

Act I Scene 1

The overture ends and lights slowly come up. It is spring 1843. On the road to Paris. Master Blazius, a rather lazy tutor with a penchant for drink, rests on the side of the road. Some peasant children gather around him, one brings him a glass of wine, which he gratefully accepts and guzzles.

[song: Diamonds from Top to Toe]

Master Blazius

LET THOSE WHO WISH TO LEARN SOME NEWS
FIRST BRING ME A GLASS OF WINE
ANTOINE TURNED TWENTY-ONE TODAY
A BETTER MAN YOU'LL NEVER FIND!

MY STUDENT'S FULL OF FLOWERY PHRASES
TRAVELED TO SO MANY PLACES
HALF THE TIME YOU DON'T KNOW
HOW TO ANSWER HIM!

Lights come up on the opposite side of the stage. Dame Pluche, the stern and pious governess, rests on a tree stump, fanning herself frantically and talking to a pair of peasant children. One of them brings her a glass of water, spilling it as she goes.

Dame Pluche

BRING ME A GLASS OF WATER, RABBLE...
WHY ARE YOU SO SLOW?
KNOW YOUR MASTER'S NIECE TODAY
ARRIVES AT THE CHATEAU

SHE'S COMPLETED HER EDUCATION
IT'S A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION
NEVER HAVE YOU SEEN SUCH PURITY!

Master Blazius & Dame Pluche

HE'S / SHE'S A DIAMOND
FROM TOP TO TOE
THAT IS WHAT I LONG TO SHOW
IT'S TO OUR CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR GUARDIANS

Instrumental interlude

Dame Pluche

HER PIETY AND GOODNESS
WOULD PUT A MONK TO SHAME

Master Blazius

HE CAN'T SEE A BLADE OF GRASS
WITHOUT GIVING YOU THE LATIN NAME!

Dame Pluche

HER BEAUTY MAKES THE ANGELS SIGH

Master Blazius

IF IT RAINS, HE'LL TELL YOU WHY

(Lights up on Antoine and Camille)

Antoine and Camille

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHO HAS IT BETTER
YOU....OR I!

WE ARE DIAMONDS
FROM TOP TO TOE
THEY WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW
IT'S TO THEIR CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR PROTEGES!

Antoine

WE'D LIKE TO THINK THAT WE DON'T NEED
OUR GUARDIANS TO SUCCEED

Antoine and Camille

WE BOTH HAVE QUITE SHREWD AND CUNNING WAYS

Camille

WE LONG TO BE
LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Antoine and Camille

WE KNOW WE CAN MAKE IT ON OUR OWN.....CUZ....

Blazius & Pluche & Antoine & Camille

THEY (WE) ARE DIAMONDS FROM TOP TO TOE
THEY (WE) WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW
IT'S TO THEIR (OUR) CREDIT
WE'RE THEIR (THEY'RE OUR) GUARDIANS

The lights fade.

Act I Scene 2

The drawing room of the Baron's chateau, just outside Paris, France. The Baron a portly and befuddled nobleman in his 50s is with Father Bridaine, the gluttonous parish priest. Master Blazius enters.

The Baron

Father Bridaine, let me introduce Master Blazius, my son's tutor. My son, yesterday, at eight minutes past twelve noon, turned twenty-one years old. He has earned his degree, and passed in three subjects. Master Blazius, I introduce to you Father Bridaine, parish priest, and my dearest friend.

Blazius *(proudly)*

Passed in *four* subjects, your lordship: literature, philosophy, law *and* physiognomy.

Baron

Yes, all right, all right....go to your room, my dear Blazius; my son will be here soon. Freshen up a bit, and return when the bell rings.

(Blazius exits)

Bridaine

Shall I tell you what I am thinking, my lord? Your son's tutor smells strongly of wine.

Baron

What? Impossible!

Bridaine

I am as sure as I breathe. He spoke to me very closely just now. He smells dreadfully of wine.

