, surely.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : None. But you put not ill
My thought to it. His aspiration flags——

CECCO : Ah, flags.

CHARLES : New wings it needs and buoyancy.
My trust in him is ripe : the fruit of it,
He shall be lord of Arta——total lord.

CECCO : He begged no softer boon ?

CHARLES : Cunning ! again ?
Sleek questions of a sleeker consequence ?

CECCO : It was, sir, only of Antonio.

CHARLES : Worm, you began so. Stretch now
 to the end,
Or——will you ?

CECCO : I would say——would ask——and hope
There is no thorny hint in it to vex you,
To prick your humor——may not he be sick,
Amorous, mellow sick upon some maid ?

CHARLES : Have you so labored to this atom's
 birth ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Is a boy's passion so new under the moon
You gape at it?

CECCO : But if, sir——

CHARLES : I had thought
Would start up in your words some Titan woe,
No human catapult could war upon!
Some dread colossal doom, frenzied to fall!
Were it he's traitor gnawing at my throne,
Or ready with some potent cruelty
To blight this tenderness new-sprung in me—
I would—even have listened!

*(Noise is heard at the postern. It is un-
locked. HEMON enters, and stops in
consternation.)*

CHARLES : Keys? To—this?

HEMON : I—have excuse.

CHARLES : Perchance also you have
Them to my gems and secrecies? Shall I
Not show their hiding?—rubies, and fair gold?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HEMON: Mistake me not, my lord.

CHARLES: I could not: you
Have come at midnight—a most honest hour.
Enter this postern—a most honest way,
And seem most honest—Why, I could not, sir!

HEMON: You wrong me, and have wronged
me. I but come
To loose my sister.

CHARLES: As to-day you would
Have loosed her with a piercing—into death?

HEMON: Rather, could I! Antonio—yet neither.
Since you, not he, are here, my passion melts
Into a plea. Humbly as manhood may—

CHARLES: This fever still?

HEMON: This fever! Must I be
As ice while soiling flames leap out at her?
And passionless—as one cold in a trance?
Rigid while she in stealth is drugged to shame?
Be voiceless and be vain, unstung, and still?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

He is my son. His flesh has memories
That would cry out and curdle him to madness,
Palsy and strangle every pregnant wish,
Or bring in him compassion like a flood.

HÆMON (*contemptuous*): O——?

CHARLES: Never!—Yet, a lurking at my brain!

Enter PAULA, hurriedly.

PAULA: My lord Antonio! my lady! (*Seeing*

CHARLES.) O!

CHARLES (*strangely*): Come here.

PAULA: O, sir!

CHARLES (*taking her wrist*): Were you not in a
haste?

PAULA: I—I—I do not know.

CHARLES: Girl!—Why do you
Drop fearful to your knees?

PAULA: 'Tis late, sir, late,
Let me go in!

CHARLES: You have a mistress who

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Keeps quick temptation in her eyes and hair.

A shy mole too lies pillowed on her cheek—

Does she rest well ?

PAULA : My lord——

CHARLES : Ah, you would say
She sometimes walks asleep : and you have come
To fetch her ?

PAULA : Loose me, sir !

CHARLES : Or she has left
Her kerchief in some nook : you seek it ?

PAULA : O,
Your eyes ! your eyes !

CHARLES : I have a son : are his
Not like them ?

PAULA : My wrist, sir !

CHARLES : It was night, then—night ?
You could not see him clearly ?

PAULA : Mercy !

CHARLES (*looking about*) : Yet

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Perchance he too walks in his sleep. Were it
Quite well if they have met—these two that walk ?

PAULA : My lady, my sweet lady !

CHARLES (*releasing her*) : Go, for she
Still wonderful may lie upon her couch,
One arm dropt whitely. If you prayed for her—
If you should pray for her—Something may chance :
There is so much may chance—we cannot know !

(PAULA *goes*.)

(*Disturbed*.) This child who hath but dwelt about
her, touched

And coiled the mystery of her hair, has might
Almost too much !

