

# **LOUIS XIV AND THE FLOWER GIRL OF THE ORANGERY**

By De Villeneuve and Masson 1831, Translated and Adapted by Frank J. Morlock

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Etext by Dagny

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LOUIS XIV AND THE FLOWER GIRL OF THE ORANGERY

(Original title:  
The Gardner-Girl of the Orangery)

A Comedy-Vaudeville in one act

By De Villeneuve and Masson 1831,

Translated and Adapted by Frank J. Morlock

C 2003

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## CHARACTERS

LOUIS XIV

THE MARQUISE DE MONTESPAN

THE PRINCE DE MARSILLAC, the confidant of the King

THE DUKE DE SAINT-AIGNAN, Captain of Guards

DESMARETS, Controller General of Finances

GRAIN-D'ORGE, rich cattle merchant

PERETTE, A Gardner attached to the Orangery

GUILLAUME, Master Gardner

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MACLOU, Gardner lad

Gentlemen, Gardners, etc.

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The action takes place at Versailles.

The stage represents a section of the Park at Versailles, near the Orangery; in the middle a statue of Louis XIV.

Gardners are working. One is atop a tall double ladder; the others are busy trimming and the others are picking up the trimmings.

**CHORUS:** Come on, Come on,  
Work with care,  
Trim, gnaw, cut,  
But especially manage  
The flowers and the buds.

**GUILLAUME:** (entering) When duty calls us  
It's not like at the court,  
For each in his turn  
Gets to the top of the ladder!

**CHORUS:** Come on, come on,  
Work with care,  
Trim, gnaw, cut,  
But especially manage  
The flowers and the buds.

**GUILLAUME:** Well! the rest of you haven't finished yet. Still, you know that for some time now His Majesty Louis XIV often comes to stroll near the Orangery here in Versailles you cannot be here when the lords arrive nobles like that wouldn't like to find themselves face to face with villains like you.

**FIRST GARDNER BOY:** Suffice, master Guillaume there I'm 'bout done all I got left to do is pick up the flowers.

**GUILLAUME:** In that case, you can leave right away, 'cause there's somebody else tasked with that duty. It's my little cousin

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Perette who I had sent from Normandy exactly for that.

**FIRST GARDNER BOY:** All the same she's a comer, your cousin she's a fine slip of a girl a morsel fit for a king, that

**GUILLAUME:** In that case she's none of your business as for you, Mr. Maclou, exactly, there she is coming this way with her little ole basket. Do me the pleasure of taking your basket and going to work further off.

**CHORUS:** Come on, come on,  
Work with care,  
Trim, gnaw, cut,  
But especially manage  
The flowers and the buds.

(They leave.)

(Enter Perette carrying two baskets which she sets down.)

**PERETTE:** Let's set to work quickly.  
My two baskets should have already been filled.  
I slept too late, it's a shame.  
But I was dreaming of the country:  
I thought I saw my village clock,  
Heard my dog barking at my flock.  
I speak the language of our peasants  
And I repeated the village lingo.  
Tra, la, la.  
I still think of the country,  
But every day  
My heart tells me  
It's better here at court.  
Innocent games are customary.  
No one really loses, I think  
For a wager you have to kiss  
The sweetest girl that's me!  
The tambourine, the sound of the bag pipe,  
They're already calling us from a distance to the elm.

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Every lad invites a young filly  
To dance the village dance, I bet.  
(dancing)  
Tra, la ,la.  
I still think of the country,  
But every day  
My heart tells me  
It's better here at court.

**GUILLAUME:** It's very nice of you to sing to me like that, my little Perette but that doesn't change the fact that for more than an hour these flowers really need to be picked up.

**PERETTE:** I was going to tell you, cousin, that just now I again met a gentleman who kissed me and who delayed me.

**GUILLAUME:** Bah! he kissed you?

**PERETTE:** Yes but he's old you know very well he's the one called the Superintendent of His Majesty's Gardens.

**GUILLAUME:** Mr. LeNotre oh! him that's different, seeing that he kisses the King when he wants to They even say that when he was in Rome he kissed our Holy Father the Pope.

**PERETTE:**  
To no one else would I have permitted it. Really, not even you cousin, Guillaume.

**GUILLAUME:** With me it's good friendship but with others, that could become dangerous.

**PERETTE:** Oh! I know that well enough my father told me that a week ago when I left the country. Down there, be careful, Perette. With that, it's to save me from a similar danger that I

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was sent to you.

**GUILLAUME:** Bah! you haven't spoken to me yet about that.

**PERETTE:** Well yes! you remember quite well Mr. Grain-d'Orge, that rich cattle merchant from the neighboring town, all the time he spent at our place. He used to stop at our farm and he spent every day there.

**GUILLAUME:** What! did that Mr. Grain-d'Orge speak to you of love? A man who has millions!

**PERETTE:** No question, he told me I was pretty, that he wanted to be my type he talked of giving me presents do I know  
Singing)  
He spoke to me of his riches;  
He boasted of his good humor;  
He swore to adore me forever;  
He constantly talked of my happiness.