Baron

No more of this. I tell you, it is impossible.

(Dame Pluche enters)

There you are, good Dame Pluche! My niece is with you, no doubt?

Dame Pluche

She is following me, my lord. I preceded her by a few steps.

Baron

Father Bridaine, my friend, I present to you Dame Pluche, my niece's governess. My niece, yesterday at seven o'clock p.m., turned eighteen years of age. She is leaving the best convent in France. Dame Pluche, I present to you Father Bridaine, priest of the parish, and my friend.

Dame Pluche

The best convent in France, my Lord, and, if I may add, the most sanctimonious girl in the convent.

Baron

Yes, yes, very good. Run along, Dame Pluche, and get yourself together. My niece will be here shortly, I do hope. Be ready when the dinner bell rings.

(Exit Dame Pluche)

Bridaine

That old lady seems rather.....pompous, does she not?

Baron

Pompous, perhaps, but...her virtue is beyond reproach.

Bridaine

But the tutor smells of wine. I am absolutely certain of it.

Baron

Father Bridaine, there are moments when I doubt your friendship. Are you trying to contradict me? Do not speak of that matter. Now then, I have been considering the idea of marrying my son to my niece. They are a match made in heaven. Their education has cost me six thousand crowns.

Bridaine

Will the wedding ceremony take place here or in Paris?

Baron

That is just what I expected, Bridaine! I was absolutely certain you would ask that question! Well, then, my friend — what would you say if those very hands — yes, Bridaine, your own hands — don't look at them so disparagingly — were destined to bless the happy realization of my dearest dreams? Eh?

Bridaine

I am silent; gratitude seals my lips!

Baron

Look out of this window. Do you see my servants crowding to the gate? My two children are arriving at the same moment! It is the happiest combination! I have arranged things in such a way that all is foreseen; my niece will be introduced by this door on the left, my son by the door on the right. What do you say to that? It will be the greatest delight to me to see how they will address one another, and what they will say. The children loved each other since the day they were born.

(beat)

Say, I have an idea!

Bridaine

What is it, my Lord?

Baron

During dinner, without it seeming...planned — do you understand, my friend? — while toasting a glass of wine — uh...do you know Latin, Bridaine?

Bridaine

I should hope so!

(Grandly)

In vino, veritas!

Baron

(Confused)

No, no, no.....*Latin*, Bridane!

(Bridaine stares blankly)

Oh, never mind, never mind. I would be very happy to see you test my son, discreetly of course — in front of his cousin—that cannot fail to make a favorable and lasting impression! Ask him to speak a little Latin; not precisely while we're eating...that would spoil our appetites, and as for me, I don't understand a word of it, but after dessert, don't you see?

Bridaine

If you don't understand a word of it, my lord, perhaps your niece suffers the same affliction!

Baron

All the more reason. Would you have a woman admire what she understands? Were you born in a barn, Bridaine? That is a pathetically impalpable piece of reasoning.

Bridaine

I don't know much about women; but it seems to me difficult to admire what one does not understand.

Baron

Ah, Bridaine, but *I* know them; I know the charming, indefinable creatures!

[Song: Charming Enigmatical Creatures]

Baron

WHEN SHE SAYS IT'S TIME TO TALK
THAT'S WHEN YOU TAKE A WALK
PACK YOUR BAGS AND LEAVE TOWN!
IF YOU STAY
YOU'RE GONNA PAY!
YOUR HEAD'LL BE REELING

Bridaine

SHE'LL ONLY WANT YOU BOTH TO GET
IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FEELINGS

Baron

THE OLDEST TRICK THAT'S IN THE BOOK
IS WHEN SHE ASKS YOU HOW SHE LOOKS
SHE NEVER WANTS AN HONEST REPLY!

