

CARDENIO

by Stephen Greenblatt and Charles Mee

Based on a fragment of "Cardenio", by William Shakespeare

Adapted by Reinaldo Maia

English version of the adaptation by Fernando Paz

CHARACTERS:

Rudi: a technician. (Val)

Anselmo: groom. (Danilo)

Camila: bride. (Simone)

Will: Anselmo's friend. (Bruno)

Doris: bride's sister. (Nani)

Alfred: Anselmo's father. (Carlão)

Luisa: Anselmo's mother. (Pata)

Susana: Anselmo's former colleague. (Bruna)

FIRST ACT

SCENE 1

(When the lights come up, we are in the country. Sounds of festive celebration coming from another room. Music. Laughter. Rudi enters, an Albanian technician).

Rudi: *(to the audience)* Some people just don't understand. Think I'm bullshitting them. That it is just philosophy... But an honest structure, simple, basic if you can, that's what makes the world a canvas. Strong, simple, where we can act like equals, same level field with the European theaters. *(The actors enter and assume a classic Renaissance pose on the stage. Music).* Structure! Because instead, all around you have baroque structure, a village party stage where social position, politics, economics, rich and poor, are nothing but an unbelievable speech, it can fall down! And it doesn't stand. Because everything in life is a structure. The plan of your day: first this, then that, then lunch... This is a structure! Because in life, this is what we need. Because why? Do you know why God invented time? *(Cuts music).* So everything would not happen at once... Structure! *(Music comes back in a faster rhythm).* And you have. It can be beautiful. It can be simple. It can enhance life. If you don't have a structure, the ensemble doesn't stand, a production doesn't stand, a man doesn't stand. You fall through it to the bottom, it makes you stand crooked all the time. *(Stops music).* Everybody dreams of a structure that is fair, *(vocal music)* that lets you breathe, that lets you be a free man and have children and have food and have love... Cause if you are always down, how can you make love, make theater? *(Instruments come back again. Vocals keep going on).* Where are you going to stand if you don't have a place to stand? In Harvard! *(Actors react and come back to music).* What can we do? Nothing! You come and go, come and go, but if you have no place to stand, then you are nowhere. *(Cuts music).* I'm not saying, what I do, it's like God, but almost. *(Actors leave. Will*

tunes the guitar. Rudi realizes his presence). Where shall I put it? Look at me! Where shall I put it?

Will: Ah. I don't know. What's this?

Rudi: The equipment for the series.

Will: What series?

Rudi: I didn't plan it. I am not the boss. I am not the person with the answer. I am the technician. I am coming to set the equipment. They told me: "Set the equipment on the courtyard!". Is this the courtyard?

Will: Yes. I don't know! It's here.

Rudi: Ok. I'll put it here, then.

Will: No. I don't think you can do that. This is where the wedding banquet will be.

Rudi: Wedding banquet?

Will: This is where the wedding banquet will be.

Rudi: When?

Will: Very soon.

Rudi: The person who asked me to set the equipment didn't know that? I mean, I will only be able to set the equipment tomorrow? I can put it against the wall?

Will: Yes. I think so. Just against the wall. Let me help you.

(They put the equipment down).

Rudi: It's a lot of equipment. I have more. I can bring it tomorrow. Because they said they needed a solid equipment. If people will watch it, it has to be solid, you know?

Will: Yes.

Rudi: So everything will not happen at once.

(They finish with the equipment. Rudi leaves).

SCENE 2

(Anselmo enters, glasses of champagne in his hands. He wears tuxedo, tie loosened, collar opened).

Will: What a perfect wedding, Anselmo! Absolutely perfect! You know you're the luckiest person I know to have married the woman you have married. Beautiful, sweet, smart and full of life! *(Silence. Will laughs).* You don't think so?

Anselmo: Sometimes...

Will: What?

Anselmo: I think she is not going to be faithful to me.

(Silence. Then, Will laughs).

Will: But that's insane.

Anselmo: Yes.

Will: I mean, that's completely insane, Anselmo. She loves you. I've never known anyone to love anyone as much as she loves you. And that's the sort of person she is, an absolutely faithful person, that's just who she is and she loves you in a way that will last forever!

Anselmo: Right.

Will: You don't think so?

Anselmo: Will, if you really were my best friend...

(They hear, outside, Camila's voice).

Camila: Anselmo!

Will: I am...

Anselmo: Would you help me?

Will: I will help you.

Anselmo: Would you do that?

Will: I would.

Anselmo: No matter what?

Will: No matter what!

Anselmo: Then do this for me. See if you can seduce my wife, so that I will know if I can trust her.

(Silence).

Will: *(laughing)* Anselmo, please, really!

Anselmo: You said you were my friend!

Will: I am your friend.

Camila: *(from outside)* Anselmo!

Anselmo: And so?

Will: And so, as your friend, I am telling you to drop this, so that you don't mess up what seems to me, as far as I have ever known, the best love in the entire world.

Anselmo: That's what I think, too. But day and night I hear a simple little thing echoing in my head: Camila is a perfect woman. And perfect women are vulnerable to seduction.

Will: Stop it!

Anselmo: I can't stop it. Camila is all the things I am not: she is intuitive and trusting, and bold and younger than I am. Not that she's so many years younger than I am and not that I am such a sophisticated worldly person really, but maybe I've just had a little more experience than she has and I think she might well feel that getting married just now, she won't have the chance to do all those other things she might have wanted to do.

Will: You mean love affairs?

Anselmo: People think of marriage as settling down, starting a family, having a home that's, really, a lasting home. Of course these things might seem desirable and reassuring, but still she might just long for a little more life experience. Do you understand?

Will: No, I don't.

Anselmo: What you find so delightful in Camila, what I find so delightful in her, too, her pleasure in things, her energy, her openness, the way she's game for anything that comes along, these are all wonderful qualities and, as it

happens, they are the qualities of a person who is ready for a new adventure.

Will: You might be just ever so slightly overly anxious, Anselmo. What I think is you need to trust what you know, and just know that she loves you and then, really, ease up.

Anselmo: I'll ease up when you've done this for me, Will. That's when I will ease up.

SCENE 3

(Camila enters).

Camila: *(sweetly)* Anselmo, sweet heart! Will you come in for the champagne or shall we come out?

Will: Oh, I'm sorry, Camila. I've kept him here.

Anselmo: No, we're just coming in.

(They prepare to come in).

Camila: Oh, Anselmo, please, let's have champagne outdoors!

Anselmo: *(happily, indulgently)* Of course. If you'd like that.

Camila: Come out, everyone! Come out! We are having champagne on the terrace underneath the sky! Where is everybody?

Doris: My God, how charming is this! A thematic wedding on the Cantareira Mountains! Champagne on the terrace overlooking the olive trees and the Cantareira vineyards! The little stone fortress on the hilltop in the distance and then in a little while we'll have a wedding feast under the mountain sun with the olio extra virgin and the free range chickens! It's a scandal! A scandal of joy! I mean: for you two. (*Everyone realizes she is going on too long*). Your true wedding from the heart just the way you wanted it... Joined together forever in matrimony by your dear friend Will! Saying what you wanted to say none of that stupid stuff priests and justices of the peace say but just saying all your own sort of stupid stuff about letting one another's trees be free to grow and about how neither of you will ever again feel the rain along the winding road... (*Camila leaves*). Did I say anything wrong?

(*Silence*).

Will: I'll get her.

(*Will leaves*).

SCENE 4

Anselmo: Doris, wherever did you get the idea that you're an amusing person at a party?

(*Anselmo leaves*).

Doris: Did I get it wrong about the trees growing? Did they not say that? And I didn't even get around to mentioning how special it is that Anselmo was so, let's face it, frankly obsessed with being married here in his mother's farm house. Why his mother's farm house? I mean it's lovely and SO historic, inherited from her ancestors from the 1st century before Christ or whatever. I mean, who cares if it's small and far away? But how is it then that his mother wasn't even invited to come? I mean, what is that, to have his mother's house and not to have his mother. To have a mother and not to have her. To have everything both ways. To have and have not. (*Calling*). Will! They are so romantic. They love you... They leave you. If only they could have you and leave you at the very same time, their lives would be perfect. Permanent romance.

(*Camila comes back*).

Camila: I think you should leave, Doris. (*Gives Doris a broom*).

Doris: Oh, Camila, dear...

Camila: No. A sister is supposed to be even better than a friend. But you turn out, as always, to be worse than anyone.

Doris: Oh, Camila, I'm so sorry. I never would have run off at the mouth like that if I'd known it would really hurt your feelings. I beg your pardon, dear. You know I didn't mean anything by it all. I'm just a superficial person with a sharp tongue.

Rudi: Cut!

Will: Camila, you know, no one takes Doris seriously.

Doris: I'm just a conversationalist.

Rudi: Everyone always at times like these feels a little tension.

(Silence).

Camila: You're right. You're right. At least, she is only one more guest.

Doris: I'm sorry, Camila.

Camila: I don't know what got into me. I might be just on edge because, you know... *(she bursts into tears)*. It's my life! *(Referring to Rudy)*. Who is he?

Doris: I don't have the slightest idea.

Rudi: Exactly! Exactly! There is more champagne inside. And you, Doris, just to show how sweet you are at heart, give the second toast.

(Everyone leaves, except Will and Camila).

SCENE 5

Will: It's been a beautiful wedding, Camila. And your husband loves you. And your guests soon will come!

(They look each other).

Camila: Thank you, Will. You're my best friend.

Will: Oh! Well! Thanks!

Camila: Shall we celebrate with champagne?

Will: Yes! Yes!

Camila: Come with me! Come on!

(She runs into the house. Anselmo comes from the opposite direction).

SCENE 6

Anselmo: So?

Will: Oh, Anselmo, she is crazy about you!

Anselmo: You tried to...

Will: I tried. I tried to flirt, she turned me away every time. She pretended she didn't even notice what I was doing.

Anselmo: Obviously, you didn't really try at all. What do you think? That I don't have reason to feel some anxiety? I tell you it's poisoning my life. Without some reassurance... Without proof that I can give Camila my absolute trust, I cannot let go. Even in bed I imagine someone else with her, and I cannot breathe. Now I want you to try again and, this time, to take it seriously!

Will: This is completely demented!

SCENE 7

(Rudi enters, feeling very proud of himself and does a little dance with his glass held high above his head).

Rudi: Here's to the bride and here's to the groom. Here's to the bride and groom together!

Will: So, let's have a toast here! Does everyone have champagne? All the guests on the terrace, please! Let's begin the toasts!

(Enter Doris and Camila).

Rudi: We're all here!

