

# COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

A Dramatic Reading

by  
W. S. Gilbert



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An adaptation from the one act drama, "Comedy and Tragedy."

The characters are: Clarice, an actress; D'Aulnay, her husband; the servant, Joseph; the Duc D'Orleans, Regent of France; Dubois, a friend of the Duke; and Doctor Choquart.

The scene is laid in Clarice's house in Paris. Clarice goes to the door leading to the garden and admits her husband.

D'AULNAY: Clarice! You brave, dear woman! Are you certain that everything is ready?

CLARICE: Yes. The story of our separation has been accepted by everybody--implicitly. Even my sister believes it.

D'AULNAY: Has the Regent fallen into the snare?

C: Readily enough. He is under the impression that I was weary of the humdrum respectability of sober married life--that, being free again, I intend to enjoy myself. To disarm suspicion, I invited him and some of his friends for this evening--My dear, he will be here in a few moments.

D'AULNAY: At last! Oh, how long and how bitterly we've waited for this! I shall be avenged--or beyond the reach of vengeance! If I fall, Clarice--

C: No! No! Keep that thought away from me, or I'll never be able to go through with this! I must keep before me his repeated insults--I must remember his cowardly attempt to take me from you. When I remember these things, my blood is on fire, and I am as brave as you are!

D'AULNAY: Clarice! You're worth risking life for!

C: Dearest!--Listen--they're coming! Wait in the garden. When they've all arrived, I'll manage to detain the Regent here alone. Go now!

D'Aulnay embraces her and goes into the garden. Then Joseph announces the guests, whom Clarice greets with forced gaiety. She is surprised to see among the court gentlemen a friend of her husband's-- Doctor Choquart.

C: Why, Doctor, I had no idea you were in Paris. Why, how grave you are! This is not a professional visit! You look as glum as if you had come to attend a patient on his deathbed!

DOCTOR: Shall I confess to you, Madame, that I am attending one who, I fear, is in a very dangerous state?

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