Bridaine

IT'S A STICKY SITUATION
SHE JUST WANTS YOUR ADULATION
ALL YOU CAN EVER DO IS LIE

Baron and Bridaine

THESE CHARMING ENIGMATICAL CREATURES!
WITH SUCH STRANGE, ERRATIC FEATURES
TEND TO DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

*(instrumental as the Baron awkwardly attempts to teach
Father Bridaine how to dance)*

Baron

Shall we dance? Splendid! Cha cha cha!

(Struggling with the uncoordinated priest)

Under my arm! Under my arm! Cha cha cha. Very good! Cha cha cha. I didn't know you had
a pirouette in you!

Baron and Bridaine

WOMEN DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

Baron

NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS
SHE COULD HAVE FORTY PAIRS OF SHOES
AND STILL NOT PASS UP A SHOE STORE
TRY TO TALK HER OUT OF IT
SHE MAY JUST POUT A BIT.

Bridaine

THEN GO OUT AND BUY FORTY MORE!

Baron

WHEN SHE SAYS THERE'S NOTHING WRONG
YOU KNOW NOTHIN'S RIGHT!

Baron (cont)

TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU'VE DONE
YOU'D BE UP HALF THE NIGHT!
INSTEAD OF TELLIN' YOU
SHE'LL YELL AT YOU
FOR NOT BEING SMARTER

Father Bridaine

SHE WON'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM,
SHE'D PREFER TO BE A MARTYR

Baron & Bridaine

THESE CHARMING EENIGMATICAL CREATURES!
WITH SUCH STRANGE, ERRATIC FEATURES
TEND TO DRIVE THE AVERAGE MAN INSANE!

AND YET WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE
WHAT AM I....WITHOUT ONE!?

(Song ends. Enter on one side Antoine, Camille on the other)

Baron

Ah! Good day, children! Good day, my dear Camille, and you, my dear Antoine! Kiss me and kiss each other.

Antoine

Good day, Father, and you, my darling cousin. How delightful; how happy I am!

Camille

How do you do, Uncle...and you, cousin?

Antoine

How tall you are, Camille, and as beautiful as the day!

Baron

When did you leave Paris, Antoine?

Antoine

Wednesday, I think — or Tuesday. Why, you are transformed into a woman! So we are both adults, now, are we? It seems just yesterday I saw you only so high!

Baron

You must both be tired. It has been a long journey, and the day is hot.

Antoine

Oh, no, not at all! Look how pretty Camille is, father.

Baron

Come, Camille, give your cousin a kiss.

Camille

I beg your pardon?

Baron

A compliment deserves a kiss. Give her a kiss, my boy!

Antoine

Lovers may kiss one another....friends rarely do so.

Camille

Neither friends nor lovers should accept anything they cannot repay.

Baron

(To Father Bridaine)

This does not seem to be a good omen.

Father Bridaine

(To the Baron)

Too much modesty is a defect, no doubt; but marriage has a way of bringing couples out of their shells.

Baron

(To Master Bridaine)

I am shocked — I am hurt! That answer displeased me. Pardon me! Did you see that she made a show of crossing herself? Come here, and let me speak to you. It pains me to no end. This moment, that was to be so sweet, is completely spoiled for me. I am annoyed... distraught. Everything is going to Hell!

Father Bridaine

Talk to them; look at them turning their backs on each other.

Baron

Well, children, what in the world are you thinking of? What are you doing there, Camille, in front of that tapestry?

Camille

(Looking at a picture)

That is a fine portrait, uncle. Isn't she my great grandmother?

Baron

Yes, my child, or, at least, your great grandmother's sister; since the charming lady never contributed — except, I believe, in *prayers* — to the enhancement of the family. She was a pious woman, I declare.

Camille

Oh yes, a saint. She is my great aunt Isabel. How becoming she looks in that nun's dress!

Baron

And you, Antoine, what are you doing behind that flowerpot?

Antoine

That's a charming flower, Father. It is called a heliotrope.