Will: Oh, yes. Doris and I have prepared a musical number to Anselmo and Camila.

(Doris' rock n'roll).

Doris: *(Camila dances and Anselmo gets a little shy)* Because women have menstrual periods! Because women have, women have menstrual periods! They're subject to chronic shortages of iron in their systems. They require constant infusions, constant infusions of meat! But because they were not hunters, they were never hunters, they had to find a way to manipulate men with sexual favors into bringing home blood-soaked dinners every night. And if the men were good at it, then to marry them! *(Doris goes crazy)*. Bring me a live pig for me to eat, now! Ten kilos of beef for my belly! And a bowl of hope!

Rudi: Have a beef stick! My God, Doris, what is this? My turn. My turn to propose a toast... *("Love, Love, Love" instrumental)*. To Camila and Anselmo, let them be happy forever, even though they might sometimes think: "Oh, what have I done, marrying this hopeless guy, this stupid jerk, when I see all these other men walk by and I could run off with one of them and no one would ever know." Of course it will never happen. It didn't happen with me. I, for example, I haven't had an affair of any kind, not a flirtation... You say nothing to reassure me? The truth is I feel like an isolated person, alone, always alone. The truth is I would rather live in a homeless person's shelter, there would be more warmth and companionship than there is living alone. I would rather live in the streets with a shopping cart full of my possessions. That would feel like a happier life to me! *(Anselmo starts singing "Love, love, love" to Camila - in a more romantic movement than Doris' previous song)*. Let's open the champagne! *(They start to pop the champagne with their mouth near the mic. Susana enters and immediately leaves, running after a butterfly. Luisa and Alfred enter. Silence. Then we hear the pop of a champagne cork)*.

Will: (*threatens*) I am going to open more champagne!

Rudi: We'll have a champagne cork popping contest! Who can pop the cork the farthest? Or how many corks can you pop at the same time? I will sing!

(*They sing "Don Quixote"*).

SCENE 8

(*Anselmo realizes the presence of his parents. Cuts music*).

Anselmo: Dad! Mother!

Luisa: Bravo! Bravo! That's the perfect location!

Alfred: Wonderful!

Luisa: What a perfect welcome!

Alfred: You couldn't have done better!

Anselmo: Yes! It certainly is! We weren't expecting you!

Alfred: No, of course not. It wasn't easy for me, I'll tell you, to keep my mouth shut. But your mother insisted it be a complete surprise!

(*Rudi enters singing "Besame Mucho"*).

Anselmo: Who is he? Mother, honestly, I don't understand. This is our party with our friends!

Luisa: Yes, we know, dear! But we had a very special present for you that we wanted to bring to you here and your friends!

Anselmo: Yes, but that's why we had the courthouse wedding before, so that you could be there for that along with aunt, uncle, everybody! So we could come here just with our friends to just have our own sort of wedding!

Luisa: Oh, Anselmo Augusto, I'm sorry, dear! We just wanted so to do something special for you.

Doris: I don't know, Anselmo Augusto, if you wanted to escape your mother you probably shouldn't have come to your mother's house.

Camila: How wonderful to see you, Luisa, Alfred. This is so nice, Anselmo, that your parents are here!

Luisa: And we did bring something for you that we think you will absolutely love!

Alfred: Your mother's idea entirely! I take no credit or blame, either! (*Alfred says King Lear's text. Suspense music*).

Luisa: You know, Anselmo, how your father and I have always tried not just to take any job that came along, this movie, that movie, but always to wait and to look for something

very special. And at last, we have received a special invitation from Harvard, to shoot a play by Shakespeare! A play that had been lost!

Anselmo and Camila: Honeymoon in Harvard!

Doris: I didn't know Shakespeare had lost any of his plays.

Alfred: Well, not that he lost... It lost itself!

Doris: Yep... Maps at the time should have been very confuse, also...

Alfred: It seems it has been Performed in his lifetime, but never printed....

Luisa: And so it disappeared...

Alfred: Like lots of other plays that disappeared - think of all those plays by Sophocles. 123 of them. Only seven left. And for all we know, lots of Shakespeare's plays may be lost. But Cardenio surfaced again in the 18th century... and then disappeared again! (*Rudi enters with the salad cart*).

Luisa: It's been recently discovered by Harvard.

Rudi: Whether it really is a play by Shakespeare or he just wrote a bit of it, the fact is that the old manuscript disappeared when the old Covent Garden went up in flames in 1804. Well, no one can verify how much Shakespeare is in it!

Luisa: But at least the version survived.

Alfred: *(to Anselmo)* And your mother and I are going to shoot it! We need the second part payment Harvard promised us as soon as possible!

Luisa: But, before that, we decided to shoot some scenes here with you!

Anselmo: Mother! I hate actors! I hate theater! And besides, nobody here is an actor!

Alfred: But that is what we need! Spontaneity! This is the mood of the shooting! That's is what we want!

(Everybody complains about the shooting).

Will: I don't think I want to be acting in a TV series...

Luisa: No, no... It's all right... We are very glad in doing this!

Alfred: I saw you act in college with Anselmo, Will. And the truth is you were a wonderful actor!

Luisa: And you don't need to worry because we brought with us from Rio de Janeiro a professional actress who will play the leading role in the series! She is an excellent actress and besides, an old friend of yours! She was the only one to follow a professional career!

Anselmo: Oh, no, no... I hate actors! I don't think I want to be acting in a TV series! You know, this isn't...

Luisa: "This isn't..." what does it mean? Anselmo! To take part in a lost play by Shakespeare attending to a Harvard request is a unique opportunity! You will read a lost play by Shakespeare! And we are going to shoot this screenplay!

Anselmo: And anyway, we thought we would eat and drink, and maybe people want to take advantage of being here and have a little day trip in a mall or a picnic in Ibirapuera Park, I don't know, but I don't think anyone thought they were going to have to be making a TV series!

Camila: Oh, Anselmo, really.... Luisa, this was so thoughtful of you.... Alfred this was such a...

Rudi: And a lost play by Shakespeare! How often do we have a chance to see something like that?

Camila: It's just very sweet of you and we all appreciate it very much. But, who is he?

Rudi: Very much. And to think this job will be shot! I'd be happy to take a role myself! My God! I hardly believe it!

Alfred: You see?

Camila: And so would I.

Anselmo: I don't think I want to be acting in a TV series.

Luisa: And what do I do with your old College acquaintance I brought to play the leading role? A real Shakespearian actress?

Anselmo: Take her to a convent, mother!

(Susana enters reciting some Hamlet lines. Instrumental music).

Susana: Hello, Anselmo... Congratulations!

Anselmo: Hello, Susana.

(Everyone applauds Susana's Hamlet monologue).

Everyone: Hello, Susana. Hi. Hello. Good to see you. Nice to see you.

Susana: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to just invade your wedding but your mother and father just...

Anselmo: Oh, no, you're not invading at all. We're all happy to see you.

Camila: Welcome. I'm Camila.

Susana: Camila! Hello! I'm happy to meet you.

Will: Hello, Susana.

Susana: Hello, Will.

Alfred: So. Is this a surprise?

Anselmo: Yes. Yes, Dad, it is.

Luisa: Now, then, children, here's the play we will do. The play is called: Cardenio. It's a play about love. What happens is Cardenio, a young gentleman, is in love with the lovely and virtuous Luscinda. But then it turns out that his best friend, Don Fernando, has Cardenio called away on some business so that Don Fernando himself can seduce Luscinda.

Doris: So, it's a love story.

Luisa: A love story. Well, a story of betrayal and duplicity and sneakiness. Because then Don Fernando...

Anselmo: Mother...

Luisa: Then Don Fernando decides to marry Luscinda himself.

Anselmo: Really, mother, that's more than...

Luisa: So he asks Luscinda's father ...

Anselmo: Mother, why don't... why don't... why don't we just remain in suspense (*suspense music*), and see how it turns out when you actually shoot the series.

Luisa: Oh, yes, alright. Good. Remain in suspense. Let's do that, then. You all know enough to see how we get started. Good. The foundation of it so to speak. So, we can have a few rehearsals, and then we can put it on here on the terrace under the stars.

Anselmo: All right. Good. Fine.

Will: Excellent.

Camila: Lovely!

Luisa: Now, here is the cast list: You will see, as we get into rehearsals, there will be some other roles to be given out and some doubling. Everyone will have a chance at something they can get their teeth into. But, for now: Will is to play the lover, Cardenio. Rudi will play Don Fernando, the duplicitous friend. Alfred will play Don Fernando's father, the duke.

Alfred: It's the role I will be doing.

Luisa: And Susana will play Luscinda, the female lead.

Anselmo: Oh, I think Camila should play the lead.

Luisa: Camila?...

Alfred: And yet: that's why we brought Susana.

Luisa: We thought, since she's a professional actress now it would be such fun for everyone to see her play the lead. And, you know: opposite Will..

Anselmo: No, no. I'm sure Camila ought to play the lead.

Camila: Anselmo...

Anselmo: If this is meant to be, in part, a wedding present for me, then I'd love to see Camila play the lead. You know, she is the leading lady for me now..

Luisa: Oh, well, that's...

Alfred: I don't think we can bring Susana all this way just to throw her back onto the unemployment rolls.

(Susana screams and starts running after a butterfly).

Susana: No. That's exactly as it should be! I'm relieved to tell you the truth. And now I will have a chance to take a vacation from rehearsals and see something of your city.

Anselmo: I'll take you for a little drive through the city to make up for it.

Susana: You needn't...

Anselmo: No, of course, you came all this way. I know you're happy to see old friends but, absolutely, I'll take you for a special tour.

Susana: Thank you, Anselmo.

Luisa: And yet, Anselmo, if Camila is to play the female lead, then really you ought to play opposite her.

Anselmo: No, no, mother, It's not real life, you know.

(Anselmo leaves with Susana. Enters suspense instrumental music).

Alfred: No, thank goodness no.

(Alfred takes the screenplay out from the middle of the salad cart. The screenplay seems to gain life and touch the people who, then, become characters. Everybody leaves the room attracted by the screenplay enigmatic force. Luisa remains seating by the salad cart).

Luisa: Oh, Umbria! Umbria! The olive trees. Bruschette, with fresh tomatoes and basil. Gnocchi, light semolina gnocchi and veal with garlic and potatoes. Fried sage. Little little green beans, still crisp, still warm, with fennel and olives. Barlotti, bracirole, Camosci, Caprioli, Cervi, Daini, Stambecchi. Oh! Mia Umbria! *(Rudi enters with a cassava in his hands and observes Luisa without being observed)*. A glass of wine, Brunello di Montalcino, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. Oh, to lift a glass of wine with

you, my love, your warm voice, your dark hair, your hands, your touch, my heaven, my love. (*Luisa realizes Rudi is in the room*).

