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Her Maidenly Reserve

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HER MAIDENLY RESERVE

ACT I.

Cease this tumult, cease this talking,
Cease this intermittent squalking,
For behold the curtain rising
On the sunny land of Spain!
Scenes of joy will now delight you,
Scenes of terror will affright you,
When we start our harmonising,
In a light Castilian strain.

(Curtain rises. Evening. Angelina discovered in balcony.)

Angelina: "What a strange and painful longing,
In my bosom I observe!
Oh, what are these passions thronging,
And these pangs I scarce deserve?
Oh, I trust 'tis nothing shocking to
My maidenly reserve!
For a little girl has nothing
But her maidenly reserve.

But what is it I desire?
Ah! I tremble on the verge!
Can it be this inner fire
Is a biologic urge?
Oh, how absolutely shocking
To my maidenly reserve!
How incontinently shocking
To my maidenly reserve!

(Enter Eduardo.)

Eduardo: Lovely vision who art thou?

Angeline: Sir my name is Angeline.

Eduardo: She is wonderful, I vow,

Angeline: He's the nicest man I've seen.

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- Eduardo: If you do not mind my talking,
I have something to observe.
- Angeline: Oh, I hope 'tis nothing shocking
To my maidenly reserve.
- Eduardo: No indeed!
- Angeline: Pray proceed!
- Eduardo: Oh, I am a toreador,
And great are the crowds that I pull,
When I leave in a welter of gore,
The fierce Andalusian bull.
The ladies are struck by my glance,
The imperious flash of my eyes,
They welcome my amorous advance,
But Love is a thing I despise!
- Angeline: What a pity!
- Eduardo: Hear my ditty!
This love was a thing I despised,
Until I perceived you today;
But my constancy you have surprised,
And love's in my heart to stay.
To say that I love you were trite,
I expire in passion, my queen!
O, pity my anguishing plight
And consent to be mine, Angeline!
- Angeline: I am deeply sympathetic
But afraid I cannot serve,
Though your case is quite pathetic,
Still, my maidenly reserve. . .
- Eduardo: O unhappy reservation,
Let me die upon your pave,
And your virtuous declaration
Be the motto for my grave!
- Angeline: You'll not die?
- Eduardo: Even I.
- Angeline: O, do not die!
(Enter Escamillo)

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Escamillo (recitative): Who speaks of dying here?

Angeline: And who are you?

Escamillo: O, I am a toreado. . .

Angeline: And great are the crowds that you pull,
I've heard the same line before.

Eduardo: 'Tis the old Andalusian bull!

Escamillo: Sir, your discourse is corrupted
I resume where interrupted.
To say that I love you were trite,
I expire with passion my queen;
O, pity my anguishing plight,
And consent to be mine, Angeline.

Angeline: What a strange and painful question,
What a melancholy choice,
For upon my oath
I can scarcely marry both;
Polyandry's
Such a quandry,
To embrace it I am loth,
Love is worse than indigestion,
And I truly would rejoice,
If I only could be free
And my happiness preserve;
What a liability
Is my maidenly reserve!

Eduardo: Ah, this matter's simply settled,
'Tis as plain as it can be,
There's no need for being nettled,
Leave this fool and marry me.

Escamillo: Do not heed his foolish saying,
He is quite unworthy thee;
Come, let's have no more delaying,
Leave this ass and marry me.

Angeline: Friends, I have an inspiration
That will save this cogitation.

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Tomorrow in Seville there's a bull fight of
renown,

The excitement that it causes will depopu-
late the town.

Since both of you are heroes and will
neither of you yield,

There fight and I will wed the one remain-
ing on the field,

How say you, Escamillo?

Escamillo: Madam, you shall shortly see.

Angeline: And how say you, Eduardo, pray?

Eduardo: My deeds shall speak for me!

Angeline—Chorus:

One hero shall I wed perforce and be his willing slave,
And for the other drop, of course, a tear upon his grave;
And thus need beauty never from the path of virtue swerve,
Nor passion ever violate my maidenly reserve.

ACT II.

Chorus: Now we turn our Spanish strain
In a sanguinary vein:
To the struggle and confusion
On the great Arena floor;
Turn from scenes of lovers sighing
To the sight of heroes dying
Where the horrid Andalusian
Bull confronts the Toreador.
See the multitudes assemble,
How they quiver, quake and tremble,
With a mad anticipation;
Bloody sights will here be seen;
If this drama is enacted,
As the parties have contracted,
One by horrid maceration.
Will obtain fair Angeline.

(Curtain; Arena: Angeline in pensive attitude.)

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Angeline: In what a flutter is my heart!
How freely I perspire!
How doth my heaving bosom smart
With anguishing desire!
Must sorrow then my wedding grace,
My happiness be sere?
My nuptial chariot take its place
Preceded by a bier?
Alas, it must; wherefore will I
Abide my fortunes here;
A brutal bull will settle my
Connubial career!