Baron

Are you serious? Such a fancy name for such an insignificant flower! It is no bigger than a fly.

Antoine

That little flower no bigger than a fly is worth having all the same.

Father Bridaine

No doubt our young scholar is right. Ask him what species it belongs to, or how it gets its color, he will entrance you with a description of said plant, from its roots to the tips of its leaves.

Antoine

I...don't know so much about it, Your Reverence. I just think it smells good, that's all.

(lights fade)

Act I Scene 3

Drawing room, later that day. The Baron is pacing nervously as Dame Pluche enters.

Baron

Venerable Dame Pluche, I am pained.

Dame Pluche

Is it*possible*, my lord?

Baron

Yes, Dame Pluche, possible. I had planned it for a long time now — I had even put everything down in my journal— that this day was to be the most enjoyable of my life. Yes, my good madam, the most enjoyable. You know how I planned to marry my son to my niece. It was decided, arranged — I had even asked Father Bridaine to perform the ceremony, here in this very room — and I see how coldly these children speak to each other.

Dame Pluche

There they come, my lord. Do they know of your scheme?

Baron

I dropped a few hints to each of them in private. I think it would be well, since they are thrown together now, that we should sit down behind these plants and leave them to themselves
(He withdraws to one side with Dame Pluche. Enter Camille and Antoine)

[song: **Games We Used to Play**]

Antoine

IT'S NOT NICE TO REFUSE A KISS

Camille

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS

Antoine

LET'S STROLL THROUGH THE WILDWOOD

Camille

I HAVE NO WISH TO RELIVE MY CHILDHOOD
YESTERDAY'S ALREADY DONE

Both

AND TOMORROW NEVER COMES.

Antoine

LET'S FLOAT
IN A BOAT
DOWNSTREAM
IT'LL SEEM JUST LIKE A DREAM
NEVER FEAR
YOU CAN STEER
AND I WILL BE THE NAVIGATOR

Camille

I'M TOO OLD TO AMUSE MYSELF WITH THE
GAMES WE USED TO PLAY

Antoine (*overlapping*)

WHAT ABOUT THE GAMES WE USED TO PLAY?

Antoine

THESE MEMORIES NEVER FADE

Camille

IT'S JUST A MASQUERADE

Antoine

OUR WHOLE PAST ONCE LAY HERE

Camille

BUT NOW IT'S DISAPPEARED.

Antoine

LET'S THROW
SKIPPING STONES
IN THE CREEK
I WILL BEAT YOU AS I ONCE DID
AS A KID

Camille

YOU NEVER DID!
I CAN SEE YOUR MEMORY'S NOT IMPROVED WITH AGE

Antoine

YOU'RE NOT TOO OLD TO APPRECIATE ...

Camille (*overlapping*)

I'M TOO OLD TO APPRECIATE...

Both
ALL THE THINGS WE USED TO DO.

Antoine
I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.

(Song ends. The two exit in opposite directions)

Baron
(Coming out from behind the plants with Dame Pluche)
Do you hear, Dame Pluche? I expected the softest harmony; and I feel as if I were attending a concert where the violin is playing "My heart it sighs," while the flute plays "Long live King Henry." Think of the frightful discord such a combination would produce, yet that is what is going on in my heart!

[Song: Discombobulated]

Dame Pluche
CAMILLE'S NOT TO BLAME

Baron
WHAT? ARE YOU INSANE?

Dame Pluche
NOTHING'S IN WORSE TASTE
THAN TAKING BOAT TRIPS DOWN THE RIVER!
SHE HAS AN OBLIGATION
TO GUARD HER REPUTATION
YOUR FUTURE DAUGHTER
MUSTN'T RISK HERSELF ON OPEN WATER!
IT'S BEST TO STAY
FAR AWAY
FROM DANGEROUS PURSUITS!

Baron
REALLY, MADAM!
WHAT COULD HAPPEN?
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A POOR, CONTEMPTIBLE,
MISGUIDED NINCAMPOOP!