Rudi: Madam, the cassava. There's the cassava to be collected!

Luisa: (*takes the cassava from Rudi's hands*) Oh, yes. Thanks, Rudi. Tell me something... Did you bring it?

Rudi: Sure, contessa!

Luisa: Just one more thing, Rudi... We need to have an intimate space. Can you build it?

Rudi: What kind?

Luisa: Any kind is ok.

Rudi: Yes, but, can you be more specific? I can build a dive, a pad, a cubby...

Luisa: A dressing-room!

Rudi: All right... Now it's clear! A dressing-room! All right, madam.

Luisa: Just one more thing, Rudi...

Rudi: Yes?

Luisa: Can you cook?

Rudi: Yeah, yeah...

Luisa: So, please, come with me to kitchen, I have some more little things for you to do!

Rudi: All right, madam.

(Both leave with the salad cart. Enter Will and Camila from the opposite side).

Camila: Still, I don't want you to speak to him about it.

Will: Nothing could be easier, Camila.

Camila: It's just that I don't understand, I'm a little bit confused. This is our wedding day. We haven't even had our wedding dinner and he's gone off with Susana? What does it mean?

Will: I don't think it means anything. He just, you know, he was so surprised for his parents to show up suddenly and Susana and I think he felt somehow, as the host, he ought to entertain her.

Camila: He could have asked you to take her for a drive.

Will: Yes. He could have.

Camila: Did he know her in college?

Will: Know her?

Camila: Did he date her?

Will: Oh, no, no. You mean: did he know her? No. Of course, I mean, he knew her, but he didn't know her. I mean he knew her as a friend or not even a really very good friend, just someone else who was doing plays in college. In fact, if anything, I think there was some tension between them. I don't think, I'm pretty sure they were never even in a play together.

Camila: Still, I feel so strange and alone. Anselmo wanted so much to have our wedding here and I was happy about it, to be in a place he loves and now I feel somehow abandoned.

Will: I feel, as Anselmo's best friend, there were things probably I could have done....

Camila: Oh, Will, you know, I don't blame you for anything.

Will: If only you would tell me what you think I could do.

Camila: You could stay someone I can count on, like the landscape, something real.

Will: Yes. I will.

Camila: The truth is, sometimes I wish he had some of your qualities.

Will: Oh, I don't...

Camila: Just your warmth and dependability.

Will: Oh, I...

Camila: You know, not exciting qualities.

Will: Right.

Camila: I mean, not that you don't have exciting qualities. I'm sure you do but, what I mean is, Anselmo is all sort of fire and darting, "oh, Camila, look here," he will say out of nowhere, "you see the way in Luca della Robbia's renderings of the virgin, she is a young girl, a very young girl, no more than twelve! Because he was perhaps the only Renaissance artist who really understood she wasn't a virgin at all, the point is--" he will say, because he's gotten so excited-- "the point is in Aramaic the word is 'almah', which was mistranslated in the Greek bible as virgin, whereas she was just a young unmarried girl, that's all it's saying in the Aramaic, this is what was shocking. Omigod, a twelve year old girl and pregnant, how can this be? it must be a miracle...." Instead of just sitting with me in a cafe, not saying much, looking at the passersby, holding my hand, maybe saying something nice to me about my hair. I mean, not that I think my hair is so interesting or that I am so interested in my hair, but just to sit quietly

with me, just be with me, as you are now. I mean, not that you and I....

Will: No.

Camila: Just that this is what a person likes and without that a person feels so lonely and alone.

Will: Right.

Camila: Just to sit in a cafe in the afternoon and you think, everywhere you look it's beautiful, everything you touch feels good...

Will: You think: it's the air

Camila: or: it's the way there are flowers everywhere!

Will: or, even, you think: it's the way they hang laundry everywhere in Bexiga. So that, everywhere you look it feels relaxed, and so much at home...

Camila: and you think: the Europeans know how to take pleasure in the every day, in a piece of bread with olive oil...

Will: so that every moment you are alive is a pleasure!

Camila: you relish every moment...

Will: Yes.

Camila: Plus I like Renaissance painting. Not even Anselmo knew what I knew about the Annunciation. That in Lippi's Annunciation, for example, you see the angel has come right into the virgin's house and he is talking to her and she is looking at him, they are meeting face to face, whereas in northern paintings of the Annunciation the virgin is always turned away and only LISTENING to the angel, not looking at him. Because the northerners, you know the Flemish were suspicious of icons well before the Reformation, were uneasy, it seems, even about the power of sight itself, but only liked the power of hearing or listening, because this is how grace comes to you if you are a northerner, I guess, through your ear.

Will: Right. Amazing.

(Rudi enters and keeps looking at them).

Camila: How's your Latin?

Will: My Latin?

Camila: You're still teaching Latin, aren't you?

Will: Oh, yes! Of course!

Camila: I love that.

Will: That I teach Latin?

Camila: Yes. I love that.

Will: You know, when I meet people - like at cocktail parties or dinner parties, everyone always wants to know what you do, they always define you by what you do - and they will say to me, what do you do, and I will say I teach Latin in high school and they will say oh! And then they turn away from me and start to talk to someone else.

(Rudi leaves).

Camila: I'm going to study Greek.

Will: You are?

Camila: I've always wanted to. And now I've signed up for a course at the New School.

Will: That's great!

Camila: It's hard to find a Greek teacher these days. Hardly anyone teaches it and there are never any students. But this one, it looks as though they will have enough students.

Will: Wow. That's great.

Camila: Right. And I think Greek is just, you know: amazing!

Will: Yes, it is. (*Silence*). Camila, I have to tell you...

Camila: Yes?

Will: This will sound strange to you, in a way. I need to confess, but also I think if you think about it, and I think it will be reassuring to you.

Camila: Yes?

Will: You see, Anselmo asked me to flirt with you and see if I could seduce you, so that Anselmo would be sure that you are faithful to him.

Camila: What?

Will: I guess because I don't know, but he has been feeling insecure. Maybe he feels he's not a lovable person and so he wanted me to test you to see if you would remain faithful to him.

Camila: To test me? Is that what you've been doing?

Will: No. No, absolutely not. I'm not going to do that. I don't want to do that, that's what I told him, and I'm not going to do that. Never.

Camila: (*starts having an attack of craziness... Takes her dress out and starts for Will*) This is completely insane! You're supposed to test me? On my wedding day? And he

thinks this is who I am, that I would take up with someone else on my wedding day? That I would what? Suddenly fall in love with another man?

Will: Right.

Camila: Is he crazy? Does he think I'm crazy? That I would just: what? Hang out with a guy, spend some time with a guy and find him so what? Compatible? So sensitive? So like-minded in some way? So simpatico or caring towards me that against my will I would find myself just falling in love with him, maybe without even knowing it? Just sinking deeper and deeper into a sort of what? Comfort level? And finally just deep deep communion?

(Will grabs Camila and tries to kiss her. She resists up to a certain point).

Will: Well, he can be a little hare-brained from time to time.

Camila: *(Frees from Will arms and runs around the stage. Will follows her, running)* A little hare-brained! Nobody ever heard of such a crazy thing. Now I think, do you know what I think? My god! I think: Who is this person I just married?

(Doris enters and starts running after them with a box in her hands. They stop).

Doris: Will, you'd better help Alfred... It looks like the Shakespearean parchment is on fire or something...

Will: The parchment? But now, Doris? I'm going! I'm going! (*Will attacks Doris and then Camila, again*). Alfred! The parchment! I'm on the way! (*Leaves. Camila and Doris stay*).

Doris: So Anselmo's left you already. (*Camila starts to cry*). It seems so thoughtful of him not to leave you in suspense for years and years, but just to ditch you right away and get it over with.

Camila: What?

Doris: Frankly, if it were my husband who ditched me like that, I'd sleep with someone else right away and put him on notice. (*Camila cries louder*). And why not, anyway? Everyone is unfaithful these days eventually. You might as well get to it, not be naive, because this is how your life will be from now on. As everyone knows, this is how it is to be married. What are the percentages? 50% of men have love affairs? 80%? And women, too. I always wonder, why should newlyweds have some brief period of self-deception, rather than begin at once to live like adults...

Camila: What? What are you saying to me, Doris? What did you say? Are you completely out of your mind? This is the advice you give me on my wedding day?

Doris: You wish I would be nice, you want me to lie to you, but what's the use of that? It's better you know now, right away, and not learn the way I did, taken by surprise, unprepared. More than anything, I resent being the last to know, the sucker who actually believes all the polite lies. To be honest, I've never understood, why I shouldn't tell the truth... I mean, the assumption that this is beneficial to the world to be nice, to be pleasant, is just unproven. Difficult people are always the ones who advance civilization. Anyway, here is my wedding gift! (*Doris hands Camila a box and leaves. Camila opens the box, but doesn't*

reveal the gift to the audience. Leaves the box on a chair and says the next lines referring to the box).

Camila: You'd think, if you marry, you'd learn to think clearly and think things through. And then it turns out you can't. And what you should have known from the beginning, you only discover in the end that infidelity is a terrible terrible thing. And now I think, I can't imagine ever beginning to want to have an affair with anyone, I'd rather be left alone in peace. I don't see how it's worth it. I can masturbate. I can get a vibrator. They have the most wonderful vibrators these days, like saddles, you can sit on them like a horse and ride and ride all you want to; it doesn't buck, it doesn't whinny, it doesn't talk, you turn it on whenever you want, and when you're tired of it, you just push its button and it stops. If you like you can get a little one that fits right in your undies, and you make it go with a little remote control, you can carry in your purse so that while you're out to lunch or at a wedding party you can be masturbating, while you're in the middle of a conversation, and when the conversation's over, no one has any hard feelings.

(Camila takes out from the box a "vibrator", revealing to the audience the gift. She is leaving as she crosses Luisa and Alfred, who come from the opposite side).

Alfred: *(on the mic)* All the cast members on stage please!

Rudi: *(enters, to Alfred and Luisa. During this dialogue, Will, Camila and Doris enter and take their places to the rehearsal)* A structure is a beautiful thing by itself, already without the play on top of it!

Alfred: Absolutely. Absolutely right! *(Luisa and Alfred look at each other and don't listen to Rudi).*

Rudi: May I ask a question about my character?

Alfred: Yes, of course, Rudi. (*On the mic*). All the cast members on stage please!

Rudi: Because a structure has proportions, it has harmonious relationships, it has the qualities that you would like to see in all human relationships. Balance, sensitivity one element for the other, accommodation... At times, it seems, almost compassion...

