

DOUBLE INDIGNITY

An Inversion in Verse in Five Scenes

By

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FIRST DRAFT

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CARABOSSE - UNLUCKY IN LOVE AND VENGEFUL

CARAMINION - HER YOUNGER SISTER

AURORA - CARAMINION'S DAUGHTER

KING EDMUND - A TWO TIMING BASTARD

PETROC - A GOOD LOOKING YOUNG MAN

AURORA'S NURSE - A TALKATIVE SOUL

LORD CHAMBERLAIN - AN OLD RETAINER

MADAME DETRUIRE - A VERY WICKED WOMAN

THE PLAY IS SET IN A ROYAL KINGDOM MANY YEARS AGO

The play is written with the following doubling in mind:

CARAMINION/AURORA'S NURSE

PETROC/LORD CHAMBERLAIN

AURORA/MADAME DETRUIRE

Don't take this play too seriously. It was not written with that intention!

PROLOGUE

Enter CARABOSSE. She is very angry. Perhaps there is a flash as she enters. Her enthusiasm for her woes tends to run away with her.

CARABOSSE

This tale is not the one you think you know.
The players bear a fair resemblance though
To those seen oft upon the bawdy boards
Of Pantoland. The land of tonic chords,
With men as women dressed, and oh so base,
With boy hirsuite played by a female face!
Damn Cinderella, Jack and Mother Goose,
Whose facile neck should really stretch a noose.
Damn Aladdin, wretched Widow Twankey
Other tales which engender feelings cranky.
Be thankful then it's lunchtime fare we pick
It's one o'clock and still no sign of Dick!

Such pallid joys are not, thank God, for us.
Here, life as 'twas lived, red raw, with much fuss
Will be the brief, mythic, yet awful tale.
Oh let man be humble, let female wail
As unveiled be the tale of Carabosse.
A woman wronged and vengeful, tempest tossed.
My crime? The same old, same old, nothing new.
I'll tell it straight: a man I thought was true
Was naught but flam, of naught but roguish hue.

King Edmund is the bastard's given name,
Like sweet Edgar's coz is he just the same.
Tall, passing fair; how cruel, shall I divulge.
His breeches show a large and pleasing bulge,
Wherein he keep such riches I can't count
Of coin and gold of unsurpassed amount.
He sought me out and wed me without pause
Such is my beauty, that was sure the cause.
And straight to breeding bed he led me on
And on and on and on and on and on.
And when I pleaded that he may desist
Over his eyes did pass that dread, red mist.
Vile shouts, abuse of dark, disgustful kind
Cruel sleights to body and distressed mind.
The king, nay creature, spoiled all I had
And never once did say that he was glad
That I was his and he was mine for life
A much adored and ever beauteous wife.
Nay. No. Indeed such never was the case.

There is a noise of someone approaching

A year since first he brought me to this place
Has flown. But hark he comes and now you'll see
How much my regal lord despises me.

SCENE 1

EDMUND enters. He looks at CARABOSSE with distaste. This is habitual as is his pride and refusal to admit fault.

EDMUND

Ah Dame, what do you here? Would you were gone.
Y'infect our house, our dreams, our life; so strong
That lowest toad should stomach far less sick
And bileful make. A habit we should kick
Are you. Of no avail our love to seek.
In kingly breast naught lives, the bond is weak.

CARABOSSE

My Lord, my presence clear displeases thee,
Though why your ire I goad I cannot see.
Why, so incensed, about my person rave?
T'is not the way the civilised behave.

EDMUND

[to audience] It preaches to its master and its Lord
As though we cared, its person not abhorred.
[to her] Madam, for the avoidance of all doubt
You're an encumbrance we could do without.

CARABOSSE

And what, my Lord, of holy marriage vows?
Eternity, the sacred rite allows.
But one short year alone has flown since wed.
You cruelly use my person, treat my head
As though my mind contained such mordant stuff
That barren heart alone could me rebuff.

EDMUND

Aye, barren, there's a word to conjure up.
That "barren" offers forth to date no pup.
No heir, no dangling babe, no suckling child.
No image of his father meek and mild
To whom we could our greatest wisdom teach;
To fire gun and after clean the breach;
To sup great quantities of gut-rot beer;
To wake next morn with eyes and aspect clear;
To horse and hunt and rip to death the fox;
To pose and, pouting, toss his lovely locks;
With boyish vigour in mock battle clench
And after dally with some comely wench.
This was all his father did dream upon
Yet with this barren all those dreams are gone.
The king does keenly mourn parental loss
And who's to blame? Why none but Carabosse.

CARABOSSE

Whose belly can with offspring greatly swell
When in the bridal bed the man won't dwell?
The charms which once I had for you are fled
Alone I sleep for you stay from my bed.
What then must I from this your absence think?
Perchance my voice it grates, my breath doth stink.