(Enter Blazius, who approaches the Baron)

Father Bridaine

MY LORD IT'S BEEN REPORTED
THE TUTOR'S WORDS ARE DISTORTED
HE DRANK WINE FOR HOURS
THEN HE TRAMPLED ON THE FLOWERS!

Baron

THIS REPORT'S ABSURD

Father Bridaine

I GIVE YOU MY WORD!
HE DRANK A DOZEN BOTTLES
AND WHAT'S MORE, HIS SPEECH WAS SLURRED!

Baron

A dozen bottles? My! That is excessive!

MY PLANS ALL HAVE BEEN SHATTERED
I'VE LOST ALL THAT MATTERS!

Dame Pluche

WHY DID I BRING CAMILLE?

Father Bridaine

I NEED A HEARTY MEAL!

All

HA HA, HA HA, HA HA, HA HA

Baron

THIS IMPORTANT DAY
HAS SOMEHOW GONE ASTRAY

Pluche

AND YET WE'RE HERE TO RECTIFY
YOUR PROBLEMS, IF YOU'LL LET US TRY.

Master Blazius (*entering*)

MY LORD, A WORD WITH YOU

Baron

OH GOOD LORD NOT YOU, TOO!

Master Blazius

YOUR SON IS FLIRTING WITH THE PEASANTS

Baron

WHAT? THAT CAN'T BE TRUE!

Master Blazius

I'M ABSOLUTELY SURE

Dame Pluche

SEEMS HIGHLY IMMATURE

Master Blazius

HE PLAYED 'DUCK DUCK GOOSE' WITH THEM

Father Bridaine

A STRANGE WAY TO SEDUCE THEM

Baron

MY BRAIN! IT'S REELING!

Blazius and Pluche

SEE HOW HE'S FEELING!

HIS IDEAS ARE ALL DISCOMBOBULATED

Baron

THIS IMPORTANT DAY

HAS SOMEHOW GONE ASTRAY

A LAWYER CANNOT FLIRT WITH PEASANTS!

Pluche

TAKE BACK ALL THE WEDDING PRESENTS

Blazius and Pluche

HE ONCE WAS ELATED

NOW HE'S AGITATED

HE'S A DISCOMBOBULATED MAN

(Blackout)

Act I Scene 4

(Outside Rosette's house)

Antoine *(stepping forward)*

Rosette, come here, little one!

Rosette *(entering)*

Yes, Antoine. I mean, "My Lord."

Antoine

You saw me earlier from your window, and you did not come down, you wicked girl! Give me that hand of yours, quick now, and those cheeks to be kissed.

Rosette

Yes, My Lord.

(He kisses her on my cheeks while holding both her hands)

Antoine

Are you married, little one? They told me you had found someone.

Rosette

Oh, no.

Antoine

Why? There isn't a prettier girl than you in the village. We'll find you a match, child. Your half-sister Camille is come! Have you seen her?

Rosette

She has not come this way yet.

Antoine

Be off quick. Put on your new dress, and come to supper at the chateau.

Rosette

Yes, my Lord.

(lights fade).

Act I Scene 5

(Drawing Room. Enter Master Blazius and Antoine)

Master Blazius

My lord, your father is in despair.

Antoine

Why so?

Master Blazius

You realize, of course, that he had plans for you to marry your cousin Camille

Antoine

Well, I ask for nothing better!

Master Blazius

Nevertheless, the Baron thinks he perceives an incompatibility in your characters.

Antoine

That is unlucky. I can't remodel mine.

Master Blazius

Will you allow this to make the match impossible?

Antoine

I tell you once more, I ask no better than to marry Camille. Go and find the Baron and tell him so.

Master Blazius

My lord, I withdraw; here comes your cousin.

(Blazius Exits. Enter Camille)

Antoine

Up already, cousin? And you'll be happy to know, I haven't altered my opinion of you since yesterday; you are ever so pretty!

