

## The Fortress - Edited Script

### SCENE 10

EVRRARD, ALIX, VINCENT, *slightly drunk, carrying a small box under his arm. Evrard sits on a chair on the right near a small table which he leans on.*

VINCENT           Your servant, sir.

EVRRARD           Good evening Vincent.

VINCENT           I'm bringing you some books. There was a letter from your daughter to the Major; and let me tell you she expresses herself very well.

ALIX                *(to Vincent)* How do you know?

VINCENT           I heard it read out.

EVRRARD           What did it contain?

VINCENT           Entreaties to the commander of the fortress to take great care of you. It was so touching, so sad that it brought tears to my eyes. It must make you so proud to be the father of a daughter so good and so sensitive. Here are your books. *(He puts the box down on the table.)*

EVRRARD           Thank you.

VINCENT           Your servant, Mademoiselle Alix.

ALIX                Your servant, Monsieur Vincent.

*(He goes out and shuts the grate)*

**Music cue**

### SCENE 11

*(Evrard and Alix watch Vincent then as soon as he's out of sight, Alix runs to the box, takes all the books out and puts them on the table. She checks the inside of the box to make sure nothing is hidden in there, then examines all the books one by one, flicking through them. The more she looks at the more she seems surprised, afflicted at not finding anything. While she is looking, Evrard is examining the titles.)*

ALIX                Nothing!

*(He puts the book back. ALIX is continuing her search vigorously.)*

ALIX                Still nothing.

*(EVRARD takes another volume. Reads, while perusing the volume.)*

EVRARD           What do I see? A few words written in Celestine's hand. *(Alix quickly goes closer)*. "Look inside the cover of the Bible."

*ALIX goes back quickly to the table.*

ALIX               Let's see. *(She looks, Evrard hunts too)* I've got it.

EVRARD           Look inside

*ALIX pulls out a folded piece of paper from the cover.*

ALIX               A letter!

*EVRARD reads with much emotion.*

EVRARD           Despite all my efforts to obtain an audience of the Emperor, I have failed. The enemy who pursues you is in league with the minister responsible for your arrest. I sense that I can no longer live away from a father I adore, and, if in a month, my efforts have not produced the results I expect from them, I will fly to you, never to leave you. Your affectionate daughter." Oh! Yes, good, loving child, *(he kisses the letter which he has wet with his tears while he was reading it, a reading several times interrupted by sighs and looks up to heaven)*. My downfall is certain. May I be the final victim of such an arbitrary and tyrannical power.

*(He looks at the letter again.)*

"Vienna, 18th September". And now it's 23 October. It ought to have come in 8 days at the most? The fatal term is up – what an awful prospect. Perhaps, alas, I will only see my dear daughter for a moment before losing her forever.

ALIX               Do not afflict yourself my dear master but hope for a better future.

**Music cue**

EVRARD           The future, you say, yes, the future is clear for me now. *(he falls into reverie)*

*(Outside, to the left, the sound of a chalumeau can be heard. The noise strikes Alix who listens.)*

ALIX               What do I hear? many times I've heard that tune on my dear master's estate but it's the first time I've heard it while we've been in this fortress.

*(She goes to the window)* I can see a Savoyard boy who is looking up towards this window, staring; he acknowledges me as if he knows me... *(she acknowledges him with a nod of her head in return)* He looks around to check no one is watching ... He has a crossbow... He pulls a paper from his clothes, shows it to me and attaches it to the arrow, indicating that he's going to fire it hither ... *(she reflects)* That song, this letter... *(with delight)* oh Sir, Sir! it's her, it's Celestine! Only your daughter is capable of such address and courage.

EVRARD *gets up briskly.*

EVRARD            Celestine!

*(he runs to the window and looks out, hope shining in his eyes. Silence while Evrard and Alix wait for the arrow to be fired)*

*(Evrard and Alix stand to one side, the crossbow arrow comes through the window and falls in the middle of the room, a paper pushed through the point of the arrow)*

ALIX *catches it up, tears off the paper, and runs to the window, shows she has the letter, and throws out the arrow.*

ALIX                We've got it. *(She returns to Evrard in a hurry.)* Read it! *(She gives him the paper.)*

EVRARD *reads with strong emotion.*

EVRARD            "All is lost ... Your enemies have won. Save yourself, my father, flee, there is still time; I've overtaken the courier dispatched to the Count Adolphe with the unjust order for your death; before I left Vienna, I braved everything to reach Joseph II; I embraced his knees; I gave him a copy of the fateful document that has caused all our misfortune and prayed him to read it before he condemned you. He promised me he would; but your persecutors are there ... surrounding him, deceiving him and victory will be theirs. I decided that I shall have to be the one to save you and not rely on others. I shall wait for you at the house of an honest peasant, whose wife took me in and has promised to help us. If by tomorrow you are not returned to me, I will come to you and either carry you from your dreadful dungeon, or perish in your arms."

Courageous and noble girl. My dear Celestine. But all your efforts will be in vain ...

ALIX                Celestine's courage has doubled my own. We will save you –I feel it and my feelings are never wrong.

EVARD                   And if I could escape, do I want to? Must I, the Emperor's most loyal subject, flee like a guilty felon?

ALIX                    God forbid that I am suggesting a shameful and dishonourable flight. Once out of this fortress you must proceed to Vienna; you will drag your accusers to the feet of the monarch in order to confound them.

EVARD                   You're right, if I die here, what will become of my daughter? Who will clear my name? But how will I escape? who will open these gates?

ALIX                    Gratitude can open them!

EVARD                   I know you think I can count upon Lieutenant Olivier, my adopted son; but I will not involve him in my misfortunes.

ALIX                    *(aside)* In that case then I will.

Music cue

SCENE 12

AS BEFORE PLUS OLIVIER, PHILIPPE, SOLDIERS

*(While Philippe is fastening the grate, Olivier approaches Evard and takes his hand furtively.)*

OLIVIER                Good evening, father.

EVARD                   Good evening, Olivier.