Alfred: All the cast members on stage please!!

Rudi: Almost tenderness. A mutual regard, the part for the part and the part for the whole or else it doesn't, it fights with itself, it wants to tear itself apart, it makes a person crazy with its "cacaphony".

Luisa: "Cocophony", Rudi!

Alfred: Cacophony! (*On the mic*). Everybody on stage, please!

Rudi: And what does a good structure aspire to? For some of us, we would have to say, a good structure aspires to symmetry, equipoise, a kind of self-possession and self-control. A sense of composure and of serenity... and... having said that, may I ask something? What does my character do? What's his profession?

Alfred: I don't know. I don't think he has a profession.

Luisa: This is a very American question.

Alfred: Very American.

Luisa: This idea that people are defined by their paying jobs. You need to just let your character define himself by who he is, not by what he does.

Alfred: Do you think Luisa and I, for example, are defined by our records of employment? (*At this moment, all the actors are on stage with the text and a candle in their hands. They don't manage to hold both things. During Alfred's lines, they prepare to begin with the rehearsal. Alfred and Luisa perform the introduction as if both were kings in a Shakespeare play*). Now, then, people, what are we doing here? What has brought us together?

Rudi: Harvard!

Alfred: Why are we here today? We are making art. A place to live where we have never had the occasion to live before and with people whose acquaintance we have not previously made. And why? So we can see what it is to be a human being. That's all. Nothing more. But, certainly, nothing less.

Luisa: (*instrumental medieval music*) And so, as actors, we won't want you to be just wallowing in your own private worlds. This is not about you!

Alfred: That's it! Will, this is just how you used to say jokes at college, remember? "Trippingly! But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-

crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness". Think of me as though I were your father! "Ooooooooooooooooooooo, it offends me to the soul!"

Luisa: Ok, Alfred! Silence!

Rudi: Clapperboard!

Luisa: All right, Will, remember you're in love with Luscinda, but you have been hesitating to approach your father, to get his consent for your marriage. For you're too poor compared to her! And this is tormenting you!

Rudi: Yeah, it's not like now, when people hang around and live together just like that... Well... Will plays Cardenio. Camila plays Luscinda. Action!

Luisa: And enters Cardenio!

Will as Cardenio: I do not see that Fervour in the Maid, which Youth and Love should kindle. She consents, as 'twere to feed without an Appetite; tells me, She is content; and plays the Coy one, like Those that subtly make their Words their Ward, keeping Address at Distance. This Affection is such a faint One, as will break untouch'd; die frosty, e'er it can be thawed; while mine, like to a Clime beneath Hyperion's Eye, burns with one constant heat... See how her Beauty doth enrich the Place! O, add the Musick of thy charming Tongue, Sweet as the Lark that wakens up the Morn, And make me think it Paradise indeed. I was about to seek thee, Luscinda, And chide thy Coldness, Love.

Camila as Luscinda: What says your Father?

Cardenio: I have not mov'd him yet.

Luscinda: Then do not, Cardenio.

Cardenio: Not move him? Was it not your own Command, that his Consent should ratify our Loves?

Luscinda: Perhaps, it was; but now I've chang'd my Mind. You purchase at too dear a Rate, that puts you to woo me and your father too; Besides, as he, perchance, may say, you shall not have me; you, who are so obedient, must discharge me out of your fancy: then, you know, 'twill prove my shame and sorrow, meeting such repulse, to wear the willow in my prime of youth.

Cardenio: O heavens! From what a Spirit comes this? (*Alfred starts reciting Hamlet's lines: "I am thy father's spirit, Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night..."*) I now perceive too plain, you care not for me. Duke, I obey thy Summons, be its Tenour Whate'er it will: If War, I come thy Soldier, or if to waste my silken Hours at Court, the Slave of Fashion, I with willing Soul embrace the lazy Banishment for Life since Luscinda has pronounced my Doom.

Luscinda: What do you mean? Why talk you of the Duke?

Cardenio: How the Duke took note of me I know not. But he doth write for me, requiring my instant Service, and repair to Court.

Luscinda: When go you?

Cardenio: Tomorrow, Love; so runs the Duke's Command.

Luscinda: O Cardenio, let me whisper what, but for Parting, I should blush to tell thee: my Heart beats thick with Fears, lest the gay Scene, the Splendors of a Court, should from thy Breast banish my Image.

Cardenio: O let Assurance, strong as Words can bind, tell thy pleased Soul, I will be wond'rous Faithful; and when I swerve, let Wretchedness o'ertake me, great as e'er Falshood met, or Change can merit.

Luscinda: Enough; I'm satisfied: and will remain yours, with a firm and untir'd Constancy. Make not your Absence long!

Cardenio: Fear not, but I with swiftest Wing of Time will labour my Return. And in my Absence, my noble Friend, and now our honor'd Guest, (*Rudi enters as Don Fernando and starts flirting with Luscinda*) the Lord Fernando, will in my behalf hang at your father's Ear, and with kind Hints, pour'd from a friendly Tongue, secure my Claim; and play the Lover for thy absent Cardenio.

Luscinda: Is there no Instance of a Friend turn'd false? Take Heed of That: no Love by Proxy, Cardenio.

Cardenio: Fernando is the Man I most do trust; He is my other Self, my inmost Friend. His Words are Bonds, his Oaths are Oracles, his Heart as far from Fraud as Heaven from Earth.

Luscinda: I liked not how his Eyes did fondle me, for it is Thee alone, Cardenio, whom I desire.

Rudi: Cut!

Luisa: Oh, yes, well. Good.

Alfred: Good!

Luisa: It seems you have almost some chemistry. Well, I think that's enough rehearsal for today.

(Enter Anselmo and Susana much at ease with each other).

Anselmo: Mother! Hello! Have you had a little rehearsal?

Luisa: We just did.

Alfred: Did you have a good drive?

Anselmo: Oh, wonderful! We had the best time!

Susana: *(as if in a scene on stage)* The city is so beautiful. And we saw the most beautiful Luca della Robbia it was so amazing and Anselmo said: "you see the way in Luca della Robbia's renderings of the virgin, she is a young girl, a very young girl, no more than twelve! Because he was perhaps the only Renaissance artist who really understood she wasn't a virgin at all. The point is, the point is in Aramaic the word is 'almah', which was mistranslated in the Greek bible as virgin, whereas she was

just a young unmarried girl. That's all it's saying in the Aramaic, this is what was shocking. Omigod, a twelve year old girl and pregnant, how can this be? It must be a miracle...." [Anselmo is beaming] Which was really true, it just seemed like a miracle, I mean the della Robbia itself and, of course, what Anselmo said about it, I mean, who would have ever thought of such a thing! He's an amazing person, your son, he's so...

Doris: Bright.

Susana: Bright, yes. Brilliant. I'd forgotten, you know. We haven't seen each other since college.

Luisa: Not since college, no.

Susana: And then he took me to see the Piero della Francesca's in this tiny little museum, where was it, Anselmo?

Anselmo: At MASP.

Susana: MASP! That's it! The pregnant virgin... and Anselmo said it used to be in a little chapel out in the middle of a field, and now it was here, all blue... the sweetest blue dress... and two angels one on either side of her, holding back a drape, as though presenting her pregnant belly. And the story is, if you visit this painting, then you will get pregnant, too.

(Silence).

Alfred: Extraordinary!

Susana: Yes, it was. We had the best time.

Rudi: *(enters)* Now, I don't want to interrupt anything, but everything is ready for your wedding feast! We can bring it from the kitchen.

(Everyone helps to prepare the wedding altar for the wedding ceremony).

Alfred: *(disturbing everyone who works to prepare the feast)* That's it! Let's party! Now, then, as for the seating arrangements, I think everyone can sit wherever they please, but the bride and groom must sit at the center of the table, bride on the right, groom on the left.

Luisa: No, I think bride on the left, groom on the right.

Alfred: Are you sure, Luisa?

Luisa: Bride on the left, groom on the right.

Alfred: Do you mean stage left or audience left?

Luisa: Stage left. Stage left.

Alfred: Ah, yes, of course. Good. Bride on the left, groom on the right. Now, Luisa, where are you, Luisa? We should be together at the table. You should come and sit with me. Because we are the model of married bliss. Married thirty

five years and as happy as we were on our honeymoon. Just to prove it can be done. Come, Luisa, sit here with me.

Doris: It would be great if there was a table! But this is a thematic wedding in the middle of the Cantareira Mountains! Among chickens! Without guests! Without characters! Just mosquitoes! Look at me, Alfred, I got stung all-over!

(The party is ready. The altar is ready in the middle of the stage. Will takes the guitar).

Will: Well, as the godfather, I'd like to propose a toast to the couple! *(Looks at Anselmo and starts playing "To Good to be True", instrumental).*

Anselmo: *(to Camila, at the other side of the stage. During his lines, he approaches the bride and, mixed with the text, sing parts of the song Will plays on the guitar)* I would like to propose a toast, if I may. Other toasts have already come before but, if it's not wrong for the groom himself to propose a toast, then I would like to propose a toast to Camila, my bride, because in truth, she is a wonderful person, an amazing person. I have to admit I thought at first she was a whimsical person and then, I learned, as time went on, no, this was not whimsy, this was a person so in touch with the feelings that come from deep within her, the unpredictable, surprising, inopportune impulses we usually try to cover up or set aside, because they unsettle us, or frighten us, our deepest impulses that want to set us out on a course in life we never anticipated, and here was a person who was simply unafraid of who she was, what she loved, what pleased her and delighted her and moved her, what caught her imagination, what stirred her desire. From the moment she came into my life, she made things happen. I have always been such an overly complicated person, looking at things from this angle and that angle, not just thinking but always re-

thinking. For a person like myself, I always thought, it's not possible for me to just abandon myself to my instincts, and yet that's exactly where Camila took me. I have discovered with her what deep pleasure there is in just committing yourself to the truth of your heart, what deep pleasure there is in that fearlessness, and I thank you for that, Camila, forever, for showing me the way to happiness.

(The bride and the groom sit on the altar and the wedding is performed. The guests sing the song Will plays and, after the chorus, Susana takes the mic and starts singing the second part of the song. Anselmo looks at her, amazed).

Rudi: I, too, would like to make a toast! People say in Harvard-! *(Everyone reacts, suspense)* -there's an old wedding tradition. A toast people always propose to the newlyweds, that brings luck, money and much happiness!

(Music explodes and everybody stands up to dance and sing. In the middle of the party, Camila throws the bouquet and Susana grabs it looking deeply at Anselmo. Suspense. Everybody looks at them. Black out).

