

ROLAND: A tragedy

By Quinault

Table of Contents

<u>ROLAND: A tragedy</u>	1
<u>By Quinault</u>	2
<u>ACT I</u>	5
<u>ACT II</u>	10
<u>ACT III</u>	15
<u>ACT IV</u>	20
<u>ACT V</u>	27

ROLAND: A tragedy

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- ACT I
- ACT II
- ACT III
- ACT IV
- ACT V

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Etext by Dagny

1685
Translated and adapted by
Frank J. Morlock
C 2003

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PROLOGUE

CHARACTERS

DEMOGORGON, king of the fairies, and the first genie on earth

TROUPE OF FAIRIES

TROUPES OF GENIES OF THE EARTH

The stage represents the Palace of Demogorgon. Demogorgon is on his throne, accompanied by a troupe of genies and a troupe of fairies.

DEMOGORGON: Heaven, which made me your king,
Interests me in your destiny.

I am gathering you here to calm your terror.

It's time for games to drive away your sadness.

Peace flees the uproar of terrible combats;

But the voice of the conqueror calls it down here.

Pitiless war and its horrifying furors

Will no longer ravage your happy retreats.

All give way to the greatest of heroes;

In vain, envy and rage join together;

He only punishes his trembling enemies

By condemning them to stand at ease.

DEMOGORGON, THE PRINCIPAL FAIRY AND THE CHORUSES:

No longer are the clash of arms heard.

Sweet pleasures, resume your charms;

Innocent games, come muster up.

Nothing can bother you.

(The fairies express their joy by dancing and singing.)

ROLAND: A tragedy

CHORUS OF FAIRIES: How horrifying war is!

What blessing is sweeter than that of peace?

Is it possible to cherish its charms more?

How agreeable is its reign!

May it last forever.

We don't have a fine life

Except when we see the birth

Of tender loves!

All things laugh, all things enchant.

Let's sing of charming peace.

Let's sing of happy fate

Which is going to fulfill our wishes.

Let's all sing of charming peace.

Let's sing of happy fate

Which is going to fulfill our wishes.

THE PRINCIPAL FAIRY: In the midst of a profound peace,

Let's offer new games to the glorious heroes

Who take care of the world's wellbeing.

Let's go transform ourselves to appear before his eyes.

DEMOGORGON: Let's retell the story of celebrated Roland.

France gave him life.

Let's demonstrate the errors into which

Love can entangle a heart that neglects glory.

DEMOGORGON AND THE PRINCIPAL FAIRY: Let's go make our voices heard

On the happy shores of the Seine.

Let's go make our voices heard

By the conqueror who rules over all.

DEMOGORGON AND THE PRINCIPAL FAIRY AND THE CHORUS:

Let's go make our voices heard

On the happy shores of the Seine.

Let's go make our voices heard

By the conqueror who rules over all. (The genies and the fairies attempt some dances and songs they are preparing. A fairy sings and the chorus of genies and fairies responds to her.)

It's love which threatens us;

How many hearts are in danger!

Some misfortunes that love causes

Cannot be disentangled.

When driven off, it returns.

It revenges itself as it pleases.

It's love which threatens us;

How many hearts are in danger!

DEMOGORGON, THE PRINCIPAL FAIRY AND THE CHORUSES: (singing together)

The conqueror forced war

To extinguish its torch;

He returns rest to the earth.

What triumph is finer!

CURTAIN

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ROLAND

Tragedy

ROLAND: A tragedy

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CHARACTERS:

ANGELICA, Queen of Cathay

THEMIRE, confidant of Angelica

MALE FOLLOWERS OF ANGELICA

FEMALE FOLLOWERS OF ANGELICA

MEDOR, servant of one of the African Kings

ZILIANTE, Prince of Orientals

TROUPE OF ISLANDERS in the suite of Ziliante

ROLAND, nephew of Charlemagne, and the most renowned of Paladins

TROUPE OF CUPIDS

TROUPE OF SIRENS

TROUPE OF RIVER GODS

TROUPE OF WOOD NYMPHS

TROUPE OF ENCHANTED LOVERS (of both sexes)

TROUPE OF PEOPLE OF CATHAY (Angelica's subjects)

ASTOLPHE, friend of Roland

CORYDON, Shepherd, lover of Belise

TERSANDRE, Shepherd, father of Belise

BELISE, Shepherdess, lover of Corydon

TROUPE OF SHEPHERDS

TROUPE OF SHEPHERDESSES

LOGISTILLA, one of the most powerful of fairies, and the wisest

TROUPE OF FAIRIES IN THE SUITE OF LOGISTILLA

TROUPE OF SHADES OF ANCIENT HEROES

GLORY

SUITE OF GLORY

TERROR

RENOWN

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ACT I

The stage represents a hamlet.

ANGELICA: (alone) Ah! how excited my heart is!

Love is battling there with Pride.

I don't know which of the two is winning;

Sometimes love is conqueror;

From moment to moment a mortal war

Revives in my soul.

What trouble, alas! what harshness!

Funereal love, cruel pride,

Won't you stop tearing my heart apart?

THEMIRE: (entering) You have little impatience

To see the rich gift they're going to present to you.

It's a prize Roland has had brought to you

From distant shores where day finds its birth.

He knew how to purchase it for you

By means of a thousand exploits.

Will you be without gratitude?

Must so much love deserve

Nothing but eternal indifference?

ANGELICA: The invincible Roland has not done so much for me;

Remind me what I owe him.

THEMIRE: Could you forget the passion with which he loves you?

ANGELICA: I think as much as I am able

Of his rare valor, of his intense love:

But despite all my efforts, in the trouble I am in,

I fear of forgetting even myself.

I fear that my pride may succumb today.

THEMIRE: Love Roland in your turn.

There's no region where his glory does not sail.

At least pride consoles itself

When glory forces it to give in to love.

By the strength of his arms Roland overturns all.

His arm knows how to strengthen a tottering throne.

ANGELICA: Alas! alas! What charms Medor has!

Ah! Why hasn't he Roland's glory?

THEMIRE: Medor?

ANGELICA: My weakness astonishes you.