HÆMON : You cloud me with these words.
Were they Antonio's——

CHARLES : If I but think
“ Helena ” must you link “ Antonio ” to it !
Can they not be, yet be apart ? Will winds
Not bear them, and not sound them separate !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

If angels cry one at the stars will they
But echo back the other?—This is froth—
The froth and fume of folly. You are thick
In falsity, and in disquietude.

Another rapture rules Antonio's eye,
Not Helena.

HÆMON: You know it—yet have led
Her to his arms?

CHARLES: His arms! Ah, mole to burrow
Thus under blind and muddy misbelief!
To mine is she come here. (*Terribly.*) Were he
a seraph,
And did from Paradise desire to fold her—
No mercy!—But, I will speak as a child,
As he who woke with Ruth fair at his feet;
Long have I gleaned amid the years and lone.
She shall glean softly now beside me—softly,
Till sunset fail in me and I am night.

HÆMON: This is a gin, a net, and I am fast!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : A net to snare what never has been
free ?

HÆMON : Still must it be this tenderness lives
false

Upon your lips.

CHARLES : “ Must,” say you, “ must,” yet
stand——

HÆMON : Then shall he rest—lie easy down and
rest

In treachery ?

CHARLES : He——?

HÆMON : Yes.

CHARLES : You mean——?

HÆMON : Yes !—yes !

CHARLES : Antonio ?

HÆMON : Is it not open ?

CHARLES (*confusedly*) : No :

Glooms start around me, glooms that seethe and
cling.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HEMON : This maid who called, did she come
idly here ?

You stir ? you rouse ?

CHARLES : A coldness runs in me.

HEMON : And have not I come strangely on
the hour !

CHARLES : It 'gins to burn !

HEMON : Not entered a strange way ?

CHARLES : You pause and ever pause upon my
patience.

"Twill heave unbearably !

HEMON : Then hear me, hear !—
Senseless against a bank I found a boy,
Hurl'd by some ruthless hoof. Near him this key
And writing——

CHARLES : Tell it !

HEMON : That avows, mid lines
Clandestine of purport, Antonio
And Helena, under these shades at twelve——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES: You bring on me a furious desolation.

But Fulvia, ah, she——

HEMON: Not there is trust!

She is aware and aids in his deceit.

This writing says it of her.

CHARLES: Fulvia? No!

No, no!—Though she had sudden whispers for him!

A lie!—Yet fast belief fixes its fangs

On me and will not loose me—for against

My hope she set a coldness and a doubt!

O woman woven through all fibres of me!

(*Starting up.*) But he——!

HEMON: Ah then, it runs in you, the rush
And pang that answer mine?

CHARLES (*quietly*): If they are still——

HEMON: Under these shades?

CHARLES: And—lips to lips——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

HÆMON : Ah, God !

You will ?—you will ?

CHARLES : Hush ! something—No, it was
But fate cried out in me, not any voice.

HÆMON : We must be swift.

CHARLES : It cries again. I will
Not listen ! He's not flesh of me—not flesh !
A traitor is no son, nor was nor shall be !
Though it shriek desolation utterly
I will not listen !

HÆMON : Do not !

CHARLES : And to-day
He shook, ashen and clenched, remembering
The guilty secret in him !

HÆMON : Still he's free.

CHARLES : My words fell warm as tears—“ A
rift has come,
A rift, a smile, a breath ”—men speak so
when

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : Convulsed,
Yet passionless ?

GIULIA : His words were low

FULVIA : Why were
You not asleep ?

GIULIA : I——

FULVIA : Did he beat his hands
Briefly—and then no more ?

GIULIA : I was behind——

FULVIA : And could not see ? But heard their
names ?

The Greek is still without ?

GIULIA : My lady, yes.

FULVIA : Your voice is guilty. How came
Hæmon in ?

Answer me, answer ! No, go quickly ! If
The duke has entered now and sleeps ! Or if——!