END OF FIRST ACT.

SECOND ACT

(Music) .

Luisa: You've all read the screenplay? Doris?

Doris: Well, I've read my part.

Luisa: You haven't read the whole screenplay? From start to finish? So, do you have any idea how you fit into the story? Surely, everyone else has read the screenplay?

All: I've read the beginning and the end.... I've read the first ten pages... I've read part of it...

Luisa: Oh, dear. It seems you're all quite hopeless. Well, then: but at least you know what the play is about, yes?

Anselmo: It's a wedding party, mom!

(Silence. Luisa groans) .

Luisa: Ah! Alfred, can you tell them what the screenplay is about?

Alfred: Of course, to be sure. Although, in truth, I think it would be better for you to do it.

Luisa: All right. It's a TV series about love.

Anselmo: I'm sorry, Susana.

Susana: It's alright. It was just a little embarrassing.

Alfred: Exactly. And about jealousy and betrayal and heartbreak and lying.

Luisa: Love.

Alfred: Exactly.

Luisa: It begins with a young couple in love, Cardenio and Luscinda.

Anselmo: And yet I think I do. It's embarrassing and, what's worse, I'm afraid just horrible for Camila. And then I think even worse than that I should have known. And then, of course, I think: I did. I always thought oddly enough from the beginning that Will was a better match for Camila than I was.

Susana: Oh.

Luisa: They want to marry. But before they can get their fathers' consent, Cardenio is called away to the court of a powerful nobleman. And while he is at court, he becomes good friends with the powerful nobleman's son, Don Fernando.

Alfred: So here you have mixed in with the story of love, the story of friendship.

Luisa: Ah yes, and, as we will see, false friendship. Because Cardenio brings Don Fernando home with him, and no sooner does he introduce his new friend to his beloved Luscinda than Don Fernando falls in love with her.

Anselmo: I thought I sensed a comfort between them and a warmth that Camila and I didn't have.

Susana: And yet you married her!

Alfred: These things happen.

Luisa: In Shakespeare.

Alfred: Right. In Shakespeare.

Doris: Excuse me. I recognize that plot. Hasn't no one in this room but me read *Don Quixote*? What happened to your education, people? This is Cervantes' story, 100 percent. If this play of yours has anything to do with Shakespeare at all, it simply shows that Shakespeare was a thief.

Luisa: I beg your pardon. Shakespeare didn't need Cervantes. He himself told the story many times over and over again in his own words.

Alfred: Exactly. It's the whole plot of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Luisa: And the *Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Alfred: *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Rudi: Yeah... Yeah... *Midsummer Night's Dream*... Yeah...
(*To Luisa*). I don't have a costume.

(*Music stops*).

Luisa: Oh, you ought to have a costume, Rudi!

Rudi: Evidently there has been some mistake. I have been given a dress.

Luisa: Yes.

Rudi: A dress.

Luisa: Yes, exactly. You remember you have been rehearsing Dorothea?

Rudi: And do you say Dorothea is a woman? I am to play a woman?

(*Luisa, in desperation, turns to Alfred*).

Alfred: It's a big part, Rudi.

Luisa: There are not many big parts.

Alfred: And we thought you should have a big part.

Rudi: Yeah. A big part.

Luisa: Yes.

Rudi: I see. Yes. Well. Of course. A big part. But you didn't say I should be a woman! Of course, it is true, I have the range for it.

Alfred: Just as we thought.

Rudi: I will do Dulcinea with such delicacy and restraint, such tenderness that you will weep! I could also play Don Quixote! *(Takes away his woman clothes and, underneath, reveals his Don Quixote costume)*. Camera!

Anselmo: I was drawn to her, she seemed to make my life make sense and she awoke in me a feeling that I guess, as it turns out, I mistook for love.

Susana: Mistook for love?

Anselmo: And then, now, this is so strange, because I think Camila showed me how it was for people to trust their instincts and I must have known I needed to know how to do that in order to be any kind of human being at all.

Luisa: In any case, moving right along, when Cardenio has to be away from town, Don Fernando asks Luscinda's parents for their daughter's hand, and, despite her protests, her parents agree. Luscinda desperately writes to Cardenio who hurries home, arriving only in time to witness the marriage ceremony, or what he thinks is the marriage ceremony, from behind a curtain.

Doris: Oh, the good old curtain. What have playwrights done since they lost that curtain?

Rudi: These days everyone has to make do with projections. You know, those little cameras you can buy for next to nothing. They're much better than those old slide projectors and you can use them to spy on almost anyone. Camera!

Luisa: Cardenio rushes away in despair!

Anselmo: Susana!

Luisa: And wanders raving like a lunatic in the mountains...

Alfred: Like Lear on the heath...

Anselmo: I've been fleeing from my instincts all these years. I think this is what has made me such a confused person since, well, ever since we were together in college.

Luisa: Where he encounters a woman, Dorothea, who is also wandering in despair!

Susana: Together in college? We were never together in college. You didn't know me in college. You didn't know me the littlest bit in college. You hardly even spoke to me in college!

Anselmo: Well, you were dating that guy whatshisname!

Luisa: Exact!

Susana: Richard!

Anselmo: Little Richard! Right!

Luisa: But Dorothea tells Little Richard, I mean, Cardenio, that Luscinda hasn't really married Fernando and that Luscinda, too, has fled to the wilderness, and also Fernando, and that all four of you are now wandering around in these same mountains.

Rudi: (*again dressed like a woman*) I have the speech right here.

Alfred: Not now, Rudi. Not now.

Anselmo: And then, this is the extraordinary thing, I heard you sing and suddenly I felt my head go completely clear and there I was: no longer thinking about anything at all, this is what Camila meant all that time, just going where your heart took you, trusting your feelings above all and I just lost myself inside your voice, I thought: suddenly here is the whole world, inside your voice, this is where I want to live. The truth is, Susana, is that I...

Doris: And this is the end of the play?

Rudi: Cut!

Luisa: Almost, almost. Cardenio and Dorothea go to an inn...

Rudi: Action!

(Music).

Doris: This is absurd! This is a Cervantes story! This Shakespeare has no shame at all!

Luisa: The story is about a friend who seduces his best friend's wife. And the story ends for everyone in despair and death!

Doris: And this is the end of the series? I thought it was a comedy!

Luisa: Not quite the end! Not quite! There is a sudden reversal! By a fantastic coincidence, Fernando and Luscinda also wind up at the same inn. Dorothea reproaches Fernando for seducing and abandoning her...

Rudi: It's a great speech; I have it right here!

Alfred: Not now, Rudi! Not yet!

Luisa: And when Dorothea reproaches him, Fernando is ashamed and agrees to marry her. And so that allows Cardenio at last to have Luscinda. And so, of course: there is general rejoicing! It's a great love story! (*Music goes louder*).

Rudi: Cut!

(*Music stops*).

Luisa: Well, now that we already have the video clip, we may shoot the scene! Will, that is to say: Cardenio, you come in from stage left, looking upset. You have been hesitating to approach your father, to get his consent for your marriage. You are afraid that Luscinda's feelings toward you are cooling and, worse, now you have to tell her that you have been called away to court.

Rudi: Silence! Will plays Cardenio. Camila plays Luscinda. Music! Smoke! Candles! Camera! Action!

Camila as Luscinda: What says your Father?

Will as Cardenio: I have not mov'd him yet.

Luscinda: Then do not.

Cardenio: Not move him? Was it not your own Command, that his Consent should ratify our Loves?

Doris: Not move him? When would he be moved? He's been trying to do it since last scene! Will, you are a wuss!

Where would he be moved? To a new apartment? To a different city altogether? I pray he could be moved at least somewhere away from the Cantareira Mountains!

Luisa: You know, Doris, this is not helpful at all. There are people here who have work to do.

Doris: Anyway, these characters are paper thin! I thought Shakespeare invented the human. This doesn't speak very well for humans.

Anselmo: *(to Susana)* Susana, I...

Rudi: The truth is, I have to admit: I never did like Shakespeare.

(Confusion. Everybody speaks at the same time).

Alfred: Silence! Dad is speaking now! People! Really! Suddenly everyone's a critic! And a Shakespeare scholar, too, it seems! A little modesty, I think, would be in order. In some things, like the law of gravity, there is a true and there is a false. But in other things there are tastes and there are unknowables! There are mysteries! There are ineffables, there are simply what one person loves and what another person loves! And when it comes to love, as my father always used to say, *de gustibus non disputandum est*.

Luisa: Thank you, Alfred!

Alfred: You're quite welcome.

Luisa: Now, Will, if you will resume from where you left off.

Rudi: Silence! Will plays Cardenio. Camila plays Luscinda. Music! Smoke! Candle! Camera! Action!

Will as Cardenio: No? Was it not your own Command, that his Consent should ratify our Loves?

Camila as Luscinda: Perhaps, it was; but now I've chang'd my Mind. You purchase at too dear a Rate, that puts you to woo me and your father too; Besides, as he, perchance, may say, you shall not have me; you, who are so obedient, must discharge me out of your Fancy: then, you know, 'twill prove my Shame and Sorrow, meeting such Repulse, to wear the Willow in my prime of Youth.

Cardenio: O heavens! From what a Spirit comes this? (*Alfred starts reciting Hamlet's lines: "I am thy father's spirit, Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night..."*) I now perceive too plain, you care not for me. Duke, I obey thy Summons, be its Tenour whate'er it will: If war, I come thy Soldier, or if to waste my silken Hours at Court, the slave of Fashion, I with willing Soul embrace the lazy Banishment for Life; since Luscinda has pronounced my Doom.

Luscinda: What do you mean? Why talk you of the Duke?

Cardenio: How the Duke took Note of me I know not. But he doth write for me, requiring my instant Service, and repair to Court.

Luscinda: When go you?

Cardenio: Tomorrow, Love; so runs the Duke's Command.

Luscinda: O Cardenio, let me whisper what, but for Parting, I should blush to tell thee: my Heart beats thick with Fears, lest the gay Scene, the Splendors of a Court, should from thy Breast banish my Image.

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Cardenio: Fear not, but I with swiftest Wing of Time will labour my Return. And in my Absence, my noble Friend, and now our honor'd Guest, (*Rudi enters as Don Fernando and starts flirting with Luscinda*) the Lord Fernando, will in my Behalf hang at your Father's Ear, and with kind Hints, pour'd from a friendly Tongue, secure my Claim; and play the Lover for thy absent Cardenio.

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Cardenio: Fernando is the Man I most do trust; he is my other Self, my inmost Friend. His Words are Bonds, his Oaths are Oracles, his Heart as far from Fraud as Heaven from Earth.

