

The orphan child of fate.
I was cast out; the wind blew me here
On great brown wings; and I always knew
She'd rescue me; she had no choice
But to love me.

ELICIA: I almost feel sorry for her. You look hungry.

CALISTO: Starving. But I think I'm about to be fed.

ELICIA: Ha-ha.

CALISTO: Ha-ha. Your eyes are pretty when you laugh.

ELICIA: You will be true to her, won't you?
I have a heart....

CALISTO: Attractively enshrined...

ELICIA: And I feel responsible, since I've set her up.

CALISTO: My every thought is of Melibea.
My eyes, my eyes are all for her.

ELICIA: Sweet Calisto, your eyes are very dark.

CALISTO: Like my father's—deep, dark, there's nothing
but love in them.

PRIDAMANT: That's the look! See? In his eyes! The look
that said danger to me. A thousand times since the day
he ran away I asked myself, "Did I imagine that look?"
but there it is. It makes my blood run cold. I am glad to
have seen this. His feral stare, like a wounded animal,
dangerous, with teeth.... What might he have done to
me if I hadn't driven him out?

ALCANDRE: He's merely in love with his Melibea.
That's a look of love.

PRIDAMANT: Love, yes, but what does love mean?
Nothing. Anything can be called love, any sort of
emotion. I find myself enjoying this vision, this
vindication. It's delectable. Memory without pain. Like

eating a great deal of delicious food without the
concomitant indigestion.

ALCANDRE: As if you'd lived a life you never really
lived.

PRIDAMANT: It makes me feel immortal. Please,
continue. I watch gluttonously.

ELICIA: I will bring her to you,
Who is yours by fate.
I think she's simmered long enough,
And should be ripe for eating. Poor little bird. *(Exits)*

CALISTO: **The sun is setting!** — *Begin*
Just for me!

The moon is rising! Just for me!
My happy heart's crawled up inside my mouth;
It lies there like a frog,
Amphibiously glad to see the night descend,
Bubbling the name of my beloved:
"MMMMMelibbba. MMMMMelibbba. MMMMM..."
Heaven sparkles, mad with joy,
The earth spins round an ache.
I am its core, its point, its pearl—
I want, therefore it spins.

*(CALISTO starts to hide. PLERIBO enters. CALISTO stops.
They stare at each other, at first with a kind of confused
recognition, and then with growing animosity.)*

CALISTO: Who are you?

PRIDAMANT: Ah, it must be my son's rival, looking for
his lover; poor fool; against this sharp-billed shrike he
doesn't stand a chance.

PLERIBO: Who are you?

CALISTO: Calisto. Who loves Melibea more
Than he loves himself, or God,
Or the world, or all the world's riches.

PLERIBO: Pleribo. Who loves Melibea more than that.

CALISTO: I love her so much that if she asked me to cut off my hand I'd do it.

PLERIBO: Well, I love her so much that if she asked me to cut off one hand I'd cut them both off.

CALISTO: Well, I love her so much that if she asked me to cut off both hands but she didn't really want me to I'd do it anyway.

PLERIBO: Well, I'd do it too and I'd also cut off my feet.

CALISTO: Would you really do that?

PLERIBO: No. I mean, not really. I mean, who would do something like that?

CALISTO: (*Meaning it*) I would. *-end*

(*Little pause*)

PLERIBO: This is a private garden. You'd better leave.

CALISTO: Make me.

PLERIBO: Uh, I forgot something inside. (*He starts to exit.*)

CALISTO: (*Stepping in front of him*) No.

(*CALISTO slaps PLERIBO.*)

CALISTO: If you love Melibea, fight for her.

PLERIBO: (*Near tears*) But I don't want to fight you.

CALISTO: You have to. We're rivals.

PLERIBO: That really hurt! That really hurt! You...hurt me!