*(Words and swords are heard, then a shriek
from HELENA. CHARLES rushes in furi-*

CHARLES DI TOCCA

*ous and wounded in the arm, followed
by HELENA, ANTONIO, who is dazed, and
from the Castle side by HEMON, guards,
etc.)*

ANTONIO: You, you, sir? father? I knew it
not, so swift

Your rage fell on me.

CHARLES (*to a guard*): Gaping, ghastly fool!
Do you behold him murderous and lay
No hand on him!

ANTONIO: But, sir——!

CHARLES: Let him not fawn
About me! Seize him! God forgives not Hell.
Not this blood only but my soul's be on him.

HELENA: O, do not, he——

CHARLES: Stand! stand! Touch me not with
Your voice or eyes or being! They are soft
With perfidy, and stole me to believe
There's sweetness in a flower, light in air,

CHARLES DI TOCCA

And beauty in the innocence of earth.
Bind him ! Leucadia's just cliff awaits
All traitors—'tis the law, they must be flung
Out on the dizzy and supportless wind.

FULVIA : But this shall never be ! No, though
your looks
Heave out with hate upon me.

CHARLES (*convulsed, then coldly*) : You are
dead,
And speak to me. Once you were Fulvia—
No more ! And once my friend, now but a ghost
Whom I must gaze upon forgetlessly.
Obey, at once ! and at to-morrow's sunset !

(ANTONIO *is taken and led out.*)

HELENA (*falling at CHARLES' feet*) : You can-
not, will not—O, he is your son
And loves you much !

CHARLES : Touch me not ! touch me not !
(*To HEMON.*) Lead her away—and quickly,

CHARLES DI TOCCA

quickly, quickly! (HEMON goes with
HELENA through the postern.)

Friends— friends — (*unsteadily*) I am—quite—
friendless now—? (*Clutching his wounded
arm.*) Ah—quite! (*He faints.*)

FULVIA: Charles! Charles! my lord! return!
—A numbness

Has barred the way of soothing to his breast!

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

Scene.—A chamber in the Castle, opening on the right to a hall, curtained on the left from another chamber. In the rear is a window through which may be seen silvery hills of olive resting under the late afternoon sun: by it a shrine. Enter the CAPTAIN of the Guard and a SOLDIER from the Hall.

SOLDIER : There is no more ?

CAPTAIN : Not if you understand.

SOLDIER : That do I—every link of it ! I've served

Under the bold de Montreal, and he
For stratagems—well, Italy knows him !

CAPTAIN : You must be quick and secret.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : Our plans grow to fulfilment—are
No way misplanted ?

CAPTAIN : Lady, all seems now
Seasonable for their expected fruit.

FULVIA : No accident appears to threat and
thwart them ?

CAPTAIN : Doubt not a fullest harvest of your
hope.

The duke himself shall for this deed at last
Have benediction.

FULVIA : May it be ! He's quick,
Though quicker in forgetting. I will move
Him as I may.

CAPTAIN : The kind and wise assaults
Your words shall make must move him, gracious
lady.

Enter HÆMON.

HÆMON : I seek the duke.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA (*dismissing* CAPTAIN *with a gesture*):

You would seek penitence

Were you less far in folly.

HÆMON (*as going*): O—if he's

Not here, then——

FULVIA: Sorrow too would strain your lips,
Not cold defiance.

HÆMON: Pardon: if you know,
Where is he?

FULVIA: Was it easy to o'erwhelm
Under the ruin of her dreams a sister?

HÆMON: Better beneath her dreams than un-
der shame.

FULVIA: Your rashness cloaks itself in that
excuse,
Your ruth, and your suspicion that has doomed
One innocent.

HÆMON: One innocent! His thought
Had but betrayal for her!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : 'Tis the Greek

In you avows it, no true voice.

HÆMON : Then 'tis

My father murdered whose last moan I hear

Driven about me in this castle's gray

Cold spaces. And the dead speak not to lie.