Don't hide anything from me; speak, I order you to.

Display to my heart the shame of its choice.

THEMIRE: Medor has received life from obscure blood.

Could he be loved by a queen so proud?

By a queen who looks with scorn

On heroes and kings under her sway?

ANGELICA: My heart was calm, and thought it always would be,

When I found Medor, wounded, near death.

In that rural place, pity

stopped me to help him.

ROLAND: A tragedy

The reward of my aid is the ill I endure.
Pity for Medor knew how to soften me.
My funereal languishing increases in proportion
To the curing of his wounds.
And I am in danger of never being cured.

THEMIRE: Distance your eyes from one who may please you too much.

ANGELICA: My glory demands it; it must be satisfied;
Medor must be banished. Alas, banish Medor!
That's condemning myself to death.
No matter, it must be done: let him leave, let him quit me. (she notices Medor)
He's daydreaming, he's heading here.
How speechless I am.
Don't abandon me.

(Angelica and Themire withdraw.)

MEDOR: (entering alone) Ah! What torment
Being in love, but keeping
An eternal silence.
To love without hope.
I love a queen, alas! By what enchantment
Have I forgotten her rank and my birth
And how much distance fate has placed between us?
Wretch that I am! I love a charming object
That so many kings have loved vainly!
I must hide a love that offends her.
At every moment I must do
A cruel violence to myself.
Ah! What torment
Being in love, but keeping
An eternal silence.
Ah! What torture
To love without hope!

MEDOR: (seeing Angelica)
They've just come to these parts on behalf of Roland
To offer you a precious gift.
He loves you, he serves you; his love can appear;
And absent though he is, he lets you know it.
His travails, whatever they may be are well rewarded.
O too happy Roland!

ANGELICA: Roland may be
Less happy than you think;
The more his love appears, the more it bothers me.
I'm ashamed of owing him too much.
No, don't envy his fortune.

MEDOR: It's true he hasn't the pleasure of seeing you.

ANGELICA: I flee him and henceforth I aspire only
To return to my empire without him.
Finally, Medor, finally, I want to know
If I have absolute power over you.

MEDOR: You are sovereign mistress of my fate.
I served a great king; I followed his steps
From the banks of the Nile to the shores of the Seine.

ROLAND: A tragedy

He died seeking glory and battles;
But for you I was going to follow him
To the other side of death.

To serve you is my only wish;
I make it my sweetest hope.

You saved my life,
Happy am I, if I ruin myself for you.

ANGELICA: Medor, you are right to believe
That I'm interested in your life.

I took care of it, heaven blessed my aid.
In the end, it's time to have a care of my glory.

I wanted to remain near you from pity
So long as my aid was necessary.

My pity no longer has anything to do;
It is time for us to separate.

Leave, Medor.

MEDOR: O heaven!

ANGELICA: Leave without delay.

MEDOR: Alas! Have I succeeded in displeasing you?

ANGELICA: No, no, I'm not angry;
Let's leave superfluous talk.

Leave!

MEDOR: I shall never see you again!

ANGELICA: Choose where you wish to love.
I will take care of your fate.

MEDOR: You forbid me from following you;
I only wish death.

ANGELICA: Live, preserve my work.

Think that it does me outrage
For you to view your life with scorn
After the care I have taken of it.

MEDOR: You wish me to live and your decree drives me away.
My life is not reserved to serve you!

And what do you want me to do
With this life you've saved for me?

ANGELICA: Far from me, enjoy a peaceful fate!

MEDOR: Far from you! Heaven! Is it possible?

Ah! Was it necessary to help me,
Only to let me die?

ANGELICA: Let's finish regrets which
Could take too long to be heard;

Don't say anything more to me,
I don't want to hear it.

It's time for us to separate.

Leave, Medor.

MEDOR: O heaven!

ANGELICA: Leave without delay.

(Medor leaves.)

ANGELICA: I will no longer see the one I love.
Do you really conceive the extreme effort
That I made over myself today by banishing Medor?

ROLAND: A tragedy

He's leaving desperate; you see to what I am exposing him.

He's going to die, I'm the cause of it.

I will die soon after him.

No, a too tender love interests me in his life.

No, he shan't leave; let's go call him back.

Unfortunate! Where do I want to go?

I am going to betray my glory and reveal my weakness.

Heavens! What is my misfortune!

If love prevails over me

I ought to die of shame.

If I must tear him out of my heart

I will die of sorrow.

THEMIRE: The help of absence

Is powerful assistance.

It's the unique hope

Of hearts that wish to flee funereal loves.

ANGELICA: The help of absence

Is cruel assistance.

Ah! What violence,

To flee incessantly that which always charms!

THEMIRE AND ANGELIQUE: The help of absence

Is a powerful assistance,

Is a cruel assistance.

ANGELICA: What! Medor forever separated from me!

Must you inspire me with such a barbarous plan?

Themire, I followed your advice scrupulously.

Make Medor return, don't let anything keep you.

Go, run—But he's coming back—never mind, let him come.

Wait—I want—alas! Do I know what I want?

THEMIRE: See these strangers, control yourself for them.

ANGELICA Can I freely sigh and pity myself?

Must I always control myself!

Without Medor everything seems horrifying to me.

Go, see him, and at least console a wretch.

(Themire leaves; Ziliante and the Troupe of Islanders enter.)

ZILIANTE: (presenting a bracelet to Angelica)

I owe my deliverance to generous Roland.

From a horrifying charm his valor saved me.

He didn't want my gratitude

Except this present which he reserved for you.

From the shore where Dawn opens the gate to the day

I am coming to offer it to you.

You burn Roland with a flame that devours him.

But who can see the beauty that he adores

Without astonishment at the excess of his love.

Triumph, charming queen,

Triumph over the greatest hearts.

(The Chorus of Islanders sings these last verses as Ziliante presents the bracelet to Angelica, and the rest of the islanders dance in the manner of their country.)

CHORUS OF ISLANDERS: Triumph, charming queen,

Triumph over the greatest of hearts.

ROLAND: A tragedy

It's not just famous conquerors
That are permitted to wear your fetters.
Triumph, charming queen,
Triumph over the greatest hearts.