OLIVIER                What is the matter? You seem more melancholy than usual.

ALIX                    *(quietly to Olivier)* All will become clear.

PHILIPPE              *(to Evard)* Come, Sir.

Music cue

EVARD                   I'll follow you.

*(Philippe goes into the tower, Evard turns and throws himself into Olivier's arms and embraces him several times)*

EVARD                   Adieu, my son. Adieu, my dear Olivier.

*(He ends the embrace and enters the tower.)*

OLIVIER                *(surprised)* Why these adieux, my father?

*(He wants to follow Evrard, Alix stops him.)*

ALIX                    Stay; I need to speak to you.

### SCENE 13

OLIVIER, ALIX.

#### Music cue

*(Alix, once she's sure Philippe has gone, pulls out Celestine's last letter and gives it to Olivier who reads it with all the emotion that his attachment for Evrard inspires. He expresses by turn his grave concern, fear, indignation. Alix watches his movements and her expression shows that all her hopes are pinned on him)*

ALIX                    *(aside)* Whose side will he take?

OLIVIER                *(aside)* No, there can be no hesitation. *(out loud)* Alix, the count's life is threatened; I will ignore my duty to obey the irresistible pull of nature. I owe Evrard everything. He took me in, raised me, and guided me towards the path of honour and virtue.

ALIX                    We have to act now. Tomorrow or perhaps even in 2 hours it will be too late.

OLIVIER                Listen. The staircase that leads to Evrard's bedroom also leads to the base of the tower. When night falls, head down it. Sixty steps down you will find a door – it's that of a small chapel. I have the key – here it is. At the far end of the chapel is a window which looks out onto the ramparts. He must throw himself into the Danube and swim across. Once free he will easily be able to defend his name and confound his accusers.

*ALIX, throwing herself on her knees.*

ALIX                    Oh thank you. Heavens, my master is saved — but you, generous Olivier...

OLIVIER                Me? Let's save Evrard first.

ALIX                    But...

PHILIPPE              *(off)* Mamselle Alix, are you coming in this evening or not?

ALIX                    Yes, sorry, Monsieur Philippe.

OLIVIER                You should go, Alix.

ALIX                    Farewell. If only I could repay with my blood such a generous action. I'd spill every last drop.

*(She kisses his hands as she makes to leave.)*

Music cue

*(As Olivier is about to pass through and Philippe who is already through is about to close the door, the major appears. Philippe moves to one side and the soldiers present arms.)*

SCENE 14

VALBROWN

VALBROWN            Olivier, I have been looking for you. I need to talk to you.

OLIVIER                To me, Major? *(aside)* What can he want? *(to Philippe)* Leave us, Philippe.

PHILIPPE              Yes, lieutenant.

*(Philippe heads off with his soldiers.)*

SCENE 15

OLIVIER, VALBROWN

VALBROWN            The Count Adolphe has just sent for me to meet him at Ulm immediately for a matter of the highest importance concerning the Chevalier Evrard. In my absence I need to give interim command of the fortress to an officer whose uprightness and honesty are known well to me. It is to you that I confide it.

OLIVIER                *(Aside.)* Heavens! *(Aloud.)* To me, Sir?

VALBROWN            I answer for the Chevalier Evrard with my life and it's only to you that I can - or want - to entrust it. You will accept, won't you?

OLIVIER                Since you insist, yes.

VALBROWN            My mind is at peace and I will go where duty calls me. Adieu, Olivier.

Music cue

*(He embraces him and leaves.)*

SCENE 16

OLIVIER, *alone.*

*(He remains stationary for a moment, overwhelmed by the weight of the various feelings which take hold of his soul one after another.)*

OLIVIER            “I answer for the Chevalier Evrard with my life and it’s only to you that I can - or want - to entrust it.” Those terrible words are engraved on my heart. Without his blind confidence, I could ensure that the vengeance of the state fell only on me. But now it’s not the Emperor that I would be betraying but a friend who places his life in my hands. In betraying this respectable man, I drag him to his execution, and I become the most vile and cowardly of mortals... My heart is being torn to pieces! ... Was there ever a more cruel situation? But it is better to die showered with Evrard’s hatred than to live burdened by shame and universal contempt ... If there is time still, let us try to warn him so that he doesn’t think I have set him a trap... *(He goes to the door, looks for the keys)* Philippe has the keys. How can I let him know? *(he calls out in a low voice)* Evrard! *(he knocks...)* Evrard! ... Alix! ... No answer... *(he listens...he calls louder)* Evrard! ... Come back . He can’t hear me... I have no choice... *(Overcome, beside himself, he goes to the grate and calls.)* Halloo! ... Guards! ... Philippe! ... To arms! ...

SCENE 17

OLIVIER, PHILIPPE, SOLDIERS, *with torches*

PHILIPPE *(running in)* What has happened, lieutenant?

OLIVIER *(extremely moved)* I thought I heard noises in the tower, I thought I heard the chapel door open.

PHILIPPE    What! quick, quick you lot – to the western ramparts

*(Several soldiers rush out.)*

You, follow me ...

**Music cue**

*(He opens the tower door and enters followed by some soldiers, after leaving 2 at the grate.)*

OLIVIER    Could I be more unhappy?

*(Silence while the orchestra expresses in a muffled way what is going on off-stage. Olivier listens.)*

PHILIPPE *(off stage)* Stop...

ALIX *(off stage)* Oh heavens!

PHILIPPE *(off stage)* I’ve got him lieutenant, he’s been taken.

OLIVIER What will Evrard think? He will curse me, see me as a traitor.

SCENE 18

AS BEFORE, EVRARD, ALIX, SOLDIERS

PHILIPPE

My word, that was close, lieutenant – I seized him just as he was about to go through the chapel window. It will be easier to keep an eye on him in the barred lodge overlooking the courtyard, opposite the guardroom.

OLIVIER, *timidly and not daring to look at Evrard whose bearing is noble, proud and calm.*

Take him wherever you think he will be safest. *(aside)* I cannot look him in the eye.