**GUILLAUME:** (singing)  
Yeah, but now, to make a nice household,  
They say all you need is a husband.

**PERETTE:** Something still was lacking.

**GUILLAUME:** (singing)  
What was that?

**PERETTE:** Any talk of marriage.

**GUILLAUME:** I'm no longer surprised, then, that your father sent you to be with me. You couldn't hope to be the wife of a man so

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opulent who is a noble now a baron!

**PERETTE:** Still it's true as they say in the country, that it's a favor from the court that cost him a thousand crowns!

**GUILLAUME:** Believe me forget about it.

**PERETTE:** Oh! I've already forgotten him, I am so comfortable here you are so good to me. You see so many beautiful things.

**GUILLAUME:** Eh! well yes, child but the thing is, that you sometimes neglect your work. You don't go in every alley of the Orangery, you're always around here, where there often isn't a flower to pick while on the other side, the earth's seeded with them and if your service were complained of it might get to the ears of the king.

**PERETTE:** That's true and I don't wish to vex him, 'cause if my father possesses a small farm with four acres of land, he owes it to him.

**GUILLAUME:** Yes, that day His Majesty was hunting, the King fired on a stag and your father got the ball in his leg. That was lucky. Well, he made his path with that broken leg now that's what caused his fortune.

**PERETTE:** Eh, to say that he doesn't recognize me, this great King, and I no longer have the honor of seeing him.

**GUILLAUME:** Well, right here, there's his statue, look at it completely at your ease.

**PERETTE:** Oh, I recognized it already.



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**GUILLAUME:** Do good work and come rejoin me when you've finished, bye, my little Perette.

(Guillaume kisses Perette on her face and leaves.)

**PERETTE:** Bye, Cousin, Guillaume. (she sets to work picking up flowers)

Oh, yes I really know it, that statue. I've already looked at it enough for that. Heck, it's quite natural, the benefactor of my family. I spend whole hours in front of it, and then I scold myself. Well, it's all the same, I always come back despite myself. Oh, but I don't want to be caught at it any more like yesterday by that great lord who asked me my name, my age, for goodness sake! He really promised me that next Sunday, at Chapel, he'd seat me in such a way as to see His Majesty, then I could really see the King.

(singing)

At church, I hope  
To gawk at him at leisure.  
His grandeur, his magnificence,  
Ah! how it all dazzles me.  
I'd be scared to be in his presence,  
But I'd shiver with so much pleasure.  
Yes, I'd be scared to be around him,  
But I'd shiver with so much pleasure, anyway. (repeat)  
I bet he's going to notice me.  
My God! Look how I'm blushing already  
He hasn't yet told me I am pretty,  
How nice it would be for a king to tell you that!  
At church I hope  
To gawk at him at leisure.  
His grandeur, his magnificence,  
Ah! how it all dazzles me!  
(stopping before his statue)  
I always come to contemplate his image.  
Ah! how many tears this fear must cost me,  
But, at least I'm sure of remaining a good girl.  
(she remains lost in admiration of the statue without noticing that  
an orange flower is falling out of her basket)  
Well, I spilled all my flowers.  
(she picks them up in a hurry)  
At church I hope  
To gawk at him at leisure.  
His grandeur, his magnificence,  
Ah! how it all dazzles me!

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(speaking) Clumsy that I am, I never do it with others.  
If I was seen? Right, see everybody's coming. It's over, next time I  
come here I won't look at the statue any more. Absolutely. If  
I can prevent myself.

(Perette continues to pick up her flowers and then disappears without  
being seen by Marsillac and the other gentlemen who enter.)

**MARSILLAC:** (laughing as he enters) Ah! ah! ah! by Jove! Gentlemen,  
this is going to cause a great scandal at court.

**DESMARETS:** What's the matter, Prince de Marsillac? I arrived just as  
it was being explained: I don't know the topic under  
discussion.

**MARSILLAC:** My word, Milord Controller General of Finances, the thing  
is that his Majesty just received a deluge

**DESMARETS:** The King?

**MARSILLAC:** The King! And the funniest thing is that his royalty was  
precisely the cause of the trouble two gentlemen of the first  
rank were arguing over the honor of presenting him a cloak  
which he finally received from a valet.

**DESMARETS:** Well I don't see anything extraordinary in that just that  
Louis XIV wanted to avoid getting wet.

**MARSILLAC:** What, you don't understand that it's a total reversal in  
the King's service? Etiquette.

(sings)

It's on that that depends, I trust,  
The safety of the monarchy.  
At the court of a great king  
Nobility takes place before patriotism.

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Let our soldiers starve;  
Let them experience a defeat  
For us who cares for after all,  
The people may lack bread  
But the Court must protect etiquette.

**DESMARETS:** But I perceive Madame the Marquise de Montespan is coming here with the Duke de Saint Aignan.

(All greet the Marquise as she enters.)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (after having made a deep bow) Gentlemen, we are preceding the King by a few moments we left him with LeNotre who is explaining to him his new ideas on the double stairs.

**MARSILLAC:** His Majesty won't be slow to join us, I am sure of it because the Marquise is already with us.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** You always flatter me, prince; that makes me believe what they say at court that you are not of my friends.

**MARSILLAC:** Ah! Marquise, aren't you the best friend of the King

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** That's true; up to now I've known how to deserve the kindnesses of Louis and so long as the heart of the King belongs to me I can count on the attachment of his court. But here's Mr. Desmarests. (she bows to him) I am enchanted to see you. They've assured me that yesterday, Mignard displayed, in your presence and before all these ladies, this portrait of the King that he's just finishing they say it's admirable.