TWO ISLANDERS: In our parts

They sigh without shame.

Love whose sway we follow

Has no allures.

Flee the cruel

Beauties.

Fear their power.

What's the use of seeing them?

Ah! Protect us from a love without hope.

What pain!

What torture

To be lover

Of an inhuman woman.

If we must be amorous

Let's love to be happy.

Without love

It would be boring to live,

But we must cease to follow

Whoever flees us forever.

Let's flee the cruel

Beauties, etc.

CURTAIN

ACT II

The stage represents the enchanted fountain of love in the midst of a forest.

THEMIRE: A dangerous charm attracts you to these woods.

You must turn your steps away.

Love reigns hereabouts; avoid its attractions;

Happy the one who can flee love's sway.

ANGELICA: I wear in the depth of my heart my funereal martyrdom.

Alas! Where can I go? Where can I flee, alas!

That love won't follow me?

Ah! I banished Medor; my sorrow is mortal.

Why didn't you urge him to disobey me?

THEMIRE: I must be faithful to you.

ANGELICA: To prevent my death, wouldn't you dare to betray me?

O too cruel fidelity!

My heart's trouble can no longer calm itself.

No, I no longer hope for a remedy for my pains.

In these forests, Merlin enchanted two fountains,

One makes you hate, and the other makes you love.

It's the fountain of hate

That I intend to seek out today.

Alas! What's the use to me of taking such a long detour?

I'm distracted in these woods, and my search is vain.

A fatal destiny keeps drawing me despite myself

To the fountain of love.

THEMIRE: You must cure yourself of the evil that possesses you.

You have nothing to reproach yourself with.

You will find the remedy

If you really want to find it.

ANGELICA: No, I am no longer seeking that terrible fountain

Which turns a tender love into inflexible hate.

It's cruel comfort I'm not seeking.

I will hate Medor! No, it's not possible.

From this horrible remedy, I don't want any cure.

Rather, I consent to die.

THEMIRE: (singing with a male and female follower of Angelica)

No, one cannot pity too much

A heart that allows itself to be inflamed.

Ah! What a torture to love!

How love's fire is to be feared!

How easy it is to ignite,

How difficult to extinguish.

No, one cannot pity too much

A heart that allows itself to be inflamed.

Ah! What a torture to love!

ANGELICA: Someone's coming; it's Roland.

THEMIRE: This invincible warrior

Is abandoning everything to see you.

ANGELICA: He's flattering himself with a vain hope.

ROLAND: A tragedy

When I wish it, this ring will make me invisible.

(Angelica places the ring in her mouth; its magic power makes her invisible.)

ROLAND: (entering)

Beautiful Angelica, finally I've found you hereabouts.

Heaven! What enchantment steals you from my eyes?

Angelica, charming queen,

My shouts vainly echo through these forests.

Angelica, inhuman ingrate!

What pleasure do you take in my sad pining?

Angelica, inhuman ingrate!

What barbarous pleasure do you find in my pain? (speaking to Themire)

What cruelty! What scorn!

You know what I've done for her.

You know my faithful love

And you see what the reward is for it!

What cruelty! What scorn!

THEMIRE: Can she scorn you without crime?

The valor you've performed has created a dazzling desert.

If you never sought anything but esteem

What mortal would be more content!

ROLAND: What has become of my strength? My power is useless.

Eh! What use is it for me today

To possess the gifts that heaven once gave Achilles?

I am leaving my king without support.

He no longer has anything except Paris for asylum.

The cruel Africans are going to triumph over him.

I see the terrible fate of my sad fatherland.

It is ready to fall under barbarous rule.

I hear its quavering voice.

But it is vain that it cries.

An unfortunate love enchants me in these woods.

Angelica! In vain I call her.

She's pitiless, the cruel one!

Eh! Why suffer so much?

Why don't I pity myself?

It's all over and I want the ingrate to know it;

It's all over; my fetters are broken forever.

It's useless for her to hide herself.

No, I no longer want to see her fatal beauty.

It just costs me too much.

Scorn extinguishes my flame.

Fortunate cruelty

That gives peace to my soul!

Fortunate cruelty

That sets me at liberty.

Misery! I'm flattering myself and my rage is vain.

Coward! Can't I break such a shameful chain?

How I feel secret troubles!

Despite me, my heart follows funereal allures;

I give in to the charm that drags me.

Angelica, inhuman ingrate!

ROLAND: A tragedy

What pleasure do you find in my sad pinings?

Angelica, inhuman ingrate!

What barbarous pleasure do you find in my pain?

(Angelica, seeing Roland distance himself takes her magic ring from her mouth and shows herself to Themire.)

THEMIRE: Where must I go? I see you again.

ANGELICA: I'm not hiding from you.

THEMIRE: Roland is seeking you in vain in this solitary abode.

ANGELICA: My heart is engaged; Roland cannot please me.

What hope could I offer him?

I am fleeing him from pity; I don't know what better to do

Than to help him cure himself.

Where can Medor be? Despair oppresses him.

Why can't I find him?

At least I can think of him without cease.

THEMIRE: Your heart ought to reserve itself for Roland.

ANGELICA: Speak to me of Medor or let me dream.

It's love itself that takes care

To embellish these pleasant regions.

But I don't see the one I love;

Nothing knows how to please my eyes.

MEDOR: (entering) Pleasant retreats,

Love that made you,

Destined you for happy lovers.

I trouble your sweet secrets;

But in my despair, my indiscreet wailing

Will not trouble you much longer.

ANGELICA: That's Medor that I just heard:

Heaven!

THEMIRE: (wanting to stop Angelica)

What! You will see him?

ANGELICA: Eh! Can I prevent myself from it!

It's too hard to follow a cruel duty.

I will find Medor, love wants to return me to him.

I cannot live without seeing him.

MEDOR: Fountain, which with such pure water

Irrigates these beautiful flowers,

In vain your charming murmur

Flatters the torment I endure.

Nothing can enchant my mortal sorrows!

The one I love is fleeing me, and I am fleeing the whole world.

Why drag my life and my misfortunes any further!