PHILIPPE

Come on, off we go.

**Music cue**

*(Evrard is led away. When they go past Olivier, Evrard looks at him and shows all the contempt he feels.)*

SCENE 19

OLIVIER, ALIX

OLIVIER *stops Alix who was sadly following her master and contemptuously looking at Olivier.*

Alix, Evrard believes me a traitor and appearances are against me but I am not guilty and all I have done is obey the sacred laws of honour.

ALIX, *with force.*

You talk of honour when you have betrayed your benefactor with the most horrible treachery.

*(She leaves.)*

OLIVIER, *appalled by Alix's words, watches her leave, then raises his eyes to heaven as witness to his innocence. He hides his face with his hands, then suddenly comes out of his deep despondency and says with spirit as he leaves:*

I will find a way to force them to do me justice.

**Music cue**

END OF ACT ONE

## Act II, The Fortress

*The theatre resembles the entrance courtyard of the fortress, surrounded by very high walls. At the back there is a large gothic gate with two panels and a smaller wicket gate. On the*



*right is the porter's lodge. Right downstage is the guardhouse. Left centre-stage a pavilion juts out; its barred window faces the audience, door on the side. There is a stone bench underneath the pavilion's window.*

Music cue

#### SCENE 1

*The bells ring for 8 o'clock as the curtain rises. This is followed by three rounds of drums. Four soldiers exit the guardhouse and are led away by Philippe*

Music cue

#### Scene 5

*(To Philippe, who is going back into the guardhouse without looking at either Vincent or Alix.)*

VINCENT            Philippe? Miss Alix asked me earlier if Sir Evrard could take a walk today.

PHILIPPE           I'm angry with this darned prisoner. It's because of him that our workload has been doubled.

VINCENT           Listen, Philippe, I'm not asking for anything else from you for my saint's day than this small favour. Ah! You can't refuse me!

PHILIPPE           Alright, you always know how to get to my soft spot.

ALIX                Thank you very much, M. Philippe.

PHILIPPE           A soldier's duty, Miss, is to serve faithfully the Emperor and the fair sex.

*(He exits.)*

#### SCENE 6.

VINCENT, ALIX

*(Someone knocks at the gate downstage.)*

ALIX                Someone's knocking!

VINCENT           It must be our young guests!

Music cue

*(He looks through the wicket before opening the gate.)*

VINCENT            It's them indeed.

*(He opens the gate.)*

SCENE 7.

VINCENT, ALIX, CÉLESTINE, *dressed to look like a Savoyard boy. On her back she has a case in the shape of a magic lantern*, THOMAS [*who has a country accent*], PAULINE [*who has a country accent*]

THOMAS            Good day godfather!

VINCENT            Good day, my children, good day. Welcome, welcome.

*(He shuts the gate. Célestine quietly approaches Alix and pulls on her dress.)*

ALIX (*aside*)        Célestine...!

PAULINE            We must be careful!

VINCENT            I was afraid you weren't coming. (*Seeing Célestine.*) Who is this little thing here?

PAULINE            Cousin, he's a little Savoyard boy who arrived last night, asking for somewhere to sleep. I was alone at home and he told me so vividly of all his troubles that I cried!

THOMAS (*grumpily & aside*) Ah yes! The story of a little Savoyard is incredibly interesting...

PAULINE            When he learned this morning that we were coming to the castle, he asked to come with us, hoping to show the soldiers his skills – he might make some money.

VINCENT            You were right to bring him my dears.

PAULINE            Isn't he sweet, cousin?

VINCENT            Yes, truly so.

THOMAS (*copying his wife*) Isn't he sweet...? Mrs Thomas, I've told you that I don't like you looking at him like that, it upsets me, and I shouldn't have to tell you that twice.

VINCENT            What is the meaning of all of this? It seems that you are not such a happy couple...

PAULINE                It's been the same these last two months since the wedding. We argue from dawn till dusk.

THOMAS (*quietly to Vincent*) Yes, but we make up from dusk till dawn!

SCENE 8.

VINCENT, ALIX, CÉLESTINE, THOMAS, PAULINE, PHILIPPE

ALIX, *going up to Philippe.*

ALIX                    So, M. Philippe, what did the lieutenant Olivier say?

PHILIPPE             Sir Evrard is allowed to go outside for an hour, but he must stay within this courtyard and I must not lose sight of him. But that won't be a problem, I'll keep an eye on him.

THOMAS (*aside*)    Huh, he's only got one!

CÉLESTINE (*quietly to Pauline*) How much I am obliged to you my dear Pauline! I'm going to see him at last!

PAULINE             I simply could not resist your entreaties and your tears.

CÉLESTINE           You can count on my eternal gratitude.

*Thomas sneaks up between them.*

THOMAS             A-ha! I've caught you! Why do you have so much to say to this little rascal?

PAULINE             It's none of your business. Do you want another fight?

**Music cue**

*(During this dialogue, Vincent goes to open the door of the pavilion, steps inside, and come out a moment later with Evrard.)*

SCENE 9

VINCENT, ALIX, CÉLESTINE, THOMAS, PAULINE, PHILIPPE, EVRARD

EVARAD    Thank you very much, Philippe. Good day my dear friends.

*(Pauline, Thomas, Philippe and Vincent greet Evrard.)*

ALIX, *quietly to Evrard who is walking up to the bench under the window.*

ALIX        Don't worry; hide your happiness, Célestine is here.

EVRRARD, *quietly*.    Célestine!

ALIX        Near to you... to the left... dressed as a Savoyard boy.

*(Evrard sits down, and hidden by Alix, he looks towards Célestine, who is also trying to look at him. As their gazes meet, it looks like they will burst with joy. Excessive tenderness is painted on all their traits and their lust for life seems to have been renewed. Philippe points at Célestine.)*

PHILIPPE            Who's that little rascal?

*Célestine diverts from what she was trying to do. She has heard Philippe and knows that they are watching her, so she changes her expression to that of the naïve and natural curiosity they would expect of a little Savoyard boy. Alix has seen Philippe pointing at Célestine.*

ALIX                *(Quietly to Evrard.)* You are being watched.

