

*Enter Madame, speaking to servant.*

SERV.—His Majesty is in this Avenue, madame.

MAD.—'Tis well ! I will seek him. (*Exit Servant.*)

KING.—(*aside.*) Ha ! Henrietta's voice ! It reminds me of her share in the foul transaction. I will question her.

MAD.—(*aside.*) He fancies himself incog ! Expecting his paramour, no doubt ; they shall not enjoy a tête à tête on this occasion, I am determined. (*aloud.*) What, Louis ! alone, musing ! What knotty point of finance, or policy, or war, or perchance love, engages your attention, when the gaiety of the pageant is so near at hand ?

KING.—(*severely.*) Madam, your arrival is opportune.

MAD.—Madam ! So cold a greeting, Louis ! you were wont to be more affable at my approach, to call me sister, to smile, as you alone can smile ! Nay, turn not from me ! Have I deserved this treatment ?

KING.—Ask your own conscience, Madam !

MAD.—Conscience ! ha ! ha ! as if conscience were a courtly commodity.

KING.—If you have no conscience, and avow it—tax your memory---that, at least, cannot be so treacherous as your conduct. Answer me ! have you not assisted in a base plot to destroy the happiness of him you still profess to regard ?

MAD.—Your language is incomprehensible. (*aside.*) Who can have betrayed us ?

KING.—(*Seizing her hand suddenly.*) The forged letter, Henrietta ! Is that incomprehensible ? (*flinging away her hand.*) You understand me now ! your hand is icy cold, it trembles, you are guilty !

MAD.—Sire ; This insinuation !

KING.—I insinuate nothing. I accuse ! accuse you of participation in a conspiracy.

MAD.—You are surely delirious !

KING.—Evasion will not serve you, Madam ! Reveal to me at once the names of your accomplices, or dread the consequences.

MAD.—Oh ! spare me, Louis ! dearest, more than brother !

KING.—(*Putting her away.*) No more of this cajolery, Madam ! Name them, I say ! and avert the scandal of a public investigation.

MAD.—Mercy, Louis ! I will confess.

KING.—Be explicit, then, and I may perchance be lenient towards you.

MAD.—Distracted at your increasing coldness, stung with jealousy---excuse a woman's weakness---dreading a rival in my own maid of honour, I yielded to the suggestions of the Countess.

KING.—So, the Countess too ! 'Twas she then, doubtless, who wrote the letter ?

MAD.—No, Sire ! The Marquis de Vardes.

KING.—And the translator, who was he ?

MAD.—Spare me the avowal !

KING.—The translator, I say !

MAD.—Alas, Sire, the Count de Guiche !

KING.—Double traitor ! through whose base insinuations suspicion was cast on an innocent man. He shall be severely punished !

MAD.—Pardon, Louis, for De Guiche !

KING.—This interest for him ! I understand ! Hear me, Henrietta ! In consideration of my former regard, so ill requited, I forgive your share in the