

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock

Table of Contents

<u>THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve</u>	1
<u>Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock</u>	1

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock

Etext by Dagny

Etext by Dagny

This Etext is for private use only. No republication for profit in print or other media may be made without the express consent of the Copyright Holder. The Copyright Holder is especially concerned about performance rights in any media on stage, cinema, or television, or audio or any other media, including readings for which an entrance fee or the like is charge. Permissions should be addressed to: Frank Morlock, 6006 Greenbelt Rd, #312, Greenbelt, MD 20770, USA or frankmorlock@msn.com. Other works by this author may be found at <http://www.cadytech.com/dumas/personnage.asp?key=130>

C 2003

+++++

CHARACTERS:

SUZANNE

MARTHA

+++++

The action takes place at the home of Villeneuve; father of Suzanne and brother of Martha.

SUZANNE: (entering and placing her hat on some furniture) I'm here!

MARTHA: At last! Come back for lunch at one!

SUZANNE: I had a lot to do. Three lessons to give this morning!

MARTHA: Where?

SUZANNE: First at Mrs. de Brignoles.

MARTHA: Oh! Then I understand your delay.

SUZANNE: Do you have it in for de Brignoles, auntie?

MARTHA: Me, not at all!

SUZANNE: She is so nice to me!

MARTHA: Oh! Very nice.

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

SUZANNE: And her daughter and her son, too!

MARTHA: Yes, the handsome Captain.

SUZANNE: Ah! what's the matter with you?

MARTHA: The matter, is, Suzanne that I don't like to see you running about all alone in this frightful Paris.

SUZANNE: That's the fate of girls who have nothing; I have to earn a living. As for you, didn't you do something?

MARTHA: Oh! me, that's quite different. First of all, I am greatly your senior and then, I have a talisman.

SUZANNE: A talisman!

MARTHA: My face.

SUZANNE: What do you mean?

MARTHA: Look me in the face.

SUZANNE: Well?

MARTHA: Well, I am ugly: there you have it!

SUZANNE: Ugly! you dare to say

MARTHA: It's not me who says it. (pointing to her face) This does.

SUZANNE: You wouldn't speak so gaily if you believed that.

MARTHA: I speak gaily of it, because that's what enchants me.

SUZANNE: Oh, for goodness sake.

MARTHA: It's so useful. What's the finest part in life. It's to be a young bachelor. Well, an ugly girl is a bachelor. She does what she wants, she goes where she wants. If I were pretty, I could take our cousin by the arm and go for a stroll: they'd say immediately: Ah! two lovebirds! Whereas now, when they meet us, what do they say? A brother and his sister! An ugly girl is always a sister. But when she's pretty, how many inconveniences!

SUZANNE: I would never have believed it.

MARTHA: Let's understand each other: for a young miss, rich and engaged to a man like herself, beauty is only one more item in her dowry, but for a poor girl, with no husband, that poverty forces to adventure into the street, a pretty face is a peril at all moments. Well, my little Suzanne, you are too pretty to be poor.

SUZANNE: I am pretty truly? Well, I'm quite comfortable with that.

MARTHA: My sermon really works.

SUZANNE: Ah, indeed! but where then is this great peril?

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

MARTHA: It is (after a silence) Suzanne, you were brought up in America.

SUZANNE: You know that quite well.

MARTHA: In that country, didn't they follow you in the street?

SUZANNE: The folks who go on the same side as me, yes.

MARTHA: Ah! It is impossible that some handsome young man, seeing you so pretty, didn't think of talking to you to tell you so.

SUZANNE: (bursting into laughter) Ah! what a notion!

MARTHA: What! They never declared it to you?

SUZANNE: Never!

MARTHA: Never in your outings, in your travels through New York, no man, seeing you alone, ever embarrassed you with an insulting proposal?

SUZANNE: A man to fail in respect for a woman! Why all the passersby who have wives, daughters or sisters would instantly rush to punish him and defend them.

MARTHA: They'd all rush en mass like that? We must really profit from free trade to import these customs to France; it's true though that they wouldn't take.

SUZANNE: I still remember.

MARTHA: I was quite sure there was still something.

SUZANNE: It was a lecture on botany; we were only four or five women amongst three hundred persons.

MARTHA: And the rest, who were they?

SUZANNE: (laughing) Men! Is there any other gender but masculine and feminine?

MARTHA: You were in the midst of three hundred men?

SUZANNE: No question, because we were listening to the same lesson. Suddenly, while I was taking notes, I saw a little paper fall across my shoulder and onto my sleeve. It was folded in the shape of a letter.

MARTHA: A billet-doux!

SUZANNE: I think so, indeed.

MARTHA: French imports! And what did the Quakers say?

SUZANNE: There was a great murmur in the assembly.

MARTHA: And what did you do?

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

SUZANNE: As for me, I continued to write. Then, when the professor was finished, I raised my arm like this and blew the paper off as if it were a little insect! Everybody started to laugh, and to applaud. And the young man was forced to leave amidst hoots! There you have it.

MARTHA: That's charming! But it's not Parisian. In Paris, you see the reception given to pretty women

SUZANNE: Why so formidable about it? Everybody greets me with open arms.

MARTHA: Precisely with open arms! Folks are greeting you like that ah! you won't fail to get it! In all of France there's an old fund of troubadours who do that, so that when a man finds himself alone with a woman, who's pretty, poor and free he has two thoughts: the first is to fix his tie and pass his hand over his hair; the second is to say to himself, Ah, indeed, it's a question of paying court to that pretty lady over there.

SUZANNE: But I never return them! Who taught you these secrets?