Luscinda: I liked not how his Eyes did fondle me, for it is thee alone, Cardenio, whom I desire.

Doris: Honest to god this is tedious. First, he doesn't want it because he is poor; then, because he is afraid of his father. Will, you're really a wuss!

Rudi: Cut! Come on, Doris! Now that my mind was wandering a little bit!

(Confusion. Everybody speaks at the same time).

Doris: And mine wanders to jumping off in the Tietê river! You begin to think how can I get out of here? Can I just get up and walk out in the middle? Is this too rude? Can I climb over people?

Anselmo: Mother, I don't think you've really found a lost play by Shakespeare, and I can't believe it's been found by a Harvard scholar!

Luisa: Really, children, I don't think you're giving it much of a chance. Let's skip to the end. You'll get how good it is, once you see how it comes out.

Anselmo: It's had more chance than any play deserves!

Rudi: Silence! Clapperboard! Last scene!

Luisa: Cardenio and Luscinda. At last, after all you have seen - Luscinda's desperate flight from Don Fernando, Cardenio's mad jealousy. You have been reunited! This is the moment of ecstasy. Come now. No more rhubarb rhubarb.

Rudi: Will plays Cardenio. Camila plays Luscinda. Smoke!
Candles! Camera...

Doris: And you please stop repeating that all the time, for
God's sake!

Rudi: Silence! Music! Action!

(Music).

Will as Cardenio: Luscinda...

Camila as Luscinda: 'tis He. O Ecstasy of Joy!

Cardenio: What bright Star, taking Beauties for me upon
her, In all the happy Lustre of Heavens Glory, Ha's drop'd
downe from the Skye to comfort me?

*(As the scene goes on, everyone gets quieter and quieter,
more and more attentive, so that the entire scene is played
without any interruption at all).*

Luscinda: If wise Nature, with all her best Endowments, all
those Beauties she sows into the Births of noble Bodies,
were here a mortal Woman and had in her the coy Denials of
young Maids, yet doubtless she would run mad for this Man.
What an Eye, of what fiery Sparkle and quick Sweetness has
my Cardenio! Here Love himself sits smiling!

Cardenio: Blessed Garden, and Fruit and Flowers more
blessed, that still blossom as her bright Eyes shine on ye!
Would I were for all the Fortune of my Life hereafter, yon

little Tree, yon blooming Apricot - How I would spread and fling my wanton Arms in at her Window! I would bring her Fruit fit for the Gods to feed on; Youth and Pleasure, still as she tasted should be doubled on her. Oh let me press these balmy Lips all day, and bathe my Love-scorch'd Soul in thy moist Kisses. Now by my Joys thou art all sweet and soft, and thou shalt be the Altar of my Love, upon thy Beauties hourly will I offer, and pour out Pleasure and blest Sacrifice.

Luscinda: Stay, stay and hide, the blushes of the bride; Stay gentle night, and with thy darkness cover the kisses of my lover. (*Camila reads the stage directions as if they were a text*). They kiss and kiss and, finally, they kiss, a long, lingering kiss that is astonishing.

Doris: Well! The screenplay might not be any good, but the lovers certainly are!

Rudi: Doris! For heaven's sake, stop disturbing! The kiss! I need them to kiss each other!

Alfred: Absolutely! Bravo! Brava!

Rudi: Yes! Yes! But we need the kiss! Kiss her, Will!

Luisa: Very good! Very good!

Rudi: Without the kiss we can't do it...

Doris: Obviously, when the leading actors are in love with one another, they can play a love scene well, even without the kiss!

Camila: What?

Will: What are you saying?

Doris: The proof is in the kiss! Tell me, mr. Rudi: if they had kissed each other, would it be a fake or a real kiss?

Rudi: It doesn't matter if it's fake or real, Doris! I just need the kiss!

Will: I'm sorry?

Anselmo: I don't understand.

Doris: Well, you see how they behaved with one another...

Anselmo: Yes. Yes, I did.

Doris: And you can tell, I hope, the difference between a spiny hedgehog and a porcupine.

Rudi: The kiss! The kiss!

Camila: Between a what?

Luisa: Doris, please! Children, this is theater!

Anselmo: I don't know. I grew up around actors and yet I don't think I understand.

Doris: Well, I ask you, Rudi, as an impartial audience member: if the kiss had happened, would it be a fake or a real kiss?

Rudi: What's the difference? I just need the take with the kiss, please! Will you kiss each other or not?

Doris: I don't think you can hide any longer, you two. Clearly you're... entangled with one another!

Camila: Entangled?

Doris: Sleeping with one another!

Camila: Sleeping with one another?

Alfred: This is a TV series, for Christ's sake!

Will: What's happening?

Rudi: What is happening is that there is no kiss!

Doris: Exactly! What's happening?

Will: *(to Anselmo and Doris)* Are you two in this together?

Anselmo: Yes. I think it must be true.!

Camila: What's true?

Anselmo: You two: you're in love after all!

Luisa: Anselmo!

Anselmo: Did you see them kiss?

Alfred: Here, here.

Anselmo: The truth is, Susana, I love you.

Susana: You what?

Alfred: This is a mistake people often make...

Anselmo: I love you!

Alfred: Thinking what they see on stage is real!

Susana: You love me? You love me? Oh, Anselmo...

Alfred: Husbands and wives, all the time, unless they are actors, too, will think that what they see is real...

Susana: This is, this is horrible!

Alfred: whereas those of us who have been in the theatre know...

Anselmo: That's what I've been saying.

Rudi: The kiss! Just a little kiss, please!

Susana: Oh, oh, well, you know. This just won't do at all. I mean it turns out you are a completely dangerous person!

Anselmo: I love you, Susana! I love you!

Rudi: Love without a kiss doesn't go on! Kiss!

Anselmo: I asked you, Will, for a favor. I didn't ask you to sleep with my wife!

Will: And I didn't!

Anselmo: I think you did!

Doris: Obviously you did!

Rudi: Please, folks... In Shakespeare there is no explicit sex! The only thing missing here is the kiss!

Will: Anselmo, I say this as your friend: you are completely crazy!

Anselmo: I love you!

Rudi: Kiss! Kiss!

Doris: *(seducing Rudi)* Marriage! Everyone thinks they can just get married and all their worries will be over, but they never are. They say I love you, I love you...

Anselmo: I love you! I love you, Susana!

Doris: How did I ever find you, what luck at last to have found you. I've waited all my life for you, what kind of miracle is this. They say this and they say this, five minutes before they go out and grab hold of some other woman and take her with them to bed. Because men will cheat on you every chance they get, time and time and time and time and time and time again, and the sooner everyone knows this and admits it, the better off they will be! Do you think I'm glad about this? No! No, I'm not! No! *(Attacks Rudi and leaves, gone crazy. Rudi follows her).*

Luisa: *(while Doris leaves)* Now, now, Doris, oftentimes it seems a person has been unfaithful whereas, in truth, they haven't been at all! Now, children. People always make something out of nothing!

Camila: I'm not going to just stand here and let you accuse me of being unfaithful when you are the one who went off to the city on our wedding day with Susana!

(Everybody starts talking at the same time).

Susana: Excuse me!

Camila: And then you come back and tell me I have somehow betrayed you???

Will: Camila...

Luisa: I don't think, Anselmo...

Anselmo: I went on a drive in the country but it seems, while I was gone, and you were in rehearsals of a love scene you went ahead and fell in love! Susana, I love you!

Luisa: *(to Alfred)* People can't tell the difference any more between the real world....

Camila: I was here doing what you asked me to do and it seems you were off on a drive through the city flirting with another woman or falling in love yourself and then you come back and accuse me of doing something wrong?

Susana: I don't think I'm part of this. If you will excuse me! I can't get involved in a scandal! *(Leaves).*

Anselmo: Susana, I love you! I love you! I'm not going to be accused of something I didn't do! I'm not going to just stand here and take it! Susana! Susana! *(Leaves behind her).*

Camila: *(as he leaves)* Something YOU didn't do?

Luisa: Children! Anselmo! *(She goes after Anselmo)*.

Alfred: Luisa! Let's not all fly off the handle! *(He leaves after everybody. Camila and Will stay alone. During this scene, they almost kiss several times. But they don't)*.

(During this scene, Camila almost breaks down. She screams at Will, as though she were very angry with him).

Will: I'm sorry, Camila. Really! What a brouhaha! I'm really sorry. It just pains me to see anything happen that causes you pain. And I'm sorry for the part I've played in that!

Camila: Oh, no, it's not your fault.

Will: And yet, I think it is. And I apologize for that. Because I never wanted in any way to cause you pain or really even any discomfort at all.

Camila: I know.

Will: *(during this speech, Will starts to speed with the text)* The truth is, this time - these rehearsals we've had for the screenplay - these conversations we've had, just having time to be together a little bit, as we never have before - I've just begun to feel such sympathy for you, such regard, such admiration and such warmth, really, to be honest, it seems even tenderness!

I'm sorry. It's the last thing in the world I meant to do to make you feel awkward in any way. I mean not that it's bad in the largest sense, perhaps, to feel these sorts of feelings for another person but in the particular, in the specific, under the circumstances.... but ,then, as it turned out I, I, I couldn't help myself! I just, I just came to feel such affection for you. I don't know, I think, it could even be, when I think back on it now, when Anselmo first began dating you and we first met, I thought at the time, "oh, oh, what a wonderful person!" And, of course, because Anselmo was my best friend, is my best friend, it never occurred to me, that is, I guess I just filed my feelings away, as feeling good that my friend had found someone that I liked, too, as a friend and so I didn't notice how I felt about you myself. And I'm sorry, because the last thing I ever meant to do was complicate things for Anselmo or for you. But the truth is, I love you!

Camila: (*getting calm*) I love you too!

Will: What?

Camila: (*Will starts feeling guilty for Anselmo*) I liked you when we first met. I don't think it was anything like love at first sight but, now, spending time together as we have, just as you say, getting to know you, just being together, being in the same place with you, I find I just feel comfortable with you and I remember at first I thought, too, oh, good, I'm glad I feel really friendly towards Anselmo's friend, so we can be friends, too, and now of course it's turned out I feel uncomfortable with Anselmo. It just makes me anxious whenever he comes into the room whereas, whenever you come into the room, I feel relaxed, I feel good, I feel I can be myself and who I am is acceptable.

Will: Oh, yes.

Camila: And even you might think: I'm delightful.

Will: Yes. Yes. I do!

Camila: And I've come to think, this time we've had together here, just being with you, it seems to me: you're wonderful!

Will: Oh.