Chorus: That this is tragic we aver,
And bide the issue here;
A brutal bull will settle her
Connubial career.

Enter men from opposite sides.

Chorus: Ah, perceive their gallant carriage,
Like two beaux approaching marriage,
Or like warriors at battle,
With their faces fixed and hard;
See, yon aureate mantilla
Cloaks the form of Escamillo;
Hear the golden spangles rattle
On the trousers of Eduardo.

Duet by men: Oh, I am a toreador,
And great are the crowds that I pull,
When I leave in a welter of gore
The fierce Andalusian Bull!

Men's chorus: Oh, each is a toreador,
And great are the crowds that he pulls,
When he leaves in a welter of gore,
The fierce Andalusian bulls.

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Duet: To say that I love you were trite,
I expire with passion, my queen;
Ah, pity my anguishing plight,
And consent to be mine, Angeline!

Women's chorus:

To say that they love you were trite;
They expire in passion, O queen!
Ah, pity their anguishing plight,
And consent to be theirs, Angeline.

Angeline: To your wishes I would bow me,
If the law would but allow me;
But since she cannot marry two,
What's a love-lorn maid to do?

Chorus: That this is tragic we aver,
And bide the issue here;
A brutal bull must settle her
Connubial career.

Bull (off stage): Mooooooooooooooooo!

Eduardo: Ah, hear the horrid note,
From the horned monster's throat.

Angeline: Do not tell a luckless maid,
That her lover is afraid.

Escamillo: I would be a paltry fellow
To be frightened by a bellow,
And I do not care to bother with it now.
If a cow is meek, indeed, sir,
I will here my thesis plead, sir,
That a bull is just another
Kind of cow.

Bull (off stage): Mooooooooooooooooo!

Eduardo: You are wrong dear Escamillo,
And I would not have you feel, though
I appear reluctant now to

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Turn my face;
That I agree indeed, sir,
With the thesis that you plead, sir,
That a bull is just a cow who
Sings in base.

Bull (off stage): Mooooooooooooooooo!

Chorus: You are really wrong, indeed, sir,
In the thesis that you plead, sir,
This is certainly a bull who
Sings in bass.

Escamillo: Ah, relate his disposition.

Chorus: 'Twere a painful exposition.

Eduardo: And his nature?

Chorus: Is sadistic to a "T".

Escamillo: Then our prospect is not charming?

Chorus: Nay, it truly is alarming.

Eduardo: But you're much too pessimistic.

Chorus: You shall see.

Escamillo. (sotto voce): I am decided.

Eduardo (sotto voce): I'll not abide it.

The men (duet):

Though we hate to disappoint you,
And regret to cause you pain,
We will really have to leave you,
For we've got to catch a train.

Angeline: Oh, you really mustn't leave me!

Chorus: Not to fight would be inane!

Escamillo: That we hate to go, believe me,

Eduardo: But we've got to catch a train.

Duet: We depart from this arena,
With a helpless sense of pain;
So farewell, dear Angelina,
We have got to catch a train.

Chorus: Let them go, dear Angelina,
They have got to catch a train.

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Angeline: They're gone! Let darkness hide the sun!
My destiny is sealed;
For I have sworn to wed the one
Remaining on the field.
Let heaven o'er my nuptial kiss
The veil of darkness pull;
The only one remaining is
An Andalusian Bull!

Chorus: That this is tragic we're afraid
And bide the issue here;
A brutal bull must share the maid's
Connubial career.

Owner of the bull (recitative):
I am the owner of the bull,
And have this monster bred;
And since his age is scarcely five,
I will not have him wed!

Chorus: Ah, now her cup of joy is full,
The maiden need not wed the bull.

Angeline: Though I would hate to wed a bull,
There's worse that might befall;
'Tis better to have wed a bull
Than not to wed at all!

Chorus: Her cup of joy is hardly full,
The maiden cannot wed the bull.

Owner of the bull:
Cease this tearful exhibition,
And remark my proposition.
The speech of lovers is not mine,
My education's nil;
Yet I've ten thousand heads of kine,
And I am single still.
What's more, I have a racking cough,
That any day may take me off.

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A million have I in the bank,
My horn of plenty's full;
And as a husband, I should rank
Much higher than a bull.
Ah, what a happy man I'd be,
If only you would wed with me!

Angeline:

Kind sir, your proposition is a highly pleasing plan,
And I am sure that you would prove a quite delightful man;
Your cough is music in mine ears and for your nuptial rank,
Your virtues are attested by the cash you have in bank.

Owner (rapturously): Then we'll wed?

Angeline (coyly): You have said.

Grand chorus:

Thus doth our highly moral tale attain its moral end,
And to its glad conclusion we the moral will append;
If little girls are virtuous and every chance observe,
They'll end by cashing checks upon their maidenly reserve.

L. C. Olmsted.