Streams, I am going to mix my blood with your ocean;

It's too little to mix my tears with it.

(Medor draws his sword to strike himself, and Angelica stops him.)

ANGELICA: Live, Medor.

MEDOR: Adorable queen,

You care too much for the life of a wretch.

ANGELICA: Why are you running towards death?

MEDOR: It's an unbearable torture

To live and not see you.

ROLAND: A tragedy

ANGELICA: I thought you had more control over yourself.

MEDOR: Alas! If you could know
The degree to which I offend you.

ANGELICA: Nothing offends me so much as your despair.

MEDOR: I will live, if that's your wish;
I see you; my fate is too sweet.

But if I must separate from you,
I cannot answer for my life.

ANGELICA: Take care of your life, Medor, you must.
It cost me dearly to save it.

It's precious to me, I've made you know that.

MEDOR: Generous queen, get it over with;
Without you, can I live?

ANGELICA: Live.

There may be a reward for it.

MEDOR: O heaven! What do I hear?

ANGELICA: It's no longer time
For the two of us to fear knowing each other.

We've said too much; Medor, I understand you.
And I allow you to understand me.

MEDOR: At your feet.

ANGELICA: Rise; I have the right to make a king;
I intend to join under the same rule

Your destiny and mine.

MEDOR: Ah! The more you forget your grandeur for me,
The more I must remember it.

ANGELICA: My glory grumbles today.

I see my fate very much above yours.

But who can prevent love

From joining two hearts that are made for each other?

MEDOR: Witness the despair with which my heart is oppressed.

Abodes where my death was my sole hope.

Who would have said, who would ever have thought

That you would be witness to the blessing that enchants me?

(Love with troupes of sirens, water gods, nymphs and sylphs, enchanted lovers enter.)

CHORUS OF CUPIDS: (who are around the fountain)

Love, love each other.

ANGELICA, MEDOR AND THE CHORUSES: Let's love, let's love each other.

CHORUS OF CUPIDS: Love is calling you.

How beautiful its flame is!

Love is calling to you all.

Love, love each other.

ANGELICA, MEDOR AND THE CHORUSES: Love is calling us.

How beautiful its flame is!

Love is calling all of us.

Let's love, let's love each other.

CHORUS OF CUPIDS: Love punishes a rebellious heart.

No one can avoid love's blows.

ANGELICA, MEDOR AND THE CHORUSES: What is sweeter
Than a faithful love!

CHORUS OF CUPIDS: Love, love each other.

ROLAND: A tragedy

ANGELICA, MEDOR, AND THE CHORUSES:

Let's love, let's love each other.

Love is calling us.

How beautiful its flame is.

Love is calling all of us.

Let's love, let's love each other.

(The enchanted lovers dance around Medor and Angelica.)

TWO ENCHANTED LOVERS:

Whoever tastes these waters can no longer protect himself

From following love's laws.

Let's taste them thousands and thousands of times.

If one tastes love, one never tastes too much.

THE SMALL CHORUS: Forever let this charming fetter enchain us.

THE GRAND CHORUS: Tender loves

Forever enchant us.

Sad reason we flee your assistance.

SMALL CHORUS: O sweet life,

Worthy of envy!

GRAND CHORUS: O happy days! How short we find you!

SMALL CHORUS: Without loving, how can we live?

GRAND CHORUS:

How many pleasures, how many games are going to follow us!

SMALL CHORUS: Tender loves

Forever enchant us.

Burnish our hearts with these new flames.

GRAND CHORUS: Let's carefully tend such a beautiful fire.

SMALL CHORUS: Let's live happily in such beautiful fetters.

GRAND CHORUS We'll wear our fetters in the grave.

SMALL CHORUS: O sweet life,

Worthy of envy!

GRAND CHORUS: Tender loves

Forever enchant us.

(The enchanted lovers accompany Medor and Angelica in dancing, Love and his cupids fly and serve as their guides.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

The stage represents a seaport.

MEDOR: No, I hear your advice only with pain.

You've tempted me to injure my love.

THEMIRE: Your life's in peril, and it is dear to my queen;

Don't suspect my fidelity to this degree.

Roland is hereabouts; he's a terrible rival.

And your ruin is certain

If you expose yourself to his fatal wrath.

MEDOR: An unfortunate must view death without alarm.

THEMIRE: Your happiness will make him a thousand times more jealous:

A proud beauty has surrendered her arms to you.

Your two hearts are joined by the softest fetters.

Ah! If life has no attractions for you,

For whom can it have charms?

See the glorious fate

That the queen is sharing with you.

Her most zealous subjects are awaiting her in the seaport

Before leaving, her order instructs them

To render you a ceremonious homage.

They are going to receive you as their sovereign.

MEDOR: The queen has left me; Roland is with her.

THEMIRE: He will see her proud and cruel.

MEDOR: Never mind, he is still seeing her.

My unrest is mortal.

Eh! Doesn't she fear Roland in despair?

THEMIRE: She fears for you; it's her unique wish

To place your life in safety by distancing it from hers.

MEDOR: If my happiness must

Be ravished from me by my rival,

It's cruelty

To have a care of my life.

THEMIRE: You must be delivered from these somber pains.

MEDOR: I didn't dare to hope

For the blessing that love is giving me.

Such a great blessing astonishes me,

And I have trouble convincing myself

That it can last for long.

THEMIRE: Let's withdraw; Roland's coming forward.

If he has the least knowledge of your love

Nothing can help you.

MEDOR: I want to observe him, even if I must perish for it.

(Medor clings to the side and listens to Roland and Angelica. Roland and Angelica enter.)

ROLAND: Must I still love you?

I ought to blush for my extreme weakness.

Ingrate! You abuse it.

The more I serve you, the more you scorn me.

What shame my heart has to still be so faithful!

ROLAND: A tragedy

Why do I find you so beautiful?
No, with all your charming and sweet attractions,
You don't deserve the love
That I have for you, cruel one!

ANGELICA: I haven't lost the memory
Of what I owe you.
You would have been delivered
Of the trouble that I see you in
If you'd wanted to believe me.
You know it, it's despite me
That such a great heart languishes under my rule;
I've done what I could to return it to glory.