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** (low to Marquise) I get it Madame the Marquise understood that this precious image ought to come to her one day.

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**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Hush! Much lower in front of them! (aloud) Well, what does the Comptroller General think of this new masterpiece?

**DESMARETS:** My word, Marquise, seeing the image of the King, my master, I thought only one thing it's that the coffers of the Treasury are empty, that all the services are in need and that the people

**MARSILLAC:** What's that? the people! My dear Comptroller what ideas! When the court demands it of you, first off, you must pay as to the rest, create the resources, that's your job.  
(sings)  
When the people experience a misfortune,  
Reassure them with words,  
If they cry out, so that they'll shut up,  
If taxes are demanded:  
In the end, overwhelm them with taxes;  
Then gold will abound in the coffers.  
Pay them with their own money,  
Then all is well with the world,  
And the people are always happy.  
(speaking) Wait, listen to a plan I've conceived. Make money out of the nobility.

(Marsillac takes Desmarets by the arm and walks with him to the back of the Orangery; the other gentlemen stroll about and appear to talk confidentially as Madame de Montespan leads the Duke of Saint-Aignan forward.)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Now, my dear Duke, we are alone, answer quickly the question I was addressing to you as you entered. Shouldn't you deliver to me that letter that Lavalliere addressed to the King?

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** I intercepted it here it is.

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**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Fine I will read it. She's renouncing the world. The King can do no more for her I'm doing this so the King will not be pained.

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** You are so good! and besides, what could you fear from this old passion?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Perhaps I was wrong to alarm myself and yet, why this coldness by the King for some days? Why did he come twice to walk mysteriously in this part of the Orangery, solely accompanied by that flatterer Marsillac, who you know, is the secret confidant of the King's intrigues? I must suspect it's again a question of a concealed love intrigue.

**MARSILLAC:** Gentlemen, here's the King.

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** Silence! they're coming.

(Everyone forms up at the arrival of the King and his suite.)

**CHORUS:** Here's the King; on his way  
To his grandeur, (repeat) let's render homage.  
Here's the King (repeat)  
Respect, love, for us that's the law.

**THE KING:** Very fine, gentlemen, I admire your devotion to my person. For a few drops of water, you all left me.

**MARSILLAC:** His Majesty can suppose that near him, the rain of Versailles doesn't dampen.

**THE KING:** No, but it gives you a bad cold and I noticed it during

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the argument between Mr. de Tresmes and de Larochefoucault. I beg you gentlemen, that such things never happen again. Etiquette must be respected. But not to satisfy the pride of some servants. Henceforth, gentlemen will be excused from accompanying me in my morning strolls.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Still, the honor of following Your Majesty each day excites the ambition of his court and especially mine.

**KING:** Yes, Marquise but as for me I want to escape from time to time from the atmosphere of intrigues that so often surround me. I am the King of France and not the prisoner of the court. I intend to be free to go where I like, to receive who I like. Yesterday, gentlemen, If I'd listened to you, I wouldn't have admitted Moliere to my table. That will force you, I hope, to receive him at yours. If you were to have among you a man of genius, the monarchy, won't be worse off for that

**DESMARETS:** (aside) It wouldn't be better off for it.

**THE KING:** Moreover, my pleasures are dear to me and besides, they are necessary to the renown of my royalty. You will continue to present yourselves for my trips to Marly, but mornings, only Marsillac will accompany me this week.

**MARSILLAC:** Your Majesty overwhelms me with honor

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (low to Saint-Aignan) I told you so they're on guard against us but we will thwart the intrigue.

**DESMARETS:** Will I be allowed to ask a moment's audience with Your Majesty?

**KING:** Ah! it's you Controller General. I'm sure of it; yet more complaints to address to me.

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**DESMARETS:** It's not I, sire, it's the people who are complaining.

**KING:** And what are they complaining of?

**DESMARETS:** The tax of the tenth, that I want Your Majesty to adopt.

**KING:** Your plan of imposing a tenth has given birth in me to religious scruples. I've submitted it to the Sorbonne, I am awaiting its response.

**DESMARETS:** But, sire, next month

**KING:** First of all let's think carefully of foregoing it. You cannot double the capitation.

**DESMARETS:** It was tripled last year.

**KING:** I've created thousands of charges and offices. Don't you also have letters of nobility? There's a revenue for the Chancellery.

**DESMARETS:** They are now in really great discredit. It's reached the point that it's necessary to employ force to have accepted those that Your Majesty deigns to grant.

**KING:** And what's it matter so long as they pay?

**DESMARETS:** But, they are refusing to pay. Just yesterday I received a

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very uncivil letter from a cattle merchant from Normandy, the rich Grain-d'Orge.

(sings)

He won't listen to anything on the subject.

All my efforts are useless.

And to the title of Baron I would grant him

At the lowest price Sire, a hundred thousand crowns!

**THE KING:** My dear chap, come to an agreement with this man

And name him, if he's very demanding,

Count or Marquis, for his money.

But make sure to get the money.

(speaking) But don't come to complain endlessly. What the devil, the affairs of the people are not my business they're theirs.

