

**The COUNT and THE COUNTESS**

THE COUNTESS

Such behavior. You should be ashamed. If I thought you were acting out of love I could forgive it.

But it's only vanity. And at your age.

THE COUNT

Out of love or out of vanity and at my age I'm going to see who is behind that door!

THE COUNTESS

Wait, Monsieur.

THE COUNT

So. It's not Suzanne is it?

THE COUNTESS

(Starting to cry.) No, it's not Suzanne. Please, Monsieur, you know I would never do anything to hurt or embarrass you. All I have ever wanted is for you to love me as completely as I love you. We were just planning a little practical joke for later this evening. I swear that he had no intention of offending you.

THE COUNT

He had no intention of ... It's a man!

THE COUNTESS

A child.

THE COUNT

A child? Chérubin! I'll kill him!

THE COUNTESS

Oh, please, Monsieur! And... and don't be upset by his appearance. It doesn't mean anything. The make-up, the hair, the dress ...

THE COUNT

Dress!

THE COUNTESS

...the powder puffs... Promise me you won't be angry.

THE COUNT

I won't be angry... AFTER I'VE KILLED HIM!

THE COUNTESS

Just stop and think for a minute.

THE COUNT

Alright. I've stopped. And I'm thinking for a minute... that I'M GOING TO KILL HIM!

THE COUNTESS

He's only poor child.

THE COUNT

Poor child! Hah! (He flings open the door.) Now, Chéru... Suzanne!

THE COUNTESS

Did you like our little joke?

THE COUNT

Joke?

THE COUNTESS

You deserved it.

THE COUNT

Me?

THE COUNTESS

Yes. Did I marry you only to suffer your neglect on the one hand and your jealousy on the Other?

THE COUNT

You are very cruel, madame.

THE COUNT

Alright, alright. (To the Countess.) I apologize. Will you forgive me?

THE COUNTESS

It's not to be forgiven.

THE COUNT

Rosine...

THE COUNTESS

I'm no longer Rosine, or at least not the Rosine you pursued so ardently only a few years ago. Now I'm just "the Countess", the neglected wife. What a ridiculous figure I've become.

THE COUNT

(Sweetly, full of repentance.) Rosine, darling, Rosine. I don't mean to neglect you. I do love you. Truly. It's just... I don't know why I... (Unable to follow through.) It was all because of the letter. It threw me into a rage. Rosine, I beg you, please...

THE COUNTESS

You beg a pardon you refuse others.

THE COUNT

Rosine, darling. It was just so humiliating...

THE COUNTESS

Well... I am sorry for that, I suppose.

THE COUNT

I confess, you really did have me going there for a while. You should have seen that look... Red in the face, tears.

THE COUNTESS

I was red in the face with anger that you could possibly believe that...

THE COUNT

...that Chérubin was in there in a dress? Powder puffs? Makeup?! How could you expect me to believe that? (Laughing.) Oh, I knew all along those tears were fake, (Imitating her.) Boo, hoo, Whahaha...

THE COUNTESS

Stop it, you're making me laugh.

THE COUNT

I like to think I'm something of a trickster - but it's you women who are the real masters.

THE COUNTESS

It's men who force us to be devious.