ROLAND: Ah! I know only too well with what harshness
You punish my cowardly love.
Your scorn bursts out; it's no longer time to feign;
All dissembling is in vain.
I pardon the scorn of the rest of humans,
I indeed deserve it; I am wrong to complain of it.
I am abandoning my glory and allowing it to tarnish,
I cherish the features that wound me.
I cannot return from my distraction,
But you cause my weakness.
Is it up to you to punish me for it?

ANGELICA: Alas!

ROLAND: What part do I take in that sigh?
Can such a tender sigh
Be addressed to some other lover?
Do you make me hear it
Just to increase my torture?
Inhuman one! Ah! Is it possible
That scorning a love which has never been equaled
You've become infatuated for someone other than myself?
Tremble for my lucky rival.
In your uneasy eyes I read my misfortune.
My presence annoys you.
You are thinking only of leaving me.

ANGELICA: If I wanted to flee you who could stop me?
I've already revealed to you
How easy it is for me to disappear
From the eyes of importunates I wish to avoid.

ROLAND: Ah! At least leave me the only blessing which remains to me!
Leave me the funereal sweetness
Of seeing such charming attractions.
It's without hope that I will follow your steps.
You will never be favorable to my desires.
I will see you forever pitiless.
But the greatest of evils is not to see you.

ANGELICA: Why can't I flee you again?

ROLAND: Why fear the one who adores you?

ANGELICA: Why do you love me so much?
An indomitable hero

ROLAND: A tragedy

Is really too formidable
With such a constant love.

ROLAND: Heaven! O heaven! It's for me that Angelica sighs!

ANGELICA: You constrain me to speak of it too much.

ROLAND: You love me!

ANGELICA: I can only admit it with regret.

Your constancy is triumphant.

Don't make an indiscreet uproar.

Spare my dying pride,

Be satisfied with a secret triumph.

ROLAND: In these isolated abodes, in a profound peace,

Let's go enjoy the fate which is going to fulfill our wishes.

Let two united hearts be happy

Forgetting the rest of the world.

ANGELICA: Leave me to send away these officious people

With whom we would be embarrassed.

Await me at a distance, I am going to follow you everywhere.

It's you alone that I wish to love.

(Roland moves away.)

MEDOR: Ah! I am suffering a torture more cruel than death!

THEMIRE: Where do you want to go? What do you plan to do?

ANGELICA: Let me calm his distraction.

See that Roland cannot hear us.

(Themire goes in the direction Roland has gone.)

MEDOR: Is it possible you have responded to his desires?

ANGELICA: Do you want to insult me when you ought to pity me?

To blind Roland, I am reduced to trickery;

He must be removed or you are ruined.

MEDOR: You will follow him? No, no, much rather that I perish.

ANGELICA: Alas! all human power

Arms itself vainly against him.

We must arm ourselves with artifice.

Medor, I am trembling for your life.

It is in extreme peril.

What won't I do

To save the one I love?

MEDOR: Roland's going to separate me

From the object I adore.

What have I to dread

But to remain living?

ANGELICA: It's to you that my heart is given forever.

I will bring Roland only misfortune.

Love will sell a costly vain hope to him.

I can, with this ring, vanish from his sight.

Soon you will see me; soon far from these regions

Our faithful passion will be in safety.

I want to put in your hands my supreme power.

MEDOR AND ANGELICA: I only want your heart.

It's the only empire

That I sigh for.

I only want your heart.

ROLAND: A tragedy

That's enough for my happiness.

MEDOR: You are leaving me, and I remain
Troubled with the darkest pain.

My life is attached to the pleasure of seeing you.

Wouldn't it be better for me to die

By Roland's hand than from my despair?

ANGELICA: Live for me; remember

That your destiny is joined to mine.

My death will follow your death.

Let's avoid a tragic destiny.

Doesn't Medor want

To live for Angelica?

MEDOR: If I weren't living for you

I couldn't endure life.

ANGELICA: Let's live, love invites us to;

Let's preserve ourselves

To love each other despite envy.

Let's preserve ourselves

To live happily far from the envious.

I could not endure life

If I weren't living for you.

MEDOR: Let's live, love invites us to.

Let's preserve ourselves

For a love so sweet.

(Medor and Angelica repeat these last three lines together.)

(A troupe of the people of Cathay enter, Angelica's subjects.)

ANGELICA: (speaking to her subjects) Those of you who want to show

The ardent zeal you have for me,

Recognize Medor for your master.

Render homage to your king.

(Angelica goes to find Roland to remove him from the seaport in which she plans to embark with Medor. The people of Cathay render homage to Medor; they raise him on a throne and witness with their songs and dances the joy they have in recognizing him as their sovereign.)

CHORUS: It's Medor that a queen so beautiful

Has chosen to reign with her.

Is there a mortal today

Happier than he?

ONE OF ANGELICA'S SUBJECTS:

Despite the pride of the great name of queen

She gives up and love enfetters her.

From thousands and thousands of lovers her heart escaped.

It was reserved for lovable Medor.

ONE OF ANGELICA'S FEMALE FOLLOWERS:

Very happy a lover who's exempted

From the pains of a boring trial!

How love made agreeable fetters for Medor!

Hardly was he a lover than he became a happy lover.

CHORUS: His rivals have no right to any further pretensions,

Except to the complaints they are going to let be heard.

At first rumor of a choice so sweet

How jealous kings will be.

ROLAND: A tragedy

We are all coming
To present you our homage.
To reign over us
Is your least advantage.
Love bestows a blessing worth a thousand times
The pomp attending the most superb kings.
ONE OF ANGELICA'S SUBJECTS: Angelica is no longer unfeeling;
Her pride thought itself invincible.
She fled love and would be fleeing it still
But for the powerful charm of Medor's glance.

CHORUS: Happy Medor! What glory
To have carried off
A complete victory
Over so much pride!
What happiness is rarer
Or whose flames are more beautiful!
May love prepare you
For new pleasures!
It's for you they made
It's features so sweet.