*Evrard stops looking at Célestine. Philippe looks at Célestine then at Evrard and back, to see if they have been secretly communicating with each other.*

PHILIPPE            *(with a booming voice, to Célestine)* Who are you?

*Pauline is worried that Célestine might give herself away, goes up to Philippe and tries to answer in Célestine's place.*

PAULINE            He's a...

PHILIPPE            Let him reply himself. Who are you?

CELESTINE            *(with the same gaiety as before)* I'm a Savoyard boy.

PHILIPPE            What's your name?

CÉLESTINE            Célestin.

PHILIPPE            Where do you come from?

CÉLESTINE            From far, far away.

THOMAS             *(muttering under his breath)* And you should have stayed there.

PHILIPPE            Why have you come?

CÉLESTINE            *(pointedly)* To entertain you for a while.

PHILIPPE            Later on. What have you got there?

CÉLESTINE            *(showing the box which is on the floor next to her)* That is a curiosity.  
*(Quietly to Alix who is standing near her.)*  
There's a change of clothes for my father inside.

THOMAS            A curiosity! Ah! I like those! Let us have a look *(he goes to open up the box)*

*Celestine drops her stick on Thomas's foot.*

CÉLESTINE            Gently!

THOMAS            Ah Christ! You be gentle yourself!

PAULINE            That's a lesson for you. It'll teach you not to be quite so curious.

VINCENT            Come on my children, let's get to work, come and help me set the table.

PHILIPPE            Do as he says.

*(He signals to the soldiers to keep their distance. They all go back into the guardhouse.)*

EVRRARD            Enjoy yourselves, my friends; as for me, I'm returning to my cell.

VINCENT            What for?

EVRRARD            I'm not feeling too well.

VINCENT            Go ahead then.

*(Evrard goes back into the pavilion.)*

VINCENT            And you Miss Alix, you're staying aren't you?

ALIX            Yes Mr Vincent. I like all this jolliness, it's nice to have a little distraction for a while.

**Music cue**

*(During this exchange, Célestine has put her case on the bench under the pavilion window. Vincent, Pauline and Thomas are busy setting the table and laying out everything they have found in Vincent's lodge. Philippe walks across the stage, i.e. from the pavilion to the guardhouse. Evrard can be seen at the pavilion's window.)*

ALIX (to Célestine) My little friend, show me what is in this case.

CÉLESTINE Willingly, my good lady, but only if you do not tell anyone what you see.

ALIX I swear it.

*The case has a double bottom, i.e. it is split in half by a horizontal plank. The first part has two little shutters, hiding painted glass etc. i.e. what you would expect from a magic lantern. This part opens towards the audience. The other part opens at the bottom and contains the all the clothes fit for a peasant.*

CÉLESTINE (to Philippe) Will you not have a look, sir?

*Philippe gets closer to the case and looks at it. Whilst he is squatting down, Alix opens the top of the case and calls Evrard. Célestine subtly pulls one of the pieces of clothing out from the case and gives it to her father who takes it into his cell through the bars and then hides again. Philippe gets back up and everyone resumes their normal behaviour. The sergeant walks away, and each time his back faces the pavilion, Alix and Célestine go back to passing Evrard the clothes, and as soon as the sergeant turns around they pretend to be simply interested in the front half of the case's contents. Evrard is at the ready and takes everything Célestine gives to him. This pantomime ends at the same time as the others have finished setting the table.*

CÉLESTINE (quietly to Evrard) Get changed instantly, and stay next to the door. The meeting place is at Pauline's house, in the main square], number...

VINCENT Food is ready! Come on everyone, let's all sit down. Are you joining us Miss Alix?

ALIX I am much obliged to you.

VINCENT (to Célestine) And you, dear boy?

CÉLESTINE I do not deserve such an honour. (Quietly to Pauline.) Try and make sure Philippe sits with his back to the pavilion. (Aloud.) If I must accept some of your food, I can eat it just as well in my chair over there.

*(She picks up the case on top of the bench and puts it just next to the pavilion. The table has been set next to the guardhouse.)*

*Pauline shows Philippe a place on the left of the table.*

PAULINE Come on, M. Philippe, take a seat.

PHILIPPE No, I'd rather be on the other side of the table, so I don't lose sight of the pavilion – I haven't forgotten that the lieutenant put me in charge of the prisoner!

*(He sits at the other end of the table so he is opposite the pavilion's door.)*

CÉLESTINE           *(aside to Alix)* How annoying! What shall we do now?

PAULINE             As you like.

*(She sits down next to Philippe.)*

VINCENT             Come on my children, come on.

*(Vincent sits facing the audience, Pauline on the left-hand side of the table, Thomas on the right, facing Philippe.)*

VINCENT             Ah, Miss Alix, are you sure you don't want to join us? You're more than welcome to.

VINCENT             *(to Alix)* Miss Alix, can you give that to our little lad?

ALIX                 Willingly.

*(She gives Célestine a piece of dark bread with a small slice of ham and a glass of wine.)*

CÉLESTINE           Thank you very much, my good sir.

VINCENT             Eat, eat, my child. You must be hungry. At your age, I ate for four men!

PHILIPPE            And now you drink for six.

*(Whilst this is going on, the audience can see Evrard taking off his army cloak and dressing up as a peasant.)*

*(Someone knocks on the gate at the back of the stage.)*

VINCENT             *(pouring a drink)* A patrol is coming back. Give me a second, I'll go.

THOMAS             Oh no, godfather, why should you take the trouble? It's not very hard to open a gate... I can do it just as well as you.

**Music cue**

*(He takes the bunch of keys from Vincent's belt and goes to open the gate.)*

ALIX                 *(to Evrard)* Main square, number 10.

SCENE 10.

VINCENT, ALIX, CÉLESTINE, THOMAS, PAULINE, PHILIPPE, EVRARD, a Corporal, eight soldiers.