Or other parts fill you with such disgust
That my very self doth preclude your lust?
Is't so great king, who over all has sway
Or is it rather thou doth play away?
Tell me Edmund, is't true I make you sick
Or have you found elsewhere to dip your wick?

EDMUND

You are coarse.

CARABOSSE

'Tis you that hath made me so.

EDMUND

Suspicious mind.

CARABOSSE

Then tell me I am wrong, it is not so.

EDMUND

It is not so and we have told you oft ...

CARABOSSE

You think I'm dim or that my brain is soft?

EDMUND

Carabosse you have a false opinion.

CARABOSSE

Don't make me laugh. You're shafting Caraminion.
You made me scream with pleasure once I know
I wish I'd guarded treasure down below.
My dearest sister, young, unsullied, pure
Has ousted me, of this I am quite sure.

EDMUND

Your paranoia does you no credit
No one but you has stood up and said it.
Yet should we choose to take a second wife
And ditch the first to gain a better life,
What blame could be attached if her we chose?
She is Beauty. As fragrant as a rose.
Her cheeks are dimpled and her skin is soft.
Her eyes like fire. Her bosom swells and oft ...

CARABOSSE

Enough! Good Grief man. Spare me your excess.
I know her well. Each curl, each golden tress
Have I long combed from birth through early years.
Have sat attentive whilst in floods of tears
She spelled the terrors of her youthful mind
How she might pair with gentleman unkind.
Have been the rock whilst she, the shifting sands,
Dreamed of castles in far exotic lands.
Still far too young, but not so young withal,
I know that you have engineered her fall.
The innocence extinguished from her eyes
I saw with sadness but with no surprise.

Now she usurps my rightful marriage bed.
You've done with me. You're tumbling her instead.

EDMUND

You'll not be told it's very plain to see
Thus shall we not continue here with thee.

CARABOSSE

Tarry, but stay, and ponder what you do.
You throw me off and yearn for pastures new.
Yet in short weeks will novelty subside
Then once again we two will be allied
In misery ...

EDMUND

Of this no more we'll stand.
'Tis true we once were proud to hold your hand.
To whisper love beholding your bright face.

CARABOSSE

I have not changed, allow my rightful place
Beside your throne, your honoured, faithful queen.
A role of value you should not demean.

EDMUND

To smooth the worries from thy knotted brow
And stroke your face was pleasant, yes, I trow.

CARABOSSE

I will be yours if you but want it so
[to audience] I know him bad but will not let him go.

EDMUND

To kiss thy lips was pleasing, certain sure.
Thy neck, thy arms, thy breast, did I adore.

CARABOSSE

May do so still, you need but say the word
And all our fight will melt and seem absurd.

Beat as he considers, then decides

EDMUND

Yet are you void. No babe will come from there
So shall you never give us son and heir.
And thus do we decree with no pomp more
That we shall straightway leave you by that door.
And think on this: once gentle we'll allow
You now are changed and turned vindictive cow!

There is a noise from outside

We are in conference with our one time spouse
Who dares disturb the silence of our house?

CARAMINION enters. She is impossibly beautiful

CARABOSSE

'Tis not the time for you to come and talk.

CARAMINION

My Lord did ask if I should like to walk
With him. So don't I pray you now get cross
You wouldn't go, thus gain I from your loss.

CARABOSSE

See'st his purpose? Is't not th'intention clear?

CARAMINION

Aye and tell me what is't I have to fear?

CARABOSSE

You cork-brained sot with dust where should be sense
He'll throw you oer once void of innocence.

CARAMINION

T'is far too late for that!

CARABOSSE

Now shall I shout!

CARAMINION

I didn't mean to say ... it just came out.

CARABOSSE

"It is not so and we have told you oft"?
You think I'm dim and that my brain is soft.

CARAMINION

I only did what I felt right to do
My Lord was saddened by his loss of you.

EDMUND

My dear desist, beware her vengeful spite
Be humble, lower eyes, appear contrite.
Her temper's vile, her eyes with fire do burn
O! Cross her not or for some peace you'll yearn.

CARAMINION

I fear her not, nor all her fury great
I've seen all before, her jealousy and hate.
Let's leave her here to lose her seismic rag.

CARABOSSE

Yes off with you. Just go and have a shag!

EDMUND

My wife be still and shut your filthy mouth
It sure behoves you not to be uncouth .
With all your faults your better parts obscure.
We'll leave you now to curse for evermore.
But think on this and be it understood
That she and we are lost to you for good.

CARABOSSE

I care no more for you than I do she
Cursed be your lives for what you've done to me.
I'll find a way to cruelly be revenged ...

CARAMINION

But sister may not we remain as friends?

CARABOSSE

Run thou bitch! Take solace in his embrace.
But should a whelp be the resulting case
No sooner born, then shalt thou be bereft
And child will suffer instantaneous death.

She storms off and the scene ends with music as time passes