I've really enough to occupy myself with the etiquette of my court the works of Versailles, the interests of my family.

**MARSILLAC:** Indeed, Milord Comptroller, His Majesty has grave occupations at the moment. (low to the King) Sire, I think I observed that little one who comes here.

**KING:** I hope she doesn't know you noticed her trouble, her agitation, when she is in front of this statue.

**MARSILLAC:** Far from it, Sire, yesterday, when questioning her, I didn't even let her guess who I was.

**KING:** (aloud to his suite) Gentlemen, accompany the Marquise into the park. Consult LeNotre's plans for the fountain of Latona and the baths of Apollo. I will go rejoin you. Marquise, I await your approval.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (making a curtsy) Sire, that's too great a favor. (low to Saint-Aignan) we must obey

**KING:** (to Marsillac) Accompany her.



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**CHORUS:** Let's leave the king, according to custom,  
To leave him (repeat), he directs us  
Let's leave the king. (repeat)  
Respect, love, that's our law!

(Marsillac affectedly offers his hand to Madame de Montespan, who affectedly replies. They leave followed by all the others.)

**KING:** (alone) I see her coming. She's got her basket. Ah! if she's only coming to pick flowers from these orange trees, if she doesn't stop at the statue, the charm will be destroyed. (he hides behind one of the orange trees) From here I can see her at my ease.

**PERETTE:** (entering) Well, but now what am I doing I don't have any business here. What, here I am again luckily, my cousin Guillaume went on an errand in Versailles.

**KING:** (aside) She is charming.

**PERETTE:** After this I can say my work is over. I'm bored at the house. I'm coming to sew in the Orangery, better to be here than not. (looking at the statue) And then, he will keep me company. (she sits on the bench)

**KING:** (aside) Surely, my pretty child, and as long as you like

**PERETTE:** (working and peeking at the stature from time to time) They say you look like him so I'm not astonished if you are pleasing, you are really sweet, you don't know I'm thinking, I'm dreaming only of you and that whenever I get a moment I escape to come see you

**KING** (aside) Now there, at least, is a disinterested love.

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**PERETTE** Yes, but by peeking at you, I'm not getting on with my work, and someone will notice, and my cousin will scold. Let's go, Mr. His Majesty, don't prevent me from working without that I'll never come back.

**KING:** (aside) Indeed but for the statue.

**PERETTE** It's nice to talk with a king, especially when he's not here to answer you.

**KING:** (taking some steps toward her) I'd really like to

**PERETTE** God! How frightened I'd be if he answered me. (The king takes a step back and hides behind the statue) Why what's going through my head is it possible, since it is of marble? Come on, now I'm weeping No, it's over I don't want to remain at Versailles. Sunday I will see this king if he looks like it the way they say, then I'll come one more time to look at the statue and then and then I will leave.

(Perette picks up her basket and is going to withdraw.)

**KING:** (showing himself) No, Perette you shan't leave.

**PERETTE:** (letting out a scream) Ah! ah! my God! How frightened I was this is the second time I've been startled I'm not going to dare to raise my eyes.

**KING:** Why this fright isn't it natural that you would want to see the king?

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**PERETTE:** (eyes lowered) Sir I didn't say

**KING:** But as for me, I heard everything!

**PERETTE:** (eyes still lowered) Since you heard everything it's not worth the trouble of hiding it from you. Yes, sir, it's true.

**KING:** Well I promise to make you see him, but to do that you must first raise your eyes to me.

**PERETTE:** Look at you it's just that I don't dare.

**KING:** Try anyway only to know if the statue is a good likeness.

**PERETTE:** (trembling) What are you saying you would be (raising her eyes to him and then hiding them right away with her hands) Heavens! (Aside) How he looks like

**KING:** Well, Perette you've seen this king your naive heart loved without knowing him. Know that if his image deserved your tenderness your charms, your ingenuousness has made an impression on him that will never be erased.

**PERETTE:** My God! the king saying that to me to me!

**KING:** You want to flee oh! I won't consent to that  
(singing)  
Perette, here, tell me I love you.  
Don't be afraid to pledge your word.

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**TOGETHER:**

**PERETTE:** I must tell him that I love him.  
Truly, it's really an honor for me!

**KING:** Perette, here tell me I love you.  
Don't be afraid of pledging your faith!

**PERETTE:** Ah! read in my heart for yourself.  
Isn't there a love for her king to be seen?

**KING:** If I have your tenderness  
Command as a mistress.  
Soon riches  
Will be your good fortune.

**PERETTE:** That's not what I want.  
If I am moaning low,  
It's only for you, Sire.  
I only want your heart.  
For my happiness  
I only want your heart.

**ENSEMBLE**

**THE KING:** Here, repeat for me: I love you.  
Don't be afraid to pledge your faith

**PERETTE:** Ah! in my heart read for yourself.  
Can't you see love for her king?

**KING:** But it's not merely as a king I want to be loved. It's still

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more it's at your knees that I ask it of you.

(The King falls to his knees.)

**PERETTE:** The king at my knees God, is it possible? Rather, it's I who ought to ask your pardon for having the audacity to love you without realizing it. (falling to her knees before him, hands joined) Milord, sire pardon me, I beg you.