PHILIPPE            *(to the corporal)* Ah! Gosh! You've arrived just in time to hear me talk about that terrible time when we were fighting next to one another – you remember - at Lissa – it was so hot.

PAULINE            Have a drink *(giving the corporal a drink.)*

VINCENT            That will quench your thirst.

PAULINE            Hurry up Thomas, or we'll drink without you!

THOMAS            Wait! I'm coming, I'm coming.

### Music cue

*(He double locks the gate but leaves the keys in the lock. He comes back to his seat, they raise their glasses for a toast.)*

*During this silent scene, Alix moves towards Célestine and hurriedly says to her:*

ALIX                The keys are in the gate!

*Célestine looks over, sees it is true and expresses her joy. Alix takes her place as Célestine heads quietly to the back of the stage. The corporal and his eight men, who are leaning on their guns, are standing behind Vincent and are arranged so that the gate at the back of the stage is hidden from Philippe's view. Thomas and Vincent, with their elbows on the table, are watching Philippe very closely.*

PHILIPPE            As I was saying, my friends, it was the famous day of Lissa when the Prussians battered us. *(To the corporal.)* I was in the centre, me *(To the corporal.)* but we were dealing with an enemy who had many more men, like it or not, we had to fall back. It was a total disaster. I was attacked by three members of the cavalry, I defended myself whilst leaning against a tree, but finally, I ran out of energy, I gave in; then they ran away and left me for dead, only after having looted me of course.

THOMAS            Luckily for you.

VINCENT            I don't see how you think that is lucky.

THOMAS            If those hot heads had realised that he was only pretending to be dead they would have killed him there and then, and we wouldn't have the pleasure of hearing this story today.

PHILIPPE            He's right, you know.



VINCENT            But by God, my fellow, you haven't mentioned your eye?

*(Célestine has come back, having made sure that the gate can be opened.)*

THOMAS            What? That was the day when you lost your left eye too?

PHILIPPE           It was a bullet, its brute force had just been taken out of it, so luckily didn't go any further into my head.

*Célestine has come back into view: suddenly, as if she has just had a moment of inspiration, she talks quietly to Alix, sends her to the back of the stage and mimes to Pauline to cover up Philippe's eye.*

PAULINE            And since then, you've only been able to see with one eye?

PHILIPPE           Absolutely.

*Pauline puts her hand on Philippe's right eye. Everyone watches.*

PAULINE            Bah! That can't be possible! You must still be able to see something!

*Célestine signals to Evrard to flee. Evrard gets out of the pavilion quickly, and scurries to the gate which has been left open; he escapes. Alix, who has been warned, closes the gate, then comes back downstage. This movement has to be very sharp and swift.*

SCENE 11.

VINCENT, ALIX, CÉLESTINE, THOMAS, PAULINE, PHILIPPE, a corporal, eight soldiers

PHILIPPE           Ah! My God! I can't see anything!

PAULINE            Really?

PHILIPPE           Nothing!

*Pauline removes her hand and looks at Célestine*

PAULINE            What a shame!

THOMAS            It's a shame not to be able to see through it.

CÉLESTINE           *(emotional, pretending just happy)* It can often be a very good thing.

PAULINE But all that is well and good, cousin, whilst we are having fun here and chatting away, our jobs are not doing themselves... and we've got enough of them in our house, as Thomas well knows.

THOMAS True, true.

VINCENT Go on my children, no need to worry. Everyone has his or her things to get on with.

**Music cue**

*(Three canon shots are heard)*

VINCENT What's that? A canon has been fired on the ramparts!

*(Everyone gets up from the table)*

CÉLESTINE *(aside)* I'm shaking!

ALIX *(aside)* Oh heavens! Is that a signal to stop his escape?

*(The caporal and his eight men go back into the guardhouse.)*

PHILIPPE I've no idea what that's about; but let's clear up so there's no trace of the party Vincent has put on.

VINCENT Philippe is right, the lieutenant Olivier could come back and disapprove.

*Everyone gets to work; in the blink of an eye the table, the chairs, everything is taken back into Vincent's house.*

PHILIPPE *(to Vincent)* Lock the pavilion.

VINCENT *(to Thomas)* Yes, yes, of course... my keys!

*Thomas runs to get the keys and brings them back to Vincent.*

THOMAS There they are.

CÉLESTINE *(to Alix)* Adieu, sweet Alix.

PAULINE Good-bye, cousin.

THOMAS Good-bye, godfather.

CÉLESTINE Good-bye M. Vincent. I thank you with all my heart.

VINCENT            Don't worry about it my child. I can promise you that you will always be welcome here whenever you want.

CÉLESTINE        I don't think I'll be coming back to this region anytime soon.

VINCENT            Good-bye then, safe travels, and good luck.

**Music cue**

*(They all go away. Vincent locks the gate. Someone outside sounds a warning).*

SCENE 12

VINCENT, ALIX

ALIX                   *(aside, in the pavilion)* They're out of here! Let's hope they can get out of the town!

VINCENT               What is the meaning of this! Something extraordinary must have happened. Anyway, it's none of my business, everything is in order here. At least no one can accuse me of having drunk too much this morning.

SCENE 13.

VINCENT, ALIX, OLIVIER, then PHILIPPE, and all of the garrison.

OLIVIER               To arms!

*Philippe opens the gate of the guardhouse.*

PHILIPPE             To arms...! What has happened, commandant? These cannon shots...

OLIVIER               Are a customary greeting. Count Adolphe has just arrived in town. Make sure a guard of honour goes to meet him.

*The big gates open, through which part of the town can be seen. A detachment, led by Philippe, goes out and forms two lines; Count Adolphe and the Major pass between the soldiers' lines. Everyone in the garrison is standing to attention and armed in the courtyard. The drums beat in the field.*

SCENE 14.

VINCENT, ALIX, OLIVIER, PHILIPPE, everyone in the garrison, LE COMTE ADOLPHE, VALBROWN

OLIVIER               Back already, M. le Major?