ONE OF THE FEMALE FOLLOWERS OF ANGELICA:
A heart so proud is in its turn
Tender and sensitive.
Medor obtained it, though his love
Didn't dare expect it.
Nothing has more allure.

CHORUS: You wear a rich crown.
A creature full of attractions bestowed it on you.

ONE OF ANGELICA'S SUBJECTS:
How sweet it is to grant love and grandeur.
When one can join them together, it's a perfect joy.

ONE OF THE FEMALE FOLLOWERS OF ANGELICA:
Tender hearts, may you love peacefully!
There's no fate more charming.

CHORUS: May love enchant you everywhere.
May your passion be constant forever.
Forget grandeurs rather than your love.
Your happiness depends on your loving forever.
Love, reign, despite envy.

Taste the sweetest blessings in life.
Fortune and love, glory and pleasure
May they forever be able to fulfill your desires.
In peace and in war,
In all regions,
To the ends of the earth,
We will follow your steps.
Let lucky Medor be one of the greatest kings.
May he render happy those who follow his laws!

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The stage represents a grotto in the midst of a grove.

ROLAND: Go, your care annoys me; Leave me, Astolphe.

ASTOLPHE: What charm keeps you in this solitary place?

ROLAND: Friend, I have nothing for you,
Either of secrets or of mystery.
Angelica no longer flees me.
I was satisfied to see her harshness soften
When we found the king of Circassia
And the superb Ferragus.
The two of them, jealous of my supreme happiness,
Have confronted me, arms in hand.
I was going to punish them, but the beauty that I love,
With her magic ring, suddenly disappeared.
My rivals have followed her in vain.
She took care to inform me
The way she intended to take.
We promised each other to be, at day's end,
At the fountain of love.
I came very soon to give myself up.
I'm going ahead of her, annoyed to wait for her,
I rambled through these surrounding regions.
The creature who enchants me
Has never had so much charm.
How love increases
From the pleasure of being loved.

ASTOLPHE: This empire has placed its hope in you alone.
If you do not undertake its defense,
It will fall in a short time,
Under a barbarous power.
Think that you are losing precious moments.

ROLAND: I am thinking of the happiness I am expecting.

ASTOLPHE: Come crown your head
With the immortal laurels that are being presented to you.

ROLAND: I see love preparing itself
To complete my happiness;
I am going to enjoy the conquest
Of a heart that has cost me so much.

ASTOLPHE: The great heart of Roland is made only for glory.
Can it languish in a shameful repose?
To triumph over love, there's not any victory
That better demonstrates the virtue of a hero.

ROLAND: When inhuman harshness
Repaid my love with such cruel torture
I was unable to leave my fetters.
Can I disentangle myself from such a charming chain
When I've reached a happy moment
In which I must receive the reward for so many pains?

ROLAND: A tragedy

Go, leave me alone in these parts.
Angelica has feelings for me.
For all others she wishes to be invisible.
Go, don't prevent her from appearing before my eyes.
(Astolphe retires and Roland seeks for Angelica.)

ROLAND: (alone) Ah! I will wait a long while; night's still far off.

What! The Sun intends to shine forever?
Jealous of my happiness, it prolongs its course
To delay the beauty that I adore.
O night! Favor my amorous wishes;
Urge the day—star to descend into the ocean.
Deploy in the air your shadowy veils.
I won't trouble your peaceful profundity
With my sorrowful cries.

The charming object of my eyes
Is only waiting for you to make happy
The most faithful lover in the world.
O night! Favor my amorous wishes!

How green these lawns are! How beautiful this grotto is! (Roland reads in a low voice the verses written on the grotto)

What I read informs me that love has led
Into this grove, far from commotion,
Two lovers who were burning with a mutual passion.
I hope that love will soon
Escort the beauty that I love here.
Enchanted with an intense happiness
We will soon write on this grotto. (Roland repeats aloud what he read in whispers)
Beautiful place, sweet asylum
To our happy loves,
May you forever be
Charming and calm!

Let's see more. What's this I see?
These words seem traced by Angelica's hand. (Roland reads the two verses that Angelica wrote)
Heavens! It's for some one other than me
That her love is revealing itself. (Roland repeats aloud what he read in whispers)
Angelica pledges her heart.

Medor is its conqueror!
She was flattering me with a vain hope!
The ingrate! It's not a suspicion which offends her?
Medor is its conqueror! No, I haven't yet heard of Medor.
My love would instead have taken alarms
If here I'd found the name
Of an intrepid son of Aymon,
Or another warrior celebrated in arms.
Angelica hasn't dared
To confess the true master of her heart.
And I can easily understand
That she speaks of me under a supposed name.

It's for me alone that she sighs;
She told me too much, and I am very certain of it.
Let's read these other words; they are in another hand. (Roland reads the two lines that Medor wrote)

ROLAND: A tragedy

What have I read? Heaven! Got to reread it. (Roland repeats aloud what he read in whispers)

How happy Medor is;

Angelica fulfills his wishes.

This Medor, whoever he may be, is giving himself the glory here

Of being the happy conqueror of an object so charming.

Angelica has fulfilled the wishes of another lover!

She was able to betray me! No, I cannot believe it.

No, no, some envious person has attempted, with these words,

To blacken the object that I love and to trouble my repose. (The sound of bagpipes can be heard off; Roland continues)

I hear an uproar of rustic music.

I must seek Angelica in these parts.

At the first glance of her eyes

My dark suspicions are going to disappear.

Perhaps she stopped

To see Shepherds from the nearby hamlet

Dance to the sound of shepherds' flutes.

(A troupe of shepherds and shepherdesses takes part in the joy of Corydon and Belise who are to be married the next day, and approaches the grotto dancing and singing. Roland doesn't notice Angelica and goes to seek her in the neighborhood.)

CORYDON, BELISE AND THE TROUPE OF SHEPHERDS AND SHEPHERDESSES : (entering)

When one enters this grove

Who can prevent himself from loving?

How love soon knows

To disarm us in these shadows!

Effortlessly, it entangles us

In the fetters it wishes to forge.

When one enters this grove

Who can prevent himself from falling in love?

How many birds in this foliage!