**KING:** (rising) Yes, I pardon you, charming girl, oh! yes get up. Ah! I've never been happier, but someone's coming this way. Perette, don't go far away from the Orangery we will see each other again today before we separate I intend to give you a souvenir take this portrait it's mine so never lose it.

(The King leaves by the rear.)

**PERETTE:** (trembling) Your Majesty's portrait. Ah, never, sire here's my cousin. My God! what is it I've done there? Heck, it looks like him a lot, too.

(Perette quickly sits down and pretends to sew. Guillaume enters with Grain-d'Orge.)

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** I tell you, we will find her here. And, wait there she is. Announce me, and especially, don't frighten her.

**GUILLAUME:** Heavens you are here again, Perette.

**PERETTE:** (still trembling, not raising her eyes) Well, what! Cousin Guillaume who's there?

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**GUILLAUME:** I'm bringing someone who wants to see you that I met in Versailles a baron.

**PERETTE:** A baron!

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Yes, Grain-d'Orge the cattle merchant.

**PERETTE:** You here has something happened to you a misfortune perhaps?

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** One it's nothing. Actually two, and they both happened to me today.

(sings)

See how much bad luck I have, Miz,  
Learning of your departure from the town.  
Likewise at court I received the news  
That I've just been named baron by the king.  
If happiness for us is to be rich,  
I am sure that near you wealth won't be lacking.  
But when I have ten quarters of nobility,  
Damn it, my cattle will be a bit thinner

**GUILLAUME:** It's true that when I met him he was in a stew! But I told him you were living with me, that you were a gardner at the Orangery, that you could see him and talk to him. Oh, then he jumped on my neck and I thought he was going to choke me.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Damn! It's quite natural when a wretch believes he's drowning and he finds a rescue plank he grabs it.

**GUILLAUME:** That's it and you wanted to strangle me thanks for the preference.

**PERETTE:** What you are coming for me?

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**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Yes, Miz, without knowing if I would find you. Down there dark ideas sometimes came to me most often they didn't come at all. To the degree that in the midst of my stables I seemed almost as stupid as my merchandise getting fatter getting but As for me! Oh! God! you must find me very changed, Perette?

**PERETTE:** No indeed you are still the same.

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Is she sweet! When I saw that I was taking all this pain to hear, I said to myself Grain–d'Orge you are going to have some unpleasantness you will come to nothing, my lad. Leave for Versailles, you will return to the king what he wants to give you and get back what he wants to take from you. What I came to give back is this bunch of papers, what I want to take back is you, Perette. That's the subject of my trip.

**PERETTE:** Take me back?

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Yes, Miz.  
(sings)  
As I am sure of having your heart  
I said to myself: let it cost what it costs;  
Let's rush to make her happy.  
Suddenly, I set out.  
At a gallop, I set out.

**GUILLAUME:** You must be really satisfied, I think.  
What! baroness! a girl from our town!

**PERETTE** It's true, it's really an honor for me,  
But since this morning, I can't say why, but  
I'm no longer thinking of marriage.

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**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** That's all the same so long as you return, and from tomorrow, if it pleases you, my millions, my animals and myself we are at your service.

**GUILLAUME:** Tomorrow, that's going to fast see, when you are attached to the service of the king, you must, at least, have his permission to leave it.

**PERETTE:** Certainly, I can't go far from here.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** It's that, without you, Perette, no nobility, they must give it back to me hand to hand. If not, I will tell them off I will tell the king himself, I'll say it to everybody.

**PERETTE:** What, Mr. Grain-d'Orge, you who are so good, you could have evil intentions towards His Majesty?

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Oh! evil intentions no! But in the end, I'm not a man in service I have the right to speak at the court I am a cattle merchant.

**GUILLAUME:** Ah! my God! now there's His Majesty coming this way if he heard you

**PERETTE:** (aside) Heavens, the King!

**GUILLAUME:** Quick, Perette, lower your eyes.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Ah! it's the king. Really this is funny. I didn't think I was brave !



## LOUIS XIV AND THE FLOWER GIRL OF THE ORANGERY

(The King enters with Marsillac, Saint–Aignan, Desmarets and Madame de Montespan.)

**KING:** (to Montespan, giving her his arm) What, you want to go back by way of the Orangery? Truly, Marquise, I can't conceive why this sudden taste has come to you for strolling in this part of the park.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Sire, I don't know sympathy, perhaps.

**KING:** (low to Marsillac) Could she have suspicions?

**MARSILLAC:** I think so and the little one is still there

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (noticing Perette) What do I see! oh! the pretty child. I've never seen her at the Orangery.

**KING:** Prince de Marsillac, make those people withdraw.

(Marsillac takes a step.)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Stop, mercy your subjects are so happy when they can find themselves on the heels of Your Majesty.

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** (coming forward) Yes, Sire, which is what decided me to speak to you frankly.

**KING:** Who is this man?

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**MARSILLAC:** The King asks who you are.

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** By Jove, I heard him, I am not deaf.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (meaningfully) Perhaps he's the husband or the suitor of this adorable child.

**KING:** (abruptly) Look, speak, answer. What are you doing there?

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** I was coming to speak to you, Sire; Your Majesty doesn't receive me well, but it's all the same. Here's what it is I am coming from the country, you made me Baron, right? I had accepted at first, because I didn't know how to refuse and because that wouldn't hurt my trade in cattle.