VALBROWN            When I was half way to Ulm I met the Count. A messenger brought him an order to come immediately to the Fortress of Guntzbourg, and then, only in the presence of the chevalier Evrard, he should open the dispatches. He doesn't know what's inside!

OLIVIER               *(Aside.)* Ah, my poor friend! It's his sentence!

ALIX                   *(aside)* Let's hope he is now far away and out of all danger!

VALBROWN            Go and ask Sir Evrard to come here. Say that the Count Adolphe wishes to speak with him.

*(Vincent opens the door. Alix comes out of the pavilion and speaks with confidence.)*

ALIX                    Don't go any further – Sir Evrard is not here.

VINCENT              Come on, now's not the time for jokes!

ALIX                    Once again, I'm telling you, my master is not here.

VALBROWN          Where is he?

ALIX                    He has escaped.

ALL                     Escaped!

LE COMTE            Run to the town gates and shut them immediately! No one may pass until I order so.

*(An officer exits with several soldiers.)*

ALIX                    Yes. Love has overcome force. A woman's ruse has got him beyond the bars and past the sentinels.

VALBROWN          Look in the pavilion...

*(Vincent goes in with Philippe.)*

ALIX                    Don't bother. I'm telling the truth.

OLIVIER              *(aside)* Heavens!

VALBROWN          *(aside)* Can it be that Olivier has thus abused my confidence?

LE COMTE            Who let him escape?

ALIX                    Me.

LE COMTE            How?

ALIX                    That is my secret.

LE COMTE            You can't have been alone to execute such a plan.  
Name your accomplices.

ALIX                    I don't have any.

LE COMTE            Where did he go? Tell me! You do realise helping a prisoner escape is a capital offence? And you, Major, don't imagine that you can avoid the

responsibility with which you were entrusted.

OLIVIER *(Aside.)* Can I allow this good man to be so dishonoured? No. *(Aloud.)* M. le Comte, the Major is not guilty and this woman is innocent. It is I who allowed Sir Evrard to escape.

VALBROWN You, Olivier!

ALIX *(Aside.)* What compassion *(Aloud.)* M. le Comte, don't believe him.

OLIVIER I'm telling you the truth. I've been trying for ages to let him escape.

ALIX Don't believe him! A hundred times he refused to help us.

OLIVIER Yes, while another was answerable for you. On my life, I swear that I would not have wanted to compromise the honour and reputation of my friend. But he gave me his responsibility for the prisoner by handing me all his powers during his absence. I alone, therefore, am subject to the Emperor's wrath.

VALBROWN I can't make sense of this. Olivier, my dear Olivier, no, I cannot believe that you are guilty. You must be going mad; come back to being your normal self. It's me, your friend... your best friend who's pressing you against his heart...it would be terrible for me to consider the man I have looked upon and loved as a son to be a traitor, the man whom I have held in such personal affection for these last nine years, which I thought would last forever.

LE COMTE Reply, Olivier, why did you forget your position?

OLIVIER Because of an obligation.

ALIX And me? Aren't I also obliged to Sir Evrard?

OLIVIER Don't increase the number of victims, Alix, go back to Evrard, and tell him that it is in memory of his good deeds that Olivier sacrificed the only thing he could give him.

LE COMTE Major, lock up lieutenant Olivier. Let the court martial assemble... Only it can help me work out how I must judge this case.

Music cue

*[The Count and the Major leave with several soldiers.]*

SCENE 15.

OLIVIER, PHILIPPE, ALIX, VINCENT, Soldiers.

ALIX                   Cruel Olivier! What have you done?

OLIVIER               I'm paying off a sacred debt. Thank you, God, you have finally given me the happiness which I have been longing for. Finally, I have paid back my benefactor, if a moment of suffering can equal his virtues, his persecutions, and the eternal gratitude that I swore to him.

*(Alix kisses Olivier's hands, covering them with her tears.)*

PHILIPPE             *(to Olivier)* Regretfully, lieutenant...

*Oliver gives the soldier his sword.*

OLIVER               Do your duty.

**Music cue**

*Oliver is taken away, Alix goes back into the pavilion after having shown Evrard's adopted son all the admiration with which she is overwhelmed and the gratitude that his generous devotion has inspired in her. Philippe, Vincent, and the soldiers watch him with compassion, and appear to carry out their painful duties with deep regret. Tableau.*

*End of Act II.*

### Act III, The Fortress

*The theatre represents the main square of the town. At the back, on the left, an external gate of the citadel. An alley of trees forms the entrance; right, at the back, the house where Pauline lives, no. 10; it juts out over a quarter of the stage. The house has two doors, one opening into the square and another into the garden, which is in the front and wraps around. This garden is enclosed by a three-foot high palisade. Front-stage is a little hut; it is covered in thatch and has two doors, one of which leads to the garden and the other the square.*

#### Music cue

#### SCENE 1

PAULINE, EVRARD

*She exits from her house by the door to the garden and looks all around to reassure herself that she's not being watched. She returns and brings out Evrard who is still disguised as a peasant and leads him surreptitiously through the garden.*

PAULINE Follow me, you will be safer in this little hut than in the house where you run the risk of being recognised at any moment by someone from the castle. Stay here until dusk, when I will return to lead you and Célestine out of the town. I'll return home and *voilà* you'll be saved.

EVRARD You can be sure, kind Pauline, that I will never forget this.

THOMAS (*outside*) Pauline! Pauline!

#### Music cue

*Pauline leaves by the door that opens onto the square.*

PAULINE What's the matter, then, for you to need to shout so loudly?

THOMAS Quickly! Quickly! As it's a very long time since Count Adolphe was last here, we want to give him a wonderful welcome.

(A gay ritornello is heard)

Look! Look! They're coming for me already. The meeting is here at ours ...

PAULINE What, here at ours?

THOMAS But of course, to be nearer. My goodness!

#### Music cue



SCENE 3.

PAULINE, THOMAS, Peasants

*[The joyous procession enters dancing]*

SCENE 4.