FULVIA : No, no. You cannot brave your
action with

The spur of that belief.

HÆMON : What want you of me ?

FULVIA : This : ache and restlessness are on
you.

HÆMON (*impatiently*) : No.

FULVIA : And doubt begins in you that as a
wolf

Will scent the wounded quarry of your conscience.

HÆMON : After he lured and wooed her under
night

And secrecy ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : Not running there will you
Escape its dread pursuit.

HÆMON : He frauded—duped
His father's trust!

FULVIA : Or there! But one refuge
Have you against its bitter ceaseless tooth,
And that above the wilds of self-deceit.

HÆMON : Why do you wind so sinuously about
me?

No refuge can be from an hour that's done.
Shall we invert the glass or tilt the dial
To bring it back?

FULVIA : But if there were?

HÆMON : Where is
The duke—I will not bauble.

FULVIA : If there were?

HÆMON : I will no longer listen to the worm,
You set to feed upon me—torturing!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

The sun melts to an end, and with the night
Antonio will not be.

FULVIA : Yet there is time.

HÆMON : The duke is fixed.

FULVIA : No matter: 'gainst the swell
And power of this peril you must lean.

HÆMON : I——?

FULVIA : Yes.

HÆMON : You have a plan?

FULVIA : One that is sure.

(Steps are heard.)

But through those curtains, quick. For more
seek out

The Captain of the guard. The duke comes
hither.

(HÆMON goes through the curtains.)

CHARLES *enters, worn, dishevelled, and followed by*

CECCO. *He sees FULVIA and pauses.*

FULVIA : I come to plead.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES (*turning away*): Ah! Nature should
have pled

With her your mother, 'gainst conception.

FULVIA: Your trust is causelessly withdrawn.

Yet for

A breath again I beg it—for a moment!

CHARLES: A moment were too much—or not
enough.

Is trust a flower of sudden birth we may

Bid bloom with a command?

FULVIA: Ah, that it were,

Or bloomed as amaranth in those we love,

Beyond all drought and withering of ill!

But hear me——!

CHARLES. Leave these words.

FULVIA: Will you not turn

Out of this rage?

CHARLES: Leave them, I say, and cease!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Did you not, Fulvia, pleading for them say
They quailed but would not flee and leave me waste?

CECCO : She is not here, my liege.

CHARLES : Antonio !

Ah, boy ! thou ever wast to me as wafts
Of light, of song, of summer on the hills !
Soft now I feel thy baby arms about me,
And all the burgeon of thy youth, ere proud
And cruel years grew in me, comes again
On wings and stealing winds of memory !

CECCO : O, then, sir——

CHARLES : Yes. Fly, fly ! and stay the guard !
He must not—Ah !—down fearful fathoms, down
Into the roar !

(CECCO starts. He stops him.)

Yet he has flung me from
Immeasurable peaks, and I have sunk
Forevermore beneath hope's horizon.
Who falls so close the grave can rise no more.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CECCO : Upon a cloud whence it must spring
to night.

CHARLES : So low ?

CECCO : Sir, yes.

CHARLES : Ah, 'tis ? so low ?

CECCO : Red now
It rushes forth.

CHARLES : A breathing of the world,
And then !—Antonio !

CECCO : Again a cloud
Withholds.

CHARLES : Antonio !

CECCO : It dips, my lord.

CHARLES (*frenzied*) : O, will great Christ upon
it lay no fear !

Let it swoon down as if its sinking sent
No signal unto Death—and plunge, plunge thee,
Antonio, forever from the day !
Has He no miracle will seize it yet !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CECCO : The town? the town?

CHARLES (*rousing*) : Ay——?

SOLDIER : Mutiny! your haste!

CHARLES : O, mutiny.

SOLDIER : Sir, yes!

CHARLES : And do the ranks
Of hell roar up at me?—It is not strange.

SOLDIER (*confused*) : The ranks of—pardon,
lord.

CHARLES : Do the skies rage——?
They were else dead to madness.