**DESMARETS:** (approaching) Eh, it's Mr. Grain–d'Orge!

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Just the same but after they told me this was costing 100,000 crowns my word!

**KING:** (severely) Mr. de Grain–d'Orge you must be very well protected to obtain such a favor.

**MARSILLAC:** What, you will refuse benefits from the king?

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** If I don't know how to pay for them my money, you see, is what I use to buy animals. A baron the more in your court won't do you any good while a herd the less in mine, that would harm me.

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(All the courtiers snicker.)

**KING:** Silence! Gentlemen I intend those I ennoble to be respected.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** (singing)

As regards your order, would you submit to it?  
For, if, like you, I am not very submissive,  
It's because since my birth I've had wherewithal to buy.  
I likewise have the wherewithal to buy good clothes.  
While, I confess, grandeur pleases me well enough,  
Still, I am chary of paying you for it,  
Perhaps you could pay your nobility better  
And as for me, I shall better place my money!

**KING:** (smiling) Meaning, Mr. de Grain-d'Orge, you don't want to reach an agreement with the King of France?

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Indeed, Sire, and if you will allow it, I propose to you that together we make a rough compromise. I agree to pay you for your barony, I ask only for permission to take to the country and marry the one I love right away Little Perette, who's here.

**KING:** (embarrassed) Ah it's it's Perette you want to marry! Why it seems to me that this request

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (who all this time has had her eyes fixed on those of the king) is quite natural, Sire; isn't your greatest privilege that of rendering all your subjects happy? What will it cost you? A word Let Your Majesty fulfill the wishes of Mr. Grain-d'Orge he interests me.

(Mute signs of communication between Marsillac and the King.)

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**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Thanks, Madame. (aside) She's a fine woman. (aloud)  
Look, Majesty, what are you going to do? Speak, I wish it! By  
Jove, for once you will have granted a wish that wasn't that  
of a Duke or a Peer.

**KING:** Enough, Mr. de Grain–d'Orge, enough; I am not opposed to this  
marriage, but only the will of this child can decide it. Come  
closer, Perette, and make your decision known. He seems to  
love you. If you love him, also I consent to everything,  
speak.

**GUILLAUME:** (low to Perette) Well what are you thinking? Say quickly  
that you consent!

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Say it, say it.

**PERETTE:** (timidly approaching the king without looking at him)  
(singing)  
I owe you gratitude.  
You wish the happiness of all your subjects,  
But allow me, in your presence,  
To dare to speak according to my heart.  
Are you agreeing to my prayer?  
Perette prefers, such is her will,  
To remain a garden girl at court,  
Near to you, a gardener,  
Than to be a baroness far from Your Majesty. (repeat)

**GUILLAUME:** (aside) What did she just say?

**GRAIN–D'ORGE:** Well she's refusing me.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (to Perette) What are you thinking of my child!  
Not to want to be the spouse of one the King has just honored  
with a title, who possesses millions. Sire, try to convince  
her yourself.

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**GRAIN-D'ORGE** No, Majesty don't give yourself the trouble over it.

Perette's in love with someone else, that's certain. Women have such bizarre ideas. But I know who Yes, Miz, I understood, I might even say who

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Well, speak, my friend; the love of Perette is doubtless pure. Nothing prevents us from knowing it.

**KING:** Why should we meddle in such details?

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Yes, I could tell it.

**KING:** It's useless.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Since you absolutely insist, Sire, I'm going to say it it's Jean Pierre there's the cowardly word.

**KING:** (who seems reassured) Must we contradict the choice of the lovable child?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** We must work to occupy ourselves in taking care to assure her happiness.

**KING:** It would truly be vain to make myself pass for a tyrant because a cattle merchant wants to marry a gardener. (to Perette) Rest assured, my child, it's not the King who intends to force you to renounce the love you feel. (shaking her hand, aside) She seems to me a thousand times prettier! (aloud) To the Chateau, gentlemen.

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**CHORUS:** When the great king calls us,  
Each one hurries to obey.  
One is faithful to his orders  
And duty is a pleasure. (repeat)

(The King Leaves, followed by all the persons in his suite except Saint-Aignan and Marsillac.)

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Ah! that's the way he protects me, the King! ah that's how he treats his nobles! Well, I no longer want his barony let him arrange about it with someone else.

**MARSILLAC:** One moment, Mr. de Grain-d'Orge the King never takes back what he has given.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Ah, you call that giving you! We'll see about that! I'm Normand I'd rather go to law, or if I lose, then I will speak for my money, I I will say whatever I wish I will do what pleases me, I will go above you, I will stroll everywhere you do, I will have myself carried in arm chairs, I will purchase footstools ah, ah, I am going to give you some of myself.

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** Certainly, you will have that right, Mr. de Grain-d'Orge

**MARSILLAC:** Will Baron de Grain-d'Orge do me the honor of accepting my arm?

**SAINT-AIGNAN:** I want to show you all the marvels of Versailles, Mr. de Grain-d'Orge.

**MARSILLAC** I pretend to the honor to take you to the treasury, Mr. Baron de Grain-d'Orge.

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**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** (taking their arms impatiently) That's it, escort me everywhere; I want to have the approval of the Court, I do. I want favors I want honors, I must have 'em for a hundred thousand crowns. (they leave dragging him away) Goodbye, Gardner-girl!