Camila: And really warm... And it would feel good just to be inside your arms. And to be in your arms for a long time... And to be in your arms while we were lying in bed.

Will: Oh.

Camila: Because I love you too!

Will: Oh.

Camila: And I see I'd like to be with you all the time! And go places together, come home together, make love! I wish we could have children together!

Will: Oh.

Camila: And then I ask myself: where did that come from? And I don't know. But I think: well, that decides it!

Will: Right.

Camila: Would you like to have children with me?

Will: Oh, yes, yes, I would. Didn't I, didn't I just say that? That's just what I was thinking!

Camila: And then I think: This isn't good.

Will: No. No. This is your wedding.

Camila: Yes.

Will: And we're celebrating your marriage. Everyone is here to celebrate your marriage. They've come for that.

Camila: Yes.

Will: And this could really just ruin everything.

Camila: Yes.

Will: Your marriage.

Camila: Your friendship with Anselmo.

Will: Yes. Right. Yes. And everybody's plans!

Camila: Exactly!

Will: And yet, I don't think I can just let you go. Now that I've found you! I love you! I love you, Camila. I just love the way you are! I love the way you move. I love the way you think. I love the way you just say what you mean and I think if we could spend all our time together, I'd just like to talk and talk and talk with you, because you know, I love your sentences and I love your clauses!

Camila: My clauses?

Will: And your verbs! And I think, I don't know, is this because I love Latin? Or now I think: do I love Latin because that's how you are and I somehow always knew, when I found you, you would be just like Latin? Because a language is a complicated thing and a beautiful thing... Just the way you are! You are the person I've looked for all my life and I was fairly certain I'd never find you and I know it's a miracle I did!

Camila: Will, the thing is, you don't have a single defense, you don't hide. I know just where to find you all the time! That's how I know I can count on you!

Will: Still, now, I think we had better find some place to hide, both of us together, because this is terrible! In many ways! To fall in love at this particular time!

Camila: Right.

Will: Even though there's nothing to be done

Camila: But, Will, oh, Will, I'm sorry, I don't think I can do it. This is not the kind of person I am.

Will: You're not.

Camila: No. Nor you, either.

Will: No. Well, possibly not...

Camila: I don't think we can just be together all of a sudden like this.

Will: No, no! You don't. Of course not. This isn't the sort of person you are, otherwise I wouldn't have fallen in love with you. You've just gotten married! I'm sorry, Camila. I don't know what I was thinking. I apologize all over again. I didn't mean to presume or intrude or whatever it is I've done. I'm just awfully embarrassed. The thing is, the best thing is probably I should leave.

Camila: Yes, I think you should.

Will: I mean not... just the room... but from the world! Maybe you would tell the others I've become suddenly ill or I had a call.

Camila: I don't know.

Will: No, of course not! That's ridiculous! That's completely stupid! I'll go into the other room myself and I'll say! I'll say... I don't know... Yes, well, of course, I'll say this whole thing was a terrible misunderstanding and I think the best thing would be for me to leave, leave you and Anselmo here to straighten things out.

Camila: Yes. Right. Thank you, Will. I think this is best.

Will: Right. So, I'll say goodbye.

Camila: Goodbye, Will.

(He leaves and returns).

Will: Still, what does this mean? That I am really leaving? Is that what I'm doing? Do you think this is the best? Is this what I have to do. Because I have to tell you: I treasure you, Camila! I'm sorry! I'm sorry to have said so! I'm sorry to feel it! To tell the truth, I'm sorry about everything really.

Camila: I... I just think I shouldn't speak. I'm just afraid I will say all sorts of things that I shouldn't say as a woman who is married to someone else.

Will: I understand. And, you know, I wish you all the happiness a person could possibly have in life because I

love you! I mean, because I have felt such closeness to you and all I wish is for your happiness!

Camila: And I wish for your happiness, too, Will, with all my heart!

Will: So, I'll say goodbye!

Camila: Goodbye!

Will: Goodbye!

(Will leaves. Camila faints. Rudi enters as if on another level, willing for the kiss to happen and for the scene just performed between Will and Camila to go on).

Rudi: No! No! Not like that! Get up! Get up! A lady does not faint like that! A lady must fall like a flower petal, not like a sack of iron! Never mind that women, just like men, Are made of clay and in truth may fall to the earth like a man. On stage it must be different!

(Enters Susana, followed by Anselmo).

Anselmo: Susana! *(Freezes)*.

Rudi: *(still as if he were on another level)* I asked you, Fernando, for a Favor. I didn't ask you to steal my Wife! How could it be? How could it be? My Friend! The Man I called my other Self - and now foresworn, a Snake, my mortal Enemy. I had once seen the Bird of Paradise, alone I

knew her haunts, and where she built her spicy Nest: 'till like a credulous fool, I shewed the Treasure to a Friend in trust, and he hath robbed me of her. - Trust no Friend: keep thy Heart's Counsels close. - Hast thou a Mistress? Give her not out in Words; nor let thy Pride be wanton to display her Charms to view; Love is contagious, and a Breath of Praise, or a slight Glance, has kindled up its Flame, and turned a Friend a traitor. - 'Tis in Proof; and it has hurt my Brain. But hold, 'tis I, I am the traitor. Fernando, my Friend, was but my Agent; he did my bidding. I am the one who must be punished.

Susana: I mean it turns out you are a completely dangerous person! I mean we don't know each other at all. We don't know each other. You hardly spoke to me in college

Anselmo: Because you were with...

Susana: Richard! Yes, Richard!

Anselmo: Little Richard!

Susana: And now I'm a person who's just recently been divorced and just come out from a failed soap opera, a total flop! I'm feeling a little fragile... to tell you the truth a little cautious about love or men or... well... life really!

Anselmo: You need a little time off.

Susana: Yes. Yes, I do.

Anselmo: Of course. Of course. I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to just jump on you. It's just that, when I heard you sing, I thought: I love you! And, in my life, I've felt a lot of feelings and most of the time I've repressed them and so I've been completely confused. But this time I heard you sing and I thought: this time this time finally you know exactly how it is you feel and either you will act on how you feel or you won't either you will have the courage to act on what you absolutely know to be the truth or you won't.

Susana: Anselmo, really! I mean, I really enjoyed our drive in the city, the Piero della Francesca, all those reds and greens no one has ever seen in nature and when we sat in a café in that sweet little park! What was that park?

Anselmo: Trianon.

Susana: That's it! But, Anselmo, probably you've forgotten but you've just been married.

Anselmo: Right. Right. No, I haven't forgotten.

Susana: And I've just been in a car wreck of a marriage. The failed soap opera! I'm all crushed and dented and smoking. Give me a break. I haven't even been towed into the garage yet.

Anselmo: Right! I beg your pardon! I'm so sorry, Susana!

Susana: You know, Anselmo, people have impulses all the time. But they don't need to act on them!

Anselmo: Unless, otherwise, their lives will turn out to be a tragedy!

Susana: Even then! Even then! What are you saying? Sometimes life IS a tragedy. There's nothing to be done about it! Even the happiest lives end up in graves!

Anselmo: And doesn't that make you think: "OK, then, if my life is going to end up in a grave at least let it be happy till then?"

Susana: No.

Anselmo: It doesn't?

Susana: No.

Anselmo: That's what it makes me think. I'll miss it enough when it's over, I don't want to miss it now. I'm asking you to marry me, Susana!

Susana: You're asking me to marry you? You ARE married, Anselmo! You can't ask a person to marry you when you just got married!

Anselmo: In the whole of your life, have you ever had such perfect ride in the city?

Susana: What? What the fuck are you talking about? A perfect ride in the city?

Anselmo: Susana, now that I've found you at last, after all these years, I'm not going to walk away from you Susana!

Susana: Anselmo. I'm going to walk away from you!

Anselmo: What?

Susana: I'm going to walk away from you! I am going to walk away from you, you crazy fucker!

(Susana leaves).

Anselmo: How can you do that? Susana! Susana, I love you!

(Anselmo goes after her).

Rudi: *(still as if on another level)* I give them the chance of an audition. What happens? Everyone goes crazy. And why? Because of the audition? No, of course, not! They are not all in one coherent psyche. What do they understand? That they cannot break the line of the story. Because then, the story will be interrupted in that point. And that drives me crazy. We cannot go on with the story, unless we make it an epic narrative. Where were we? Luscinda asks Cardenio if he does not mistrust his friend. He says he trust him completely, as if he were another himself. Could he have avoided this betrayal? Could he have imagined it? Certainly, not. So, he goes meet Duke Richard. On the fourth day of his absence, he receives a note and there he recognizes Luscinda's letter: "The word Don Fernando gave you that he would speak to your father, and yours would speak to mine, he kept much more in his behalf than in yours. In two days, the wedding will take place, in secret. Imagine how I fell. Praise God this letter reaches you

before I be delivered to the man who did not keep the word given!" Oh! Treacherous Don Fernando, who stole my Glory, murderer! What doth thou want? After I left you steal my dear I curse you, from whom I could bear Revenge, had I a Heart for that as I have to complain. Coward and dull I have been, and may now die coward, sorry and crazy.

Quem me causa tanta dor?

Amor.

Quem as glórias arruína?

Mofina.

Quem às dores me há votado?

O fado.

Receio que me é, pois fundado

Morrer deste mal tirano,

Pois conspiram em meu dano

O amor, a mofina e o fado.

Quem pode emendar-me a sorte?

A morte.

O bem de amor quem no alcança?

Mudança.

E seu males quem os cura?

Loucura.

Então em vão se procura

Remédio algum a tais chagas,

Sendo-lhe únicas triagas

Morte, mudança, loucura.

(Poem by Gregório de Mattos, Brazilian Baroque poet in which the poet confesses having been ruined by love and fate and declares only death or craziness may heal his wounds).

(Enter Will and Camila).

Will: You know, this just makes no sense to me, Camila. I don't think I can leave.

Camila: You can't?

Will: No.

Camila: What a catastrophe this all is! I've always trusted my feelings, and now they've led me into a trap. A double trap: I shouldn't have married Anselmo and I shouldn't have fallen in love with you.

Will: I thought Anselmo had gone crazy, but I'm the one, I'm the one who has fallen in love with my best friend's bride, on his wedding day, no less, with his parents looking on!

Camila: We have to stop.

Will: Right.

Camila: We have to think about other peoples' feelings, not just our own.

Will: Right. All the same, I love you and I will never love anyone else.

Camila: I don't think I can just go back with Anselmo and live with him and you and I would be lovers.

Will: No! No! I mean... you don't, do you?

Camila: No.

Will: Because if that's what you really would like to say...