SOLDIER : Sir, it is
Your guard beyond the gates.

CHARLES : 'Tis every throat
Of earth and realm unearthly has a cry
Against me and against!

SOLDIER : No, but a few——

CHARLES : You doubt it?—Are my eyes not
bloody? Say!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

SOLDIER : Sir ! sir !

CHARLES : My lips then are not pale with murder
Bitterly done ?

SOLDIER : Pale—no.

CHARLES : Yet have I killed ;
Spoke death with them—not reasonless—yet
death.

And all the lost have echoes of it : hear
You not a spirit clamor on the air ?
Ploughing as storms of pain it passes through
me.

Mutiny ? Go. I could call chaos fair,
And fawn on infinite ruin—fawn and praise.

(SOLDIER goes.)

Yet will not yield ! (To CECCO.) My robes and
coronet !

(CECCO goes to obey.)

I'll sit in them and mock at greatness that
A passion may unthrone. If we weep not

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Calamity will leave to torture us,
And fate for want of tears will thirst to death!

Enter CARDINAL.

Ah, priestly sir.

CARDINAL: Infuriate man!

CHARLES: Speak so.

I lust for bitterness.

CARDINAL: What have you done!

CHARLES (*shuddering, then smiling*): Watched
the sun set. Did it not, think you, bleed
Unwontedly along the waves?

CARDINAL: O horror!

Horrible when a father slays and smiles!

CHARLES: Not so, lord Cardinal, not so!—but
when

He slays and smileth not.

CARDINAL: Beyond all mercy!

CHARLES: Therefore I smile. Men should not
mid the trite

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Enchanting and vain trickery of earth
Till they no longer hope of it, or want.
Smiles should be kept for life's unbearable.

CARDINAL: Murderer!

CHARLES: Ah!

CARDINAL: Heretic!

CHARLES: Well.

(Goes to shrine and casts it out the window.)

CARDINAL: Fool! fool!

CHARLES: There are no wise men, O lord Cardinal.

CARDINAL: Heaven let Antonio's death under
the sea

Make every wave a tongue against your rest,
And 'gainst the rock of this impenitence!

(CHARLES listens as to something afar off.)

No wind should blow that has not sting of it,
No light stream that it stains not!

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES (*sighing*): You have loosed
Your robe, lord prelate—see.

CARDINAL: O stone! thou stone!

CHARLES: Have peace. A keener cry comes
up to me

Than frenzy can invoke: a vaster pain
Than justice from Omnipotence may call.

CARDINAL: My lips shall learn it.

CHARLES: “Father” moans it. “Father!”——
It is my ears’ inheritance forever.

Enter FULVIA

FULVIA: Lord Cardinal, one of your servants
has
In quarrel been struck, and mortally ’tis feared.
Quickly to him: then I may plead of you
Escort to Rome.

CARDINAL: I do not understand.

FULVIA: But shall.

CARDINAL: To Rome?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : Do not pause here to learn
With the dear minutes of a dying man.

(CARDINAL *goes.*

CHARLES : You baffle and bewilder.

FULVIA : Well.

CHARLES : You—?—Yes!

I am beat off by it.

FULVIA : 'Ten years of shelter
Have you held over me.

CHARLES : Ten years——

FULVIA : Whose days,
Whose every moment else had borne a torture.

CHARLES : Now——?

FULVIA : I, perhaps, must go.

CHARLES : Must?—Still I grope.

FULVIA : Must go! Though in this castle's
aged calm
And melancholy dusk no shadow is
Or niche but may remember prayer for thee.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : To Rome? You must?—I am under a spell.

FULVIA . We, thou and I, after the battle's foam
Or chase's tired return, often have breathed
The passionate deep hours away in rest
And sympathy.

CHARLES : Say on. Your voice—I marvel——

FULVIA : And at the dawn have looked and
sighed, then slow

With quiet clasp of fingers turned apart.

CHARLES : You go?—But, on!—your tone—
in it I feel——

FULVIA : Have we not fast been friends?