How their singing must charm us!

Night and day, by their chirping,

Their love intends to express itself.

When one enters this grove

Who can prevent himself from loving?

A SHEPHERD AND A SHEPHERDESS: Live in peace;

Lovers, be faithful,

Love each other forever.

Your mutual passions

Fulfill your wishes.

It's an extreme joy

To obtain what one loves

Without languishing too long.

Be constant,

Always love the same way.

Always live satisfied.

How love is beautiful

When it's new!

What blessing has more attractions?

Live in peace;

Lovers, be faithful

ROLAND: A tragedy

Love each other forever.

CORYDON: I will love my shepherdess forever.

BELISE: I will love my shepherd forever.

CORYDON: My love is sincere;

I will love my shepherdess forever.

BELISE: My heart cannot change

I will love my shepherd forever.

CORYDON AND BELISE: My love is sincere;

My heart cannot change.

CORYDON: I will always love my shepherdess.

BELISE: I will always love my shepherd.

(Roland, not having found Angelica, returns to ask news from the shepherds.)

CORYDON: Angelica is queen, and she is beautiful!

But neither her grandeur nor her charms

Will render me unfaithful;

I will never leave

My shepherdess for her.

BELISE: If the charming Medor were king

In the rich land watered by the Seine

And were capable of leaving Angelica for me

And made me a great queen,

No, I still wouldn't want

To leave my shepherd for Medor.

ROLAND: What are you saying here, about Medor, about Angelica?

CORYDON: They are the happy lovers whose story is public

In all the hamlets hereabouts.

BELISE: They left this beautiful abode regretfully;

These trees, these rocks, this rustic grotto,

All tell here of their love.

ROLAND: Ah! I am succumbing to the torture I endure.

CORYDON: Repose on this bed of green.

BELISE: You appear hurt; listen at leisure

About the pleasant adventure of these happy lovers.

You will hear it with pleasure.

(Roland, overwhelmed with sorrow, sits on and listens uneasily as Corydon and Belise tell him.)

CORYDON: In these parts, Medor was dying unassisted.

Angelica arrested his steps.

She knew how to employ an art whose power

Guaranteed Medor from death.

BELISE: Angelica is mistress of a great empire;

She is charming; she had her choice from

Hundreds of the richest kings.

Medor is without wealth, without nobility,

But Medor is so handsome that she preferred him

To a hundred kings who have sighed for her in vain.

CORYDON: One cannot love more;

Never was joy so sweet.

BELISE: They have given themselves to each other before us

The plight of marriage vows.

CORYDON: When the feast is prepared, we must find them.

BELISE: They were enchanted in these lovely retreats.

ROLAND: A tragedy

CORYDON: We could hardly snatch them away
From the charming spot you are on.

ROLAND: (rising hastily) Where am I? Just heaven! Where am I, wretch?

BELISE: Remain and see our dances and our games.

CORYDON: They promised me this beautiful shepherdess.
Honor our wedding; it will be tomorrow.

ROLAND: Where are these lovers going?

BELISE: They begged my father
To lead them to the nearest port.
Here he is: stay if you like to believe me;
You will learn from him the rest of the story.

TERSANDRE: Go, leave us, annoying cares;
Distance yourself from our peaceful games:
We possess an inestimable blessing
Which completes our desires.

Let our happy days flow by
In sweet and lasting leisure.
Go, leave us, annoying cares;
Distance yourself from our peaceful games.

CORYDON, BELISE, AND CHORUS:

Go, leave us, annoying cares;
Distance yourself from our peaceful games.

TERSANDRE: I saw this beautiful queen leave port—

ROLAND: Angelica has left!

TERSANDRE: And Medor with her;
She made him a great king. It's her unique care.

ROLAND: They left together!

TERSANDRE: They are already far away.
In the most happy regions of the world,
They are going, in peace, to taste a thousand pleasures.
Just as the wind reigns over the ocean,
All favor their desires.

ROLAND: (aside) The two of them have stolen my vengeance from me!

TERSANDRE: (to Corydon and Belise)
Angelica wanted to exceed our hope.
Behold this bracelet.

ROLAND: (looking at the bracelet) What do I see? Unfortunate!
I placed in her hands this reward for my courage;
It's a precious pledge of my faithful love.

TERSANDRE: As a reward for our efforts she gave it to us.

ROLAND: Heaven!

CORYDON AND BELISE: O heaven!

TERSANDRE: I received this gift from her very hand.
We were the witnesses of her extreme happiness.
She wanted to make us happy.

ROLAND: Heaven! Could I be overwhelmed by a more frightful blow?

TERSANDRE: But who is this warrior? Easily one may guess
That he comes of an illustrious origin.

CORYDON: We found him around here.

BELISE: His heart's trouble is revealed in his eyes.

CORYDON: He's agitated.

ROLAND: A tragedy

BELISE: He's threatening.

CORYDON: He's turning pale.

BELISE: He's sighing.

TERSANDRE: Perhaps his heart is undergoing an amorous martyrdom.

I am touched by his sorrows.

BELISE: What terrible glances!

ROLAND: The perfidious woman!

TERSANDRE: He's murmuring.

CORYDON: He's shaking.

BELISE: He's shedding tears!

ROLAND: How many oaths! Ah! The perjurer!

TERSANDRE: Don't abandon him in a pain so black.

ROLAND: She's laughing at my despair.

I loved her with a love so tender, so faithful.

TERSANDRE: His looks are more soft.

CORYDON: He is less agitated.

ROLAND: I thought to live happily with her.

Alas! What felicity!

TERSANDRE: No, I don't doubt it; it's love that's bothering him.

BELISE: Can love cause this somber sadness?

We've seen such satisfied lovers in these woods!

TERSANDRE: Whoever follows love's laws

Exposes himself to formidable evils.

For every two lovers that love sometimes makes happy,

There are a hundred wretches every day.

CORYDON: His trouble is abating.

TERSANDRE: I hope that, in the end,

We can ease his funereal pain.

Let's bless the love of Angelica:

Let's bless the love of Medor.

In the rich abode of a magnificent court,

On a throne of gold, may they

Love each other as they loved each other in a rustic abode!