(*PLERIBO stares at CALISTO, then lunges at him. CALISTO knocks him easily to the ground.*)

CALISTO: (*Crouching beside the prostrate PLERIBO*) I did?

PLERIBO: Yes. I've never been hit before.

CALISTO: I could keep hitting you. And it would hurt more and more. But do you know what will make the pain completely unbearable?

(*PLERIBO shakes his head "No".*)

CALISTO: Melibea will come through that door soon. She'll see you beaten. It hurts to be hit. It will hurt much much more to be thoroughly humiliated in front of her. Don't you agree?

(*PLERIBO doesn't answer.*)

CALISTO: So I'm going to turn my back, and you can leave. Better hurry, because I hear her coming down. If I turn around and you're still there, it will be very unpleasant for you. Take my word for it.

(*CALISTO turns his back. PLERIBO hesitates, then crawls away.*)

CALISTO: My first rival bested!
It wasn't so hard; and well-timed,
My Melibea of the moon is coming.
I'll hide and await my cue. (*He hides.*)

(*MELIBEA and ELICIA enter.*)

MELIBEA: Is it safe? No one here?

ELICIA: No, ma'am, no sign of Ca...

MELIBEA: Ssshhhh!!! Please, for the love of God,
Speak that name only to murder me.

ELICIA: What's wrong with you, ma'am?

MELIBEA: I have a fever. I thought the night air
Would cool it down; it makes it worse.
I hurt.

ELICIA: Where's the pain?

CLINDOR: I'm thinking of my father. - *Begin*
 When they toss my trunk in the lime pit,
 And my astonished severed head in after it,
 Will you, father, in your house,
 Oblivious, half-a-world away,
 Feel some correspondent shiver in your spine?
 When the sun and lime have bleached my bones,
 Will your mouth, unexpectedly, inexplicably, go dry?
 I am the orphan child of fate,
 The hero of an old romance....
 I think this is the end of me.
 I can see the light grow green
 And the night recede,
 And the footsteps of the guards
 As they arrive at my door;
 I feel the irons on my wrists and feet,
 The weakness in my legs
 As we walk down corridors of stone,
 The chill of the early morning in the walled courtyard,
 The audience at attention, men my father's age,
 The hooded stranger with the hand on the handle of the
 axe
 And then....

PRIDAMANT: No...

CLINDOR: My fear's so great I think that I've already
 died,
 And then I wake up, to rehearse it all again.
 Why, in the depths of this open-eyed nightmare
 Do I cling to a vision of you, Isabelle?
 As though you can save me, by returning my love,
 As though, wrapped in your love, I can't be killed.
 I love you, Isabelle.
 I really think that's true....
 Oh, pardon, spare, forgive, relent,
 I don't want to die. — *end*

(ISABELLE and LYSE enter.)

ISABELLE: God should not forgive you, my breath, my
 soul,
 But beg your pardon for His villainy.

CLINDOR: This must be some illusion, some tantalizing
 dream,
 Or else some early torment sent
 To souls already damned....

LYSE: Not devils, sir, but
 Angels of deliverance, flapping iridescent wings
 And rattling keys.

(She opens the door to the cell. ISABELLE runs to his arms.)

ISABELLE: One more day apart from you and I'd have
 died;
 With this embrace we're both restored to life.

CLINDOR: I'm not going to die?

LYSE: Eventually you will, but
 Not for years and years.

ISABELLE: When death comes for you, Clindor,
 As Lyse is right to say it will,
 We two will have grown old and gray together,
 Faithful through life, through death,
 And till eternity ends.

LYSE: Yes, and there's no end to eternity,
 Or to Clindor's capacity for love.
 Come, before the dawn
 Wakes your father from his dreams of execution,
 We three must ride
 Far beyond the reach of his law and his rage
 To a freer, happier, more gentle land....
 As we descend on our subterranean voyage,
 I'll tell you a tale of the man in the moon....

ISABELLE: Oh, yes, Lyse, a story,
 A story of love...