Camille

Let us be serious, Antoine Your father wants to make a match between us. I don't know what you think of it, but I consider it right to forewarn you that I have made up my mind on the matter.

Antoine

The worse for me, if you dislike me.

Camille

No more than anyone else; I simply don't intend to marry. There is nothing in that to wound your pride!

Antoine

I don't deal in pride: I care for neither its joys nor its pains.

Camille

I came here only to settle my mother's property; tomorrow I go back to my convent

Antoine

Well, you play fair. Shake hands and let us be good friends!

Camille

I don't like demonstrations.

Antoine

(Taking her hand)

Give me your hand, Camille, I beg of you. What do you fear of me? You don't choose that we should be married. Very well, we won't get married.

Camille

I am very glad my refusal leaves you unconcerned.

Antoine

I am not unconcerned, Camille Your love would have given me life, but your friendship shall console me for the lack of it. Don't leave the chateau tomorrow. Stay here a few days; let me hope that our past life is not dead forever in your heart.

Camille

I feel I must leave.

Antoine

Why?

Camille

That is my secret.

Antoine

Do you love another?

Camille

No; but I will go.

Antoine

Is it irrevocable?

Camille

Yes, irrevocable.

Antoine

Well! Adieu. I should have liked to sit with you under the chestnuts in the little wood, and chat like kind friends for an hour or two. But if you don't care for that, let us say no more. Good-bye, my child.

(Antoine exits. Enter Dame Pluche)

Camille

Is all ready, Dame Pluche? Shall we start tomorrow?

Dame Pluche

Yes, dear unspotted dove. The Baron called me a nincompoop yesterday, and I am delighted to go.

Camille

Stay; here is a note you will take to Lord Antoine, before dinner, from me.

Dame Pluche.

O Lord in heaven! Is it possible? *You* writing a note to....to a *man*?

Camille

Am I not to be his wife? Surely I may write to my fiancé.

Dame Pluche

But...but.....Lord Antoine has just left this spot. What could you possibly have to write about? Your fiancé! Heaven help us! Can it be true that you are forgetting your delicate upbringing?

Camille

Do what I tell you, and make all ready for my departure.

(lights fade)

Act I Scene 6

(Outside. Afternoon. Rosette and Antoine are kissing)

[song: Kisses]

Rosette

DO YOU THINK ALL OF THESE KISSES
DO US ANY GOOD?

Antoine

YOU'RE MY COUSIN, PART OF THE FAMILY
LET'S NOT WORRY TOO MUCH IF WE SHOULD

Rosette

WORDS ARE ONLY WORDS, I KNOW
KISSES MEAN A BIT MORE
AND I'M NOT SO GRAND A LADY
AS THE ONES YOU'VE KISSED BEFORE

(brief instrumental as the two kiss)

Antoine

I'M ENCHANTED BY YOUR HEAVENLY SMILE
AND YOUR DELICATE TOUCH

Rosette

YOU RESPECT MY SMILE IT SEEMS
BUT YOU DON'T SPARE MY LIPS TOO MUCH

KISSES COME IN MANY VARIETIES
I KNOW JUST WHAT EACH ONE MEANS
FATHERS KISS YOU ON YOUR FOREHEAD
AND WE KISS THE BACK OF THE HAND OF THE QUEEN

BUT KISSING ON THE LIPS IS
SOMETHING ONLY LOVERS MAY DO
IT WOULD BE A TRAVESTY
IF THE VILLAGERS WERE TO MISCONSTRUE

Antoine

LET THE VILLAGERS GOSSIP
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY DO!
AND MAYBE THIS ONE TIME
THEIR INUENDOS ARE TRUE

Both

THEY KNOW I CARE ABOUT YOU
AND MAYBE YOU CARE
JUST A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME, TOO.

(They kiss again as the music continues. Lights fade).