MARTHA: My talisman! Still the same! Because no one ever looks at an ugly woman, she has all the time to look at others. That's what I did and I saw. So, there you are Miss Suzanne Villeneuve, instructress, you are going to ask advice of an attorney, a doctor, a scientist; at your first visit he will pay you compliments; at the second, he will call you my pretty client; at the third, according to the date of his birth, he'll slip you a billet-doux, take you by the waist or fall at your knees men of the Empire still throw themselves at your knees, never quite getting back up.

SUZANNE: Yes some old fools everybody laughs at.

MARTHA: Not at all! These are national traits! You go to solicit a minister, you find protectors, post scripts At the end of two days the supernumeraries will shake your hands, the office chief will kiss you on the face.

SUZANNE: What he'll kiss me?

MARTHA: A bureau director! Do you think he'll be satisfied with the arrangements of his inferior? Then he'll escort you to the minister!

SUZANNE: What? Are the ministers also ?

MARTHA: Oh! no! no! That's quite different! The ministers are quite above these petty weaknesses! Their function is still like a sacrament. They respect themselves! They respect you! And you have nothing to fear from them! But except for them, and the senators perhaps, all young or old, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, employed or living on their income, civilian or military, all troubadours! troubadours! troubadours! Troubadours and usurers, for they always loan by the week at two hundred percent interest payable in Not one who loves disinterestedly not even a captain!

SUZANNE: (uneasy) A captain!

MARTHA: Well, yes! for, since the word is vile, it's necessary that I get to the point! Do you imagine that, if Mr. de Brignoles trudges slowly and frequently up our four floors, it's because he loves the sculpture on the wood? Mr. de Brignoles is in love with you!

SUZANNE: (smiling) I'm quite aware of that.

MARTHA: You know it?

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

SUZANNE: No question, since he told me.

MARTHA: And you?

SUZANNE: Me? I love him, too.

MARTHA: And you told him that, too?

SUZANNE: No question since he asked me.

MARTHA: (aside) She has responses that bowl you over! (aloud) Have you told your father?

SUZANNE: No, not yet! It's my secret. I have the right to remain silent! It's someone else's secret and I don't have the right to reveal it.

MARTHA: You haven't told your father about Mr. de Brignoles' love?

SUZANNE: There's nothing wrong in that! I will mention it when the time comes.

MARTHA: And when will the time come?

SUZANNE: When our marriage date is set.

MARTHA: (stupefied) Your marriage! You believe that Mr. de Brignoles intends to marry you.

SUZANNE: No doubt! Because he told me he loves me.

MARTHA: Huh? It's unheard of! What evidence do you have?

SUZANNE: When a man of heart says to a young girl: I love you and she replies to him: I love you, too it's over! they are married!

MARTHA: They are married! Ah, indeed! If everybody who said that was Clearly, you are coming from another world! Ah, indeed! do things like that happen in America?

SUZANNE: It's all very simple; they speak to the Governor.

MARTHA: What's a governor?

SUZANNE: That's the name they give to fathers.

MARTHA: I like this name of governor well enough; it represents authority, discipline.

SUZANNE: Not at all. Not even fathers marry their daughters.

MARTHA: In that case who marries them?

SUZANNE: They do it themselves.

MARTHA: Themselves? Why, but in the end, this governor, you must still ask his consent?

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

SUZANNE: Oh, yes. Afterwards.

MARTHA: After what? After the marriage?

SUZANNE: (very simply) No, after the young girl has made her choice.

MARTHA: It's the young girl who chooses?

SUZANNE: That seems fair to me, since she engaged herself.

MARTHA: Yes! but it's the governor who gives the dowry.

SUZANNE: A dowry? Who's asking him for a dowry?

MARTHA: What, in America the young girls ?

SUZANNE: In America the young girls are not forced to buy their husband; an honest man finds them all richly enough endowed, when they bring to the marriage an honest heart and a life without blemish. But here, I don't know how to prevent myself from blushing when I hear marriage spoken of. You'd think it was a market! Always this humiliating word. How much has she got? She's got she's got what she is!

MARTHA: Dear child! So you believe that your poverty won't prevent Mr. de Brignoles

SUZANNE: What's my poverty matter and what would be his plan if he didn't want to marry me?

MARTHA: His plan? His plan? And his mother?

SUZANNE: Oh! his mother, that's different! I am sure that this marriage is her sole desire.

MARTHA: Huh?

SUZANNE: She told me so in a thousand ways.

MARTHA : She told you?

SUZANNE: Not in words, if you mean, but in deeds. Why would she ceaselessly lure me to her home?

MARTHA: Why?

SUZANNE: Why does she constantly join me with her son?

MARTHA: Why?

SUZANNE: Why does she meddle in everything that interests him? Is it thus one can act with another woman unless she wants to call her her daughter? But what's wrong with you, Martha? What's the matter? Are you weeping.

MARTHA: Yes, I'm weeping! (kissing her) Oh! Suzanne, how you hurt me!

SUZANNE: Why, then tell me

THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING UGLY By Legouve

MARTHA: (forcefully, aside) No, it's impossible! no! I don't want to believe it. A woman! a mother! that would be too frightful! But for him, it's different and my duty is to unmask him. To enlighten you. Suzanne, Mr. de Brignoles doesn't intend to marry you! Mr. de Brignoles will never marry you.

SUZANNE: Paul doesn't love me?

MARTHA: Oh! I am not saying he doesn't love you. I think, on the contrary that he's madly smitten with you.

SUZANNE: Well, in that case, what's he want to do with me.

MARTHA: What's he want to do with you! Oh! I cannot I mustn't! Just know that men are an abominable sex!

CURTAIN