CHARLES : What hath your voice?

FULVIA : Such friends have we not been as
grow up from

Eternity?

CHARLES : You say it, and I wake.

FULVIA : Such friends—till yesterday you——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : Ah!

FULVIA : Changed sudden as the sea when com-
eth storm.

CHARLES : I had forgot—forgot!—the sun!—
the sea!

The sea!—Antonio!—The cliff—the surf!

The shroud and funeral fury of the waves!

FULVIA : Be calm.

CHARLES (*rising excitedly*) : I'll stay it! Cecco,
our fleetest foot!

A rain of ducats if he shall outspeed

This doom on us. More! more! a flood of
them,

If he——

FULVIA (*drawing him to his chair*) : Be patient
—calm.

CHARLES : I—I—remember,
'Tis night!

FULVIA : Yes, night.

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CHARLES : The sun's no more! It hath
Gone down beyond all mercy and recall.

FULVIA : Beyond?—Ah!

CHARLES (*quickly*) : Fulvia?

FULVIA : 'Tis hard to think!

CHARLES : You utter and he seemeth still of life.

FULVIA : He was a child in mimic mail clad out
When first this threshold poured its welcome to
me.

CHARLES : Softly you muse it, and call to your
eyes

No quailing nor a flame of execration!

You do not burst out on me? from me do

Not shrink as from an executioner?

FULVIA : I am a woman who in tears came to
Your strength, in tears depart.

CHARLES : And will not judge?
But fear me—fear, and flee?—You shall not go!

FULVIA : Perhaps——

CHARLES DI TOCCA

FULVIA : Your eyes look upon flesh, lord Cardinal.

(A cry is heard, then weeping.)

ANTONIO *(startled)* : Whose pain is this ?—
strangely it hurts me—strangely !

Enter CECCO hastily, bearing robe and coronet.

CECCO : My lord, the lady Helen's little
maid——

(Sees ANTONIO. Shrinks from him.)

ANTONIO : What of her ? Are you horrified to
stone !

Her maid ?—There are than risen dead worse
things

And worse to dread !—her maid ?

CECCO : Sir——

ANTONIO : Forth with it !

She direness of her mistress brings ? some tale

That earth elsewhere abyssless gaped her up ?

That butterfly or bud turn asp to bite her ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

CECCO : Sir—she—the maid craves audience
with the duke.

ANTONIO : Fetch her, and quickly.

(CECCO goes.)

FULVIA : Reason, Antonio.

She will but whimper, tell what overmuch
Of grief her mistress makes for you : of tears
Your sunny coming will dry in her.

ANTONIO (*putting her aside*) : These
Hours come not of any good, but are
Infected with resolved adversity.
This dread !—

FULVIA : They ever dread who have but quit
The shadow of some doom and the dismay.

Re-enter CECCO, with PAULA weeping.

ANTONIO : Girl ! girl ! Thy mistress ?

PAULA (*shrinking*) : O !—

ANTONIO : I am no ghost.
Thy mistress ?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

PAULA : Mary, Mother! (*Sinks praying.*)

ANTONIO (*lifting her up*): Look on me. See!
I have not been down in the grave, nor ev'n
A moment beyond earth. Do you not hear!

PAULA (*looking at him*): Sir!

ANTONIO : Tell me.

PAULA (*hysterically*): Go to her,
O, go to her.

ANTONIO : But, child——?

PAULA : She, O!—go seek her, O, she is——

ANTONIO : Where, Paula?

PAULA : Blind all day she moaned and wept.

ANTONIO : My Helena!

PAULA : And when the sun was gone,
Came quiet, kissed me—O, go seek her, sir!

ANTONIO : Kissed you——?

PAULA : Then to me gave these jewels. O!
And darkly cloaked stole out into the night.

CHARLES : Alone?

CHARLES DI TOCCA

ANTONIO : Whither, quick, whither ?

PAULA : Ah, I do

Not know : but she——

ANTONIO : Pray, pray, tell out your dread.