PAULINE, THOMAS, Peasants, CÉLESTINE dressed as a peasant

PAULINE       *(aside)* I fear that this celebration will be cancelled when those at the castle realise that the prisoner is no longer there. But if no-one notices until this evening, he is saved.

CÉLESTINE     *(in the garden, whispers)* Pauline!

*Pauline approaches the fence*

PAULINE       Pardon, Miss? ...

CÉLESTINE     What was the reason for the noise I heard? Why have all these people gathered?

PAULINE       Don't worry, it's all of our young people who have come to greet the governor. Since you've been seen, come as well, you can mix with them; I will say that you are my cousin.

**Music cue**

*(Célestine gives each girl a simple curtsy and says a few words to each one. The young girls seem flattered by her politeness and make friends with her.)*

CÉLESTINE     *(quietly, to Pauline)* Where is my father?

PAULINE       In this little hut.

CÉLESTINE     Is he safe?

PAULINE       You have my word.

CÉLESTINE     He has not been seen ...

PAULINE       By anyone.

**Music cue**

*Thomas returns, stops sharply, looks at Celestine with a confused expression, and goes up to Pauline, who he takes to one side*

PAULINE       *(aside)* Fool that I am ...! I forgot to warn him; I hope he doesn't do anything stupid!

THOMAS       Tell me, my wife, who is this one? I don't know her.

PAULINE       She's our cousin.

THOMAS       Her, our cousin! Is she directly related or really ...

PAULINE       I told you she's our cousin.

THOMAS       Since when has she been in our family?

PAULINE       ... I will tell you about it presently.

THOMAS       What a pretty relation to descend upon us all of a sudden! (He looks at her). Tell me, my wife, the more that I look at her, the more I think that she looks like ... But yes ... I am not mistaken, it's him ...

*The young men have come closer to Thomas and his wife and listen in curiously. Thomas notices them, turns around and says to them in a tone that he thinks makes him sound imposing.*

THOMAS       What! ... is there anything so extraordinary in a man speaking to his wife? ...

*He orders them to move away, then he returns to Pauline and says seriously to her:*

THOMAS       Ah, that, Madame Thomas ... permit me ... you well know that my honour is dear to me and that I don't consider it a joking matter ... look at me directly ... and reply to me ... This girl here ... she's a boy ... I recognise her; it's the Savoyard boy from earlier...

*Pauline silences him and takes him further away.*

PAULINE       Quiet! Quiet, fool! ...

THOMAS       What do you mean fool! If I was, I wouldn't have noticed it.

PAULINE       You don't know what you're saying; I will tell you all about it this evening.

THOMAS       On the contrary! I want to know everything straightaway, why this little scoundrel ...

PAULINE       You are wrong.

THOMAS       Ah well, this girl ...

PAULINE It's not that.

THOMAS Ah, so neither a girl nor a boy!...

PAULINE Be quiet, idiot, I will say once again that it's a honourable lady who has reasons to disguise herself; as she was told that we were both two good people, she approached us first, I promised her that we would help her out, and we will be well rewarded for it.

THOMAS Yes! How much will we receive for that, then?

PAULINE The pleasure of having reunited a daughter with her father, and the knowledge that there are in the world two people who owe us their existence and who will bless us every day for having save them.

THOMAS Ah! We will only have pleasure ...

PAULINE That is worth more than money. Don't give any of this away, do you understand! Talk to her as if she is really our good cousin.

THOMAS To whom are you saying this? You know very well that I am not stupid.

Music cue

SCENE 6.

PAULINE, CELESTINE, THOMAS, Peasants, VINCENT.

VINCENT, *on the threshold of the citadel gate.*

VINCENT Thomas! Thomas!

THOMAS I beg your pardon, sir?

VINCENT Come quickly, quickly, I have something very important to tell you.

CÉLESTINE *(aside)* I tremble!

PAULINE *(aside)* What could it be?

*(Vincent whispers to Thomas)*

SCENE 8.

PAULINE, CELESTINE, Peasants, THOMAS

THOMAS, *completely shocked.*

CÉLESTINE and PAULINE What's happened?

THOMAS      My goodness! It's so terrible! ... the Governor ... the Major ... the citadel ... the prisoner ...

CÉLESTINE and PAULINE      Well? the prisoner? ...

THOMAS      He has escaped.

PAULINE      Do they know who helped him?

THOMAS      They sure do.

CÉLESTINE and PAULINE      Heavens!

THOMAS      He's an officer of the garrison ... but he will never do it again ... because the court martial ...

CÉLESTINE and PAULINE      Go on, the court martial!

THOMAS      Has just condemned him to death.

PAULINE and all the PEASANTS      To death!

*(Célestine totters.)*

THOMAS      To death. It's here, in this square that the execution will take place ... Ah! My goodness! A day that had started so joyfully!...

*(Célestine falls into the arms of Pauline.)*

Who would have thought it? ...

*(He sees Célestine.)*

And so! And so! ... *(Célestine is carried into Pauline's house. To the Peasants.)*  
Off you go then, you others, because all this doesn't seem particularly joyful to me.

*(The Peasants move away.)*

I will let you know if things change.

*(He enters his house.)*

SCENE 9.

*Evrard opens the door of the hut – which opens out onto the square - with care, only showing half of his body.)*

EVRRARD      What words did reach my ears! ... I thought I heard people talking about a court martial ... of someone condemned to death ... Could my escape be the

cause of some misfortune? ... However, what I heard cannot be about Alix; I don't think that anyone could, in any way, hold her responsible for my escape ... Who else could I have compromised? ... Olivier did not have any knowledge of it ... and in this cruel anxiety I don't see either Pauline, or my daughter ... everyone has abandoned me. (*The door of the fortress opens; count Adolphe and the major leave by it.*) I hear some noise ... someone approaches from this side ... Let's listen but be cautious.

**Music cue**

*(He half-closes the door, and stands behind it in a way that he can be seen by the audience.)*

SCENE 10.