Camila: No. No, I couldn't do that.

Will: No, thank god. Neither could I. It seems to me if I were the sort of man I've never wanted to be I'd know just what to do now! I'd just take you and leave with you and to hell with the series!

Camila: Right. Or you could kill Anselmo.

Will: What?

Camila: You know, you could kill him. You could take him for a ride and there could be an accident.

Will: An accident. He could fall into a river.

Camila: Or you could just go out hunting for mushrooms and you would bring back a poison mushroom for his pasta.

Will: Or there could be a dreadful automobile accident on the way back from a ride. I would have had to stop off someplace. Or I could take my bike to ride back, and his steering wheel could be disconnected and he would go right off a mountain road and plunge into the Tietê river.

Camila: The point is: better cuckold than dead!

Will: Right. Whatever happens he'll still be alive with lots of chances to make a life for himself a happier life than one married to a woman who loves someone else.

Camila: This is true. Still, I wish we could find some way to leave that doesn't make Anselmo feel humiliated, that lets everyone leave more or less intact so that they can nurse their wounds in some private place of their own choosing rather than feel exposed as well as hurt.

Will: Right. Probably what we should do is what Anselmo asked me to do: I should flirt with you. But I should flirt with you in such a way that everyone can see me do it and everyone can see you turn me down. So that will be established that you are faithful to Anselmo. And then everyone can leave. And then, when we get back to reality, you can speak privately to Anselmo and we can be together! And even though everyone will look back and realize that we were lying, in a way that's as thoughtful as we can be of everyone else's lives. I think it's the most considerate thing to do.

Camila: Where can we do this?

Will: We could do it in the dressing-room, while everyone is on the stage.

Camila: Except then no one will be able to hear us!

Will: No. We can figure this out.

Camila: We can do it in the dressing-room. We can turn the camera on so that everyone will hear us on the stage. Then, you can flirt with me and I can turn you down. Then, I can

run out on the terrace and be surprised to find everyone standing there.

(Enters Rudi on another level, together with Doris).

Rudi: Right. Good. Yes. That's excellent. He could say: "I love you, Camila, as Anselmo doesn't and as he never will. I will treasure you and treasure you forever!" And she could say: "No!", "No!".

Doris: And then he could say: "Yes, you can count on me as you would count on the earth itself! I will be here for you forever!"

Rudi: And then she could say: "But, Will, you know I will always be faithful to Anselmo! Faithful and true and steadfast!"

Doris: And he could say: "And yet I love you as no one has ever loved you before!"

Rudi: And then she could say: "Will, try to understand: there is no greater treasure than fidelity. It is the only refuge for any human being in a life so uncertain in its entirety and in its every moment every day!" And then he'll try to kiss her and she will say...

Doris: "No! No Let go of me!". And out of the kitchen onto the terrace where everyone will be standing!

(Enter Luisa, Alfred, Anselmo and Susana).

Luisa: What's going on here?

Rudi: Silence! Silence, please! They are acting! They will kiss each other!

(Will and Camila continue the scene in soap opera mood. Everybody watches).

Will: Still, Camila, I love you as Anselmo doesn't and as he never will!

Camila: No...

Will: Yes. You can count on me as you would count on the earth itself. I will be here for you forever!

Camila: But, Will, you know I will always be as faithful to Anselmo as he has been to me. I would only ever deal with him with the same candor he has shown me. I would only ever be as honest, as true, as steadfast as he has been to me!

Will: And yet I love you as no one has ever loved you before!

Camila: Will, try to understand: there is no greater treasure than fidelity. How can we go from day to day if there is nothing in the world we can depend upon? No. There is one vow I intend to keep in my life and that is I will be absolutely faithful to my one true love.

Will: But, Camila, come away with me now. Come away with me this minute.

Camila: No, Will. No! Let go of me, Will! Let go!

Doris: What scene are they rehearsing?

(We hear the sounds of scuffling).

Will: But, Camila! Camila! Don't run away!

Rudi: The kiss! The kiss! Kiss her! Kiss her! Kiss her! It can't be like that! I need that kiss!

(Camila bursts out onto the stage, and meets everybody).

Anselmo: I heard you saying you were completely faithful to me, Camila.

Camila: Of course I was, Anselmo.

Anselmo: And the truth is: I put Will up to it.

Luisa: What?

Anselmo: When Camila and I were married, I was afraid she wouldn't be faithful to me, that's all, it's as simple as

that, and then I did something just absolutely deranged. I asked Will, as my friend, to try to seduce her to see if she would be faithful to me.

Alfred: What?

Luisa: Oh, Anselmo, on your wedding day!

Doris: This is completely disgusting!

Anselmo: Yes. Yes, it is. But, meanwhile, as if this weren't bad enough, I've been a worse person even than this... Because, while I was doubting whether Camila would be faithful to me, I've been unfaithful to her.

Camila: You what?

Will: What's this?

Luisa: Anselmo!

Alfred: My god, what's happening?

Anselmo: I can't go on without being completely truthful with all of you, my good friends, or you have been until this moment, and perhaps now you never will be again. But I have fallen in love with Susana.

Camila: Susana?

Luisa: Susana!

Alfred: Oh my god. See what we've done, Luisa?

Luisa: How could this have happened?

Alfred: Anselmo...

Anselmo: I'm sorry, Dad. I apologize to everyone, really, but especially to you, Camila. But, since this has happened, as terrible as it is, I thought it would at least be best for me to be honest with you now. To say, as dreadful a thing as it is to say, I can't go ahead with our marriage now.

Camila: No.

Luisa: No!

Anselmo: I apologize and apologize to you, Camila. You are such a good, sweet, warm, fine person... and I have been nothing but dishonest and confused and so manipulative and cruel and thoughtless... While all this time you have been so generous and forgiving, all a person would hope to find in another person. I am so sorry, Camila. I'm not asking for your forgiveness some things in life just should never be forgiven. That's just the way it is.

Luisa: And, what? What does Susana say after Alfred and I brought you here? Are you in love with Anselmo?

Susana: I told Anselmo I've just come from a ruined marriage myself. I can't think of just suddenly falling in love just throwing myself into someone else's arms as though I were a teenager.

Camila: No. Of course. But do you love him?

(Silence).

Susana: Yes. I've always loved him. Since college.

Luisa: And will you marry him?

Susana: Yes. I will!

Luisa: Will you marry Susana, Anselmo?

Anselmo: Yes. Yes, I will!

Doris: Well, there's a mature decision! What are the odds here, Anselmo, that your second marriage will last as long as your first?

Luisa: Doris!

Camila: Doris, I wish you had left before you ever came. As badly as everyone has behaved, I think you've been the worst because, of everyone, you are the only one who just wants everything to turn out badly because that will prove that you have always been right about everything all the time!

Doris: Camila...

Camila: You should leave now, Doris. Before you ruin something else. I'm sorry this is how you are, but you are a kind of curse!

Doris: Camila...

Camila: I mean it!

Will: I think it would be best for you to leave, Doris, really: for everyone!

Anselmo: The truth is, you haven't been a very positive presence.

Rudi: Honestly, Doris, No one likes you, Doris. If you want to know the truth, what people say behind your back is that they can't stand you and they never could.

Luisa: I'm sorry, Doris. But I think you need to go.

Doris: *(as a witch)* OK. Good. Fine. I see, in any case, that none of you needs a malicious person to throw your lives into turmoil when you do such perfect job all by yourselves. But don't think, just because I make things convenient for you now, I'm not going to come back into your lives. You can't get rid of me. I am your sister, Camila. You haven't seen the last of me, any of you. *(She leaves)*.

Luisa: Well.

Alfred: So.

Anselmo: Perhaps, really, it's time for all of us to leave. It may be we could all use a little time by ourselves to put things back together. In any case, I think probably it would be best for me to leave with Susana and leave the rest of you in peace.

Camila: *(very sweet)* Anselmo, I don't want you to slink away in shame. A person should never be ashamed of love, however it may have come to them, whatever promises they've had to break, whatever things they've done that they wish they hadn't. When a person finds the love they believe will be their lifelong love, I know, the choice is no longer theirs. But, even if it's the biggest gamble you have ever taken and no one knows if it can last, a person has to take it. Because if you're not going to gamble on love, what should you gamble on? And so, I wish you every happiness.

Anselmo: Thank you, Camila.

Susana: Thank you.

(Silence).

Luisa: Well, Alfred and I were planning on leaving, too, weren't we, Alfred?

Alfred: Oh, yes! Yes, indeed we were.

Luisa: Still. I can't leave without saying: I feel Alfred and I ought to apologize to all you young people. It seems to me it's all our fault. I see now, if only we hadn't brought the screenplay, none of this would have happened. It may be we should have known our own lives have been so transformed by this invitation.

Alfred: Oftentimes we forget what an impact it can have. We think, Luisa and I, "It's just a movie, just an evening in the theatre, just a piece of light entertainment..." and then it turns out it is...

Luisa: The power of the theatre!

Alfred: The power of the art of the theatre. Disruptive. Transformative. Apocalyptic. So... let's go home!

Rudi: Let's go... Let's everybody go home...

Luisa: Camila, dear, I know this has been a terrible ordeal for you. Probably all you'd like is just to get back home. But you should know, if you would like just to stay on a while here, let things settle a little bit before you go on with things, you would be so welcome to stay. Alfred and I would be very glad if you accepted it.

Anselmo: And I know, Will, this has hardly been a pleasant vacation for you but, if you don't have anything else you need to get to, if you happen to be free to stay on as well, to keep Camila company so that she doesn't feel alone...

Rudi: That's it... Everybody... Let's go home!

Will: Thank you.

Camila: Thank you.

Will: Well. Perhaps we will then. Would you like that?

Camila: Oh, yes. I think I would. I think that I would love it.

Luisa: All right then, children. Here we go! Everyone has their cars? Do you have the keys, Alfred?

Alfred: I've left them in my jacket pocket.

(Everyone saying their goodbyes. Camila, Will and Rudi stay).

Will: Alone, at last...

Camila: Alone, at last...

(They give a long kiss. They leave. Music).

Rudy: They give a long kiss. They leave. Music

Rudi: Structure! That's it! That's it! Finally, the kiss! That's what theater needs! A happy end! A close up! Structure! Structure! Offstage, one wants to keep one's feet on the ground. Because the theatre an insubstantial thing. Incorporeal. Evanescent. If you would touch it, it would disappear like that. Because, really, the theatre is all just make-believe. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is Harvard, or an American bank, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There's no reason why not giving a kiss! There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field. And yet, the truth is, from the first act to the last, the stage is only a stage, and the players only players.

(Enters final music).

END