PAULA : Last night she said, “ My heart is in
my lord

Antonio’s to beat or cease with it.”

I learned her words—they seemed so pretty.

CHARLES (*gasping*) : Ah !

ANTONIO : Why do you gasp ?—Paula——

CHARLES : If she—the cliff !

ANTONIO : The cliff ! The—?

(*Staggers dizzily, then rushes out.*)

CHARLES : Let one go with him—bring
Us what hath passed—hath passed.

(*A SOLDIER goes.*)

PAULA (*with uncontrollable terror*) : My lady !

CHARLES : Child,

I cannot bear thy voice upon my heart !

CHARLES DI TOCCA

BARDAS : "Is 't not enough," she pled to me,
" Enough

That I must wander the cold way of death
Unto his arms? Go hence! There is no rest.
I will go down and clasp him, drift with him
To some unhabited gray ocean vale
God hath forgot. There will we dwell away
From destiny and weeping, from despair!"

CHARLES : You left her?

BARDAS : As I held her piteous hand
Came revellers who saw us—jested her
Of taking a new love. She broke my grasp——

ANTONIO : And leapt?—down the wide air?

BARDAS : Swifter than all
Prevention.

ANTONIO : Helena! O Helena!
That all thy loveliness should fare to this,
Thy glory go in dark calamity!

CHARLES DI TOCÇA

BARDAS : I saw her as she leapt and until death
Shall see no more.

ANTONIO (*drawing*) : Blot it from you ! Her
face,
Her sorrow and her fairness shall not stand
Imprisoned in your eye, tho' 'twere to cry
Relentlessly your crime.—But no—but no !

(*Sheathing his sword, he pauses, then staggers suddenly out.*)

PAULA : Let me go to my lady !

CHARLES : Still her ! She
Forever hath a fluttering, a cry,
Undurably. It presses the lone air
With sensitive and aching agony.

PAULA (*witlessly, in tears*) : I know thy song,
my lady, I know, I know !
'Twas pretty and 'twas strange, but now I know.

(*Sings.*) Sappho ! Sappho !
In maiden woe

CHARLES DI TOCCA

(Let alone love, it spurns and burns!)

Wept—wept, and leapt—

O love is so!

(Let alone love, it burns!)

My lady! O my lady! my sweet lady!

(She is led out.)

FULVIA: This is most sad—most sad, and pitiful.

CHARLES: I cannot bear her voice upon my heart

Enter AGABUS gazing into the air.

Again this monk? this dog of death?— and now?

AGABUS: My trusty Shadow *(Laughs madly.)*

Ha, he has been here!

My king o' the worms and all corruption!—

(Approaching CHARLES.) Lovers, and lovers!

O she leapt as 'twere

To Christ and not sin's Pit! And he is gone

To follow her! The devil's nine wits are

Too many!

(Wanders about.)

CHARLES DI TOCCA

This is not tidings—hath it not on me
Been fixed forever? It is older than
Despair, as old as pain! (*To HÆMON, who has
entered.*) Your sister——

BARDAS: Hæmon——!

CARDINAL: Hold him not in this anguish.

FULVIA: She and our
Antonio have left us to our tears.

(*HÆMON stands motionless.*)

CHARLES: Let no one groan. I say let no one
groan——

Fury on him that groans! (*He blindly rocks to
and fro.*)

FULVIA: My lord!

CHARLES (*taking her hand*): Well——come.

(*As in a trance.*)

There's much to do. We will think of the dead.
Perchance 'twill keep them near us: speak to them,
And they may answer while we wait, may float

CHARLES DI TOCCA

Dim words on moonbeams to us. O for one
That shall sound of forgiveness and of rest !

(More wildly.)

O I have started on the mountain's brow
A tremor that has loosed the avalanche ;
And penitence too late—too late—too late—
Was powerless as flowers along its path !

*(He sinks back into his chair and stares
hopelessly before him.)*

CURTAIN.