**GUILLAUME:** (to Perette) Let's go, come with us, now, cousin. Since you don't want to be a baroness, return to your work.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (appearing) Stay, Perette. I need to speak to you.

**PERETTE:** To me, madame?

**GUILLAUME:** That suffices, I'll withdraw all by myself. (aside) Sonofabitch! what's this all about? If the court descends to the garden, the garden will rise to the court. I see myself at least as Vicomte of Orange, so I do. (he leaves)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Approach, my child.

**PERETTE:** I await your order, madame.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** My orders! I have only a prayer to address to you. Your age, your sweetness, all inspire an interest in you which one doesn't know how to defend against I try to deserve your confidence, your friendship.

**PERETTE:** You won't talk to me any further about marrying Mr. Grain-d'Orge?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** I only want to speak of him the one who loves

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you and that you love and if it's possible for me to contribute to your happiness.

**PERETTE:** Oh, no, madame, for I no longer have anything to desire.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (worried) What? What do you mean?

**PERETTE:** Nothing, except that the one I love has learned of it without getting angry. That's all that I could ask.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** And you've dared to form the hope?

**PERETTE:** Oh, I hope for nothing except to see him from time to time and to think of him always.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** But if I had enough power to convince the King to give you for a husband the one you love.

**PERETTE:** That's impossible, madame, he's married.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Married! poor child and was he able to make you a confession of a passion that his duty forbids him to publish aloud? Doubtless it's one of the gentleman of His Majesty who, taking their master for a model, ceaselessly offer to one or another the homage of a love they don't feel.

**PERETTE:** (excitedly) What! madame you think that the King

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (aside) It's him! (aloud) Alas, my child, he's always caused nothing but tears to those who had the weakness of loving him you don't know all that this love could cost



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you in remorse! For your happiness, for mine it's necessary to triumph over it.

**PERETTE:** For your happiness then you love him, too?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (meaningfully) Who the King?

**PERETTE:** (worried and lowering her eyes, aside) What have I said?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Yes, Perette powerful links attach me to him!

**PERETTE:** (aside) What an idea! if she was (aloud) Ah! madame, if you are the Queen, pardon me.

(Perette falls at the feet of Madame de Montespan.)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (raising her) Stand up! No question, the king has made brilliant promises to you. To enrich you is easy, but to grant you a true, lasting love, that's what he can never do.

**PERETTE:** (upset) Oh! I don't wish anything, madame!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Listen, my child! Can you have heard the name of the Duchess de la Valliere spoken of?

**PERETTE:** They spoke to me of her as the most beautiful lady of the court!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Meaning that she was loved by the king. Well!

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This La Valliere who sacrificed her reputation to Louis XIV was the butt of the just wrath of an offended queen after two years, not of happiness, but of scandalous notoriety was forced to enshroud her shame in the depths of a convent, imploring vainly a souvenir from the one who loved her as he would never be capable of loving you

**PERETTE:** And he completely forgot her!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Since that time he's never mentioned her name, and when, as today, the duchess addresses him and reproaches for her abandonment, he doesn't deign even to cast a glance at her letters read yourself. This was sent to Versailles yesterday from the Carmelites!

**PERETTE:** (taking the letter hesitantly) What, madame you want

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Read it, it's necessary.

**PERETTE:** (reading) Sire, it's not for me that I implore your pity, but for my daughter, for your child who has no one to sustain her on earth except you. Take care of our poor Louise if you must never think of her mother another has succeeded me in your heart to the Marquise de Montespan, another.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Keep going, keep going!

**PERETTE:** To the Marquise de Montespan, another will succeed without doubt. Already the rumor is spreading at the court that you have given her a rival. How can I, from the depths of this retreat, make my voice heard to the one who would be unfortunate enough to love you like me! (with the greatest emotion) I would tell her to flee you, for the love of a king leaves only tears after it, only regrets. What you inspire is a hundred times more cruel than death.

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**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Well, Perette what will you do?

**PERETTE:** From tomorrow I will leave I will finish forever

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Believe that my benefits will follow you everywhere.

**PERETTE** I told you, madame, I want nothing nothing except Your Majesty's pardon.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Heavens! here's the king! Leave leave quickly.

**PERETTE:** (she heads towards the back, stops and says to herself, weeping) No, I will never see him again.

**KING:** (entering without seeing the Marquise and stopping Perette) Well, where are you running to this way, my pretty child?

**PERETTE:** Sire! The Queen! The Queen!

(Perette escapes. The King remains stupefied, the Marquise looks at him, smiling ironically.)

**KING:** What's she mean? The Marquise! (aloud) I was looking for you, madame.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (trying to seem calm) Sire, permit me to congratulate you on the beauty of your new protege and the nobility of your tastes.

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**KING:** What you imagine!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** So modest. Ah! Your Majesty has made more difficult conquests.

**KING:** My royalty often does more than my person.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** At least, Your Majesty doesn't fear to admit them but it is one whose rank

**KING:** Are you forgetting that the King of France raises all who approach him? Titles, honors, isn't it my will that disposes of them?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Pardon, Sire to have dared before you

**KING:** Come, come, marquise I admit this meeting here must give you some umbrage, one would swear that I was coming to a rendez-vous.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Indeed, but appearances are so deceiving.