EVRRARD, hidden, COUNT ADOLPHE, VALBROWN (& Olivier under guard)

VALBROWN I ask a favour of you, Count Adolphe, a reprieve of three days; in that time perhaps we will receive some information which will enable the court to reconsider its decision.

COUNT ADOLPHE Brave Major, I am truly upset that I cannot grant you that which you ask of me, but a severe example must be made of him

VALBROWN Ah! Count Adolphe, what is left for the innocent and virtuous man if the criminal knows to die in this way? No, even if it will provoke your anger, I cannot prevent myself from saying it again; my friend is not guilty.

COUNT ADOLPHE So you're accusing the court of injustice or bias?

VALBROWN God forbid that I would insult my comrades in this way! I know that everything points to condemning this unfortunate young man; he himself has confessed his error, and I had to forget all other feelings to remember only my duty; but it has never seemed more sorrowful or painful to fulfil it.

COUNT ADOLPHE He forgot his own; you cannot, you should not do more than pity him. Assembly the garrison on this square: the sentence will be carried out in an hour.

VALBROWN You're putting my heart to too cruel a test. In the name of friendship, in the name of all that you hold dear, do not demand of me this barbarous heroism, I am not capable of it - do not order that it will be me, his friend, his father ... who will kill the unfortunate Olivier.

*Evrard opens the door and launches himself towards the Count.*

EVRRARD        Olivier! My goodness! ... stop ... here is your victim ...

VALBROWN    Evrard!

COUNT ADOLPHE    Evrard!

EVRRARD        The very one! Who would die of sorrow on learning that his escape would have caused the loss of his innocent son.

VALBROWN    Count Adolphe, the dispatches that you were ordered to open only in the presence of the chevalier Evrard ...

COUNT ADOLPHE    I have them; but, alas! ...

EVRRARD        Read them, Sir, I am ready for anything. I have been resigned to the worst for a long time.

SCENE 11.

EVRRARD, VALBROWN, COUNT ADOLPHE, CÉLESTINE, PAULINE, THOMAS, VINCENT, PHILIPPE.

*Alerted by Evrard's cry, Célestine comes out of the house, she attempts to throw herself towards her father; but she is held by Pauline and Thomas, who force her to stay in the background. Vincent and Philippe are at the door of the citadel and listen. Count Adolphe opens the dispatches.*

COUNT ADOLPHE    They are signed by the Emperor. *(to Valbrown)* He is lost, it's his decree. *(He reads.)* "Having taken note of the document that was given to us by the daughter of the chevalier Evrard; having reread and pondered it with the strictest and most scrupulous care, we remain convinced that the man who we used to think had useful views and the desire to contribute to the good of the State, is no more than a cutthroat, a traitor, and we believe in this instance that we should provide a striking and fearful example of our justice system; accordingly, considering all the proof of treachery that this man has so long hidden under the simple guise of probity and virtue, we condemn ...

**Music cue**

*Celestine lets out a heart-breaking cry, escapes the arms of Pauline and collapses at the feet of her father.*

CÉLESTINE        Ah! My father is to die! ...

*Everyone runs and scurries around Célestine who is totally deprived of her faculties.*

VALBROWN Ah! Count Adolphe! This scene is heart-breaking ... And how! The Emperor ...

COUNT ADOLPHE See for yourself. *(He hands him the letter.)*

**Music cue**

*Valbrown scans through it; when he arrives at the place where the Count stopped, his face changes expression, he reads quickly and without getting to the end, but he appears elated.*

VALBROWN Chevalier Evrard, Miss Célestine, Count Adolphe, my friends ... listen ... listen all of you. *(He reads.)* “And so we condemn to life imprisonment the corrupt minister who betrayed our trust. We name in his place Chevalier Evrard. We return all his property and possessions, to which we add those of the traitor that he succeeds. We have pleasure in recognising him as an enlightened, honest and irreproachable man, and we wish for our compensation towards him to be as brilliant and as well-known as his persecutions were. My heart and my arms are open to him, I rest my glory on making him forget the involuntary wrongs that I have dealt him. JOSEPH.”

SCENE 12 AND LAST.

PAULINE, THOMAS, VALBROWN, CELESTINE, EVRARD, COUNT ADOLPHE, OLIVIER, ALIX,  
Peasants, Soldiers

*Olivier, released, runs into the arms of Evrard.*

OLIVIER My father!

ALIX Célestine! *(they embrace.)*

OLIVIER *(to Célestine)* Miss Célestine, I know all that you have done for your father, and I can only admire you for it. *(to the Count.)* Pardon me, Count Adolphe, my first thought was to nature and gratitude, the second belongs to you.

VALBROWN Embrace me, Olivier, you caused me a lot of pain.

COUNT ADOLPHE Chevalier Evrard, make the arrangements as soon as you can for our prompt departure, I would like to have the pleasure of taking you myself to the feet of the Emperor.

PHILIPPE But I still don't understand how Monsieur Evrard could escape.

*Pauline puts his hand over his right eye.*

PAULINE What, you don't see it, Monsieur Philippe?

PHILIPPE Not at all! ... Ah! Ah! I get it. Tricked! ...

PAULINE        That proves, Monsieur Philippe, that a man needs both his eyes to keep track of a woman's actions.

VINCENT        Even then, that's often not enough.

EVRARD         My friends, I owe much to all of you ... to you in particular Pauline.

PAULINE        You don't owe me anything anymore, since you are free and happy.

VINCENT        *(to the peasants)* My children, let us celebrate the joy that the happy turn of events today inspires in us.

### Music cue

*Each gives themselves over to a lively and resounding gaiety. The soldiers who are in the background seem to take part in all that is going on. At the end of the ballet, Célestine and Olivier return to the arms of Evrard. Alix, Vincent and Philippe group themselves at the head of the peasants. Thomas, with his obsession to arrange everything, gets one to raise their leg, another their arms or their head. The Major is near the Count and seems to greatly enjoy himself looking at the tableau. Pauline is near Célestine who holds her hand, pressing it to her heart. General tableau. The curtain falls.*

END