CORYDON, BELISE, AND THE CHORUS: Let's bless the love of Angelica;

Let's bless the love of Medor.

ROLAND: Shut-up, wretches! Do you dare to ceaselessly

Pierce my sad heart with more horrible blows?

Wretches! Shut-up;

Give thanks to your baseness

Which shields you from my wrath.

TERSANDRE, CORYDON, BELISE, AND CHORUS:

Ah! Let's flee, flee everybody!

(They all scatter.)

ROLAND: (alone) I am betrayed! Who could have believed it?

O heaven! I am betrayed by the beautiful ingrate

For whom love made me betray my glory.

O sweet hope with which I was enchanted,

In what abyss have you hurled me?

Witnesses of an odious passion,

You have too greatly wounded my eyes.

Let all resound in these parts

ROLAND: A tragedy

The horror that reigns in my heart

(Roland smashes the inscriptions, and tears the branches off the trees, and smashes the rocks into pieces.)

ROLAND: Ah! I've descended into the night of the tomb!

Must love still pursue me?

This sword is nothing but a vain weight

For a plaintive ghost

(Roland throws away his armor, and puts himself in great disorder.)

ROLAND: What a gulf has opened! What do I perceive?

What funereal voices are shrieking?

Hell is arming a pitiless fury

Against me.

(Roland thinks he sees a fury; he speaks to it and imagines she responds.)

ROLAND: Barbarian! Ah! you return me to life!

What's your plan? speak—O horrible torture,

I must reveal a terrible example

Of the tortures of a funereal love.

CURTAIN

ACT V

The stage represents a palace of the wise fairy Logistilla.

ASTOLPHE: Wise and divine fairy,
To whom all things are possible,
You whose generous aid
For unfortunates always declares itself,
Will you be insensitive to Roland's misfortunes?
This hero, that love has driven mad,
Is leading a deplorable life;
His fate which was so glorious
Makes him more pitied than it made him envied.

LOGISTILLA: Your just wishes have been foreseen;
Already by paths unknown to mortals
I brought Roland to this happy asylum.
The charm of a peaceful sleep
Suspends the illness of this hero.
But it's difficult
To place him in perfect rest.

ASTOLPHE: I know your power; everything must give way to it.
Your care saved me from a hundred frightful perils.
You won't offer a useless remedy
To the trouble that possesses
The greatest and most unhappy of heroes.

LOGISTILLA: I can interrupt the war of the elements.
My voice makes hell tremble.
I impose silence on thunder
And I extinguish the fire of lightning.
But I can calm with less effort
The winds who've slipped their chain,
And I'd sooner appease an irritated ocean
Than a heart agitated by love.

ASTOLPHE: From your salutary cares, I expect everything for Roland.

LOGISTILLA: Our efforts are going to increase.
Go, distance yourself from our secret mysteries.
Your glances might trouble them.
(Exit Astolphe.)

LOGISTILLA: (observing Roland asleep)
With the aid of sweet harmony
Let's calm this great heart forever.
Let's return to it its first peace.
Let it drive out the love which banished it.
Lucky is he who is protected forever
From the charm of fatal love!

(The Chorus of fairies repeats these last two lines. The fairies dance around Roland and perform ceremonies of victory to restore his reason.)

LOGISTILLA: Return to this hero your celestial illumination,
Divine reason, return.
How unfortunate is a heart when you abandon it

ROLAND: A tragedy

In a funereal distraction.

LOGISTILLA AND THE CHORUS OF FAIRIES:

Lucky is he who is protected forever
From the charms of fatal love!

(The fairies continue their dances around Roland and Logistilla evokes the ghosts of ancient heroes to assist him in removing all distraction from Roland.)

LOGISTILLA: O you whose name, filled with glory,
Is not enslaved in the night of death;
You whose celebrated memory
Triumphs forever over time and forgetfulness,
Come, heroic shades,
Come second our efforts.
Leave the somber retreats
Of the profound empire of the dead.

(The shades of ancient heroes appear.)

LOGISTILLA: Roland, run to arms.
May glory have charms!
Love of its divine attractions
Lets you live above death's destruction.

LOGISTILLA AND THE CHORUS OF HEROIC SHADES

Roland, run to arms.

May glory have charms!

(To the voices of heroes Roland leaves his sleep and begins to regain his reason.)

ROLAND: What aid comes to release me
From my fatal passion?
Heavens! Can I think without horror
Of the disorder to which love had reduced my soul?
Distracted, senseless, furious,
I made an odious spectacle of my weakness.
What reproach must I forever make myself!
Wretch! Reason enlightens me
So as to portray my shame to my eyes!
What survives of my glory is an extreme torture!
Unfortunate Roland, seek another seclusion;
Go, if it's possible, hide yourself from yourself
In eternal obscurity.

LOGISTILLA: (stopping him)

Moderate the sadness
Which grips your heart.
What hero, what conqueror
Is exempt from weakness?

CHORUS OF HEROES: Leave forever this day
The shameful bonds of love.

LOGISTILLA: Go, follow glory.

ROLAND: Let's go, let's rush to arms.

How glory has charms!

CHORUS OF FAIRIES AND HEROES:

Roland, rush to arms.

How glory has its charms!

(The fairies and the shades of heroes express through their dances the joy of having cured Roland. Glory followed by Renown and preceded by Terror comes to urge Roland to go to deliver his country.)

ROLAND: A tragedy

GLORY: Roland, you must arm your invincible arm,
Terror is preparing to advance on your heels.
Save your country from a cruel war.
Don't follow love any more; it's an untrustworthy guide.
No, you won't forget
The harm that love has done you.

(Roland dons his arms which are presented to him by the fairies and heroes; he demonstrates the impatience he has to leave to obey Glory, and Terror flies in front of him. The fairies and the heroes dance to express their joy; and Logistilla, the chorus of the followers of Glory, the chorus of fairies and the chorus of heroes sing together.)

LOGISTILLA AND THE CHORUSES:

Glory is calling you.
Don't sigh except for her.
No, don't ever forget
The wrongs love has done you.

CURTAIN