**KING:** Yes, especially when one is like me.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Incapable of betraying sworn faith faithful to his love.

**KING:** My love! Would you like a proof of it, speak I'm making you a Duchess.

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**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** A new title for me! Ah! that's not gallant, Sire, you are treating me like a disgraced minister.

**KING:** Then what can I do to prove to you

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Nothing because I know everything that young girl you love her.

**KING:** Who told you that?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** She herself.

**KING:** Well! isn't it the duty of a good king to have affection for all his subjects?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** And even the female ones?

**KING:** (taking the hand of the Marquise) When one has no love except for one alone.

(He kisses her hand.)

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Except for one alone. Wait, there yet remains a way for you to make me believe in your tenderness.

**KING:** Speak I don't want to refuse anything to you what is it?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** It's to offer me, this very day, in the presence

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of your courtiers, what has already distanced itself from me  
the pretty portrait of Your Majesty, painted by Mignard and so  
boasted by all the court. Well, you aren't answering?

**KING:** Wait, marquise, ask of me anything else.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** It's disposed of already I understand, a rival  
happier than me

**KING:** No, madame it's for it's for the Queen!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** For the Queen?

**KING:** Do you still doubt?

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** Doubt? Ah! You Majesty manages so well.

(Enter Guillaume with Perette.)

**GUILLAUME:** Come on, come this way, I tell you we will find someone to  
speak to. Since you tell me you found this portrait, it must  
be returned.

**KING:** (aside) The little one again! (to the Marquise) Come, Madame.

**GUILLAUME:** (with embarrassment) Excuse, Sire, if I dare to disturb  
you it's, that having seen in the hands of this child, the  
portrait of Your Majesty

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**KING:** (aside) Ah! the clumsy!

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** The portrait of the King?

**PERETTE:** Pardon me, Sire! if this portrait is found in my hands.  
(sings) Just now, near the Orangery,  
You left it by error.  
I found your cherished image  
And I hid it in my heart.  
A single instant I dared to pretend  
To keep it; it must be agreed.  
But now, I must return it,  
For it no longer belongs to me.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** (meaningfully, and watching the king) That portrait was for the Queen?

**PERETTE:** (presenting it to her ingenuously)  
Take it back, then, Madame!

**GUILLAUME:** (tugging her skirt) Well! what is it you are doing there?

**PERETTE:** (low to Guillaume) Then she's not the Queen?

**GUILLAUME:** (embarrassed) Huh! why, yes almost. She's Madame De Montespán.

**PERETTE:** (aside) How mistaken I was!

(Enter Marsillac, Desmarets, Saint-Aignan, Grain-d'Orge and other gentlemen, etc.)

## LOUIS XIV AND THE FLOWER GIRL OF THE ORANGERY

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** (ridiculously dressed and surrounded by gentlemen) Let me be announced, let me be greeted! Beware when I pass. I am satisfied with you, gentlemen, my colleagues, you are very likable and your Sherry wine, too.

**DESMARETS:** Silence before the King! Your Majesty, permit me to present to him

**KING:** The Baron de Grain-d'Orge.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Better than that, sire! Since I paid cash, they named me Count. They made me a good deal!

**GUILLAUME:** What, cousin, you are going to be a Countess?

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Countess Will she consent now?

**GUILLAUME:** Pardon it's that, before His Majesty, I don't dare repeat what Perette just told me.

**KING:** Speak.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** The king allows it.

**GUILLAUME:** Ah! then I can tell you that just now I treated this poor child so roughly because I saw her weep without knowing why. Cousin, she said to me in her little voice which goes like this: I was wrong, he's a fine man, Mr. Grain-d'Orge, he would be incapable of deceiving a poor girl, him! so, if he still wanted me! well, I will be his wife.



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**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** She said that? What, does she love me? She loves me, perhaps?

**PERETTE:** No, cousin, I don't want them to say now that Mr. Grain-d'Orge is a great lord!

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** Oh! yes, if it's only that, don't let it bother you, Perette. If my title papers for count offend you I will lock 'em in a drawer. I won't go wearing my nobility in my buttonhole not so stupid.

**MADAME DE MONTESPAN:** You are going to leave, Perette. Be happy, that's the wish of the King, and my wish, too.

**KING:** (spitefully) Doubtlessly I'll keep it infinitely. (to Grain-d'Orge and casting a glance at Perette) Mr. de Grain-d'Orge, I permit you to present your wife to the court, I intend to receive the Countess.

**PERETTE:** May Your Majesty pardon me, but now I will never leave the country.

**GRAIN-D'ORGE:** (strutting) Oh, don't worry, I will come to see you all alone. That will come to same thing.

**KING:** Gentlemen, the hour of Council is here. (low to Perette) Perette au revoir! (offering Madame de Montespan his hand) You see plainly, Marquise, that you alarmed yourself wrongly. (Low to Marsillac, slipping the portrait into his hand) Tomorrow this portrait to the widow Scarron. (aloud) Let's leave!

**CHORUS:** (the king leaves with his court during this chorus) Let's sing the glory of this great king.

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He's just fulfilled all our wishes.  
One day history will say  
Louis has made everybody happy.

**CURTAIN**