

# **Johann Nestroy (1801-1862)**

## **Previous Relations**

Farce with songs in one Act

**First performed on 7th January 1862**

Carl Theatre, Vienna

*Translated by Wilhelm and Theresia Guschlbauer*

The “Galloglass Theatre Company” of Clonmel, Co. Tipp, performed this translation throughout Ireland in the fall of 2001 on the occasion of Nestroy’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
(Première 18 October 2001)

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**Cast:**

**FRANK LOGMAN**, wood merchant

**JOSEPHINE**, his wife

**ANTONY LOATHER**, man servant

**SALLY BLACKBIRD**, cook

Locality of action: a large town

*(An elegant room in the house of the wood merchant with a central and two side doors)*

### First scene

LOGMAN. JOSEPHINE.

*(Logman enters in an elegant dressing gown from the right door, Josephine, also in an elegant negligée, follows.)*

LOGMAN. But, dearest wife, my heart, I am for nothing in this!

JOSEPHINE. No excuses! It's only your fault if in the end I have no servants. Only the day before yesterday you have fired a servant -

LOGMAN. Because I discovered a very bad habit of his: he stole my cigars.

JOSEPHINE. Because of a few miserable cigars!

LOGMAN. Excuse me, my angel, but my cigars cost 25 guilders the hundred, and are thus not that miserable, and the misery is that the good ones are so expensive. If you hadn't thrown out Fanny, we would not be in trouble. But you didn't keep quiet till she was gone, Fanny. - Because -

JOSEPHINE. Because you stroke her cheeks.

LOGMAN. I? You must be mistaken.

JOSEPHINE. I saw it with my own eyes!

LOGMAN. How women always judge according to appearance! Accidental movement of the hand, involuntary servant, accidental crossing of the line of the movement of the hand with the cheek of a room-crossing scatterbrained maid. - You must not see an intention in this.

JOSEPHINE. O, your friendliness is well known.

LOGMAN. I have never shown a preference for any one; I am the same with all the maids, *(aside)* but only if they are cute.

JOSEPHINE. Have you already sent out a request?

LOGMAN. Certainly, my angel, the grocer's wife shall send us one.

JOSEPHINE. How vulgar! "Grocer's wife!" - One gets servants nowadays from a more appropriate source called the "service procurement agency".

LOGMAN. And you believe that those from the "service procurement agency" are better? Possible. But we have already had some pretty good servants from the grocer's wife. Such a grocer's wife -

JOSEPHINE. Again! Husband, get rid of these vulgar expressions! If I think what my late father, the Professor, would say, if he could hear the vulgar language of his son in law!

LOGMAN. I don't know, my angel, but I find that you are today a quite disagreeable angel.

JOSEPHINE. Shut up! You know that I am accustomed to proper service as a daughter from a distinguished family; if I don't have a maid in half an hour, I shall leave your house and go to stay with my aunt. - Oh, my father Professor, why did you have to die so early!

LOGMAN. Sometimes you talk, my angel, as if I had killed him; as far as I am concerned the Professor could have remained here for a longer time yet.

JOSEPHINE. Now don't delay, in half an hour at the latest this new person must be here!

Do you understand? (*leaves through the door at the left.*)

### Second scene

LOGMAN (*alone*).

LOGMAN. Wonderful woman, clean woman, young woman, superb woman - but I am relieved when she leaves the room. It's not that I have no inclination for her, oh no! On the contrary! In my opinion she has only one terrible fault - she is from a "distinguished family". This troubles me, oppresses me, I stand out against her. Oh, it's disagreeable if one is from the lower echelons and always has to look up to a pedestal bearing one's wife. One suffers a moral neck-pain. If she only knew, this hyper-educated Professor's daughter, that my parents were cobblers and that I myself - (*turning around afraid*) oh God, if somebody heard! - I have been a manservant! Such previous relations could prove fatal should they come to light later on. It would be awful! Now I shall get dressed and on the way I will drink a glass of wine – That way, I will forget more readily that I have a wife from a "distinguished family". (*leaves through the door at right.*)

### Third scene

SALLY (*alone*).

SALLY (*enters through the centre door during the Ritornell of the following song; she is in very modern, but rather shabby dress*).

#### Sally's Song

##### 1.

Theatre! Oh Theatre, thou art  
 art's devoted temple!  
 You stole many people's heart -  
 I am such an example.  
 I lived happily as a cook,  
 I laughed, had fun with every look,  
 All masters in love, found me not bad,  
 No other sorrows I then had.  
 The thing that tortured me day and night  
 /:Desire, desire for the theatre's light.:/

##### 2.

I took the step - but what did I gain?  
 No fees they paid anyway,  
 My love's desires turned to pain  
 were not rewarded, neither pay.  
 Lovers and heroes loved me many fold,  
 everyone said to me: "I swear for ever  
 loyalty, loyalty as solid gold" -

But gold I saw nearly never.  
 Thus both in love and in gold  
 /:Its promises, its promises the theatre did not hold.:/

**3.**

*(to be written, ex tempore)*

*(after the song.)* It is a huge jump from the hearth stones where the kitchen stove stood, to a scene where the laurels are in flower; but I have risked it to throw myself into a higher drama. The "Maid of Orleans" was my first, highly risky enterprise; the success was deceptively brilliant. Then I coughed every day in the "Miller and his child" and I flatter myself that this rapidly grown-up child has never been coughed as well by anyone else. I have cast my shadow as a "cricket" and I am sure that not even Gassmann has thrown such a shadow. But what did I get in return? It was not the habit of these theatre directors to pay fees and they weren't going to change their fundamental principles for me. It's less important what one performs than where one performs. Unfortunately, I never found a decent theatre. A decent theatre is one where a millionaire sits in each box and a capitalist in each stall; there you can still have some hope, which then expands to a possibility and sometimes even becomes an outlook. But to be reduced to the laurels cannot satisfy a former cook who knows the real value of laurel leaves and that they are not much superior to thyme. No, I shall return again to the meat pots of Egypt, to my previous relations. My young mistress, the Professor's daughter, who provided me with her confidence every time she gave away her heart – so, innumerable times – will now have matured into a young woman, but does that mean that she will have lost her kind heart? I have an idea that I could once more be a happy servant with her. Somebody comes - it's she.

**Fourth scene**

JOSEPHINE. The previous.

JOSEPHINE *(enters from the left door)*. Who is here -? *(seeing Sally, to herself.)* Oh - a young lady! *(aloud.)* Whom do you want to see?

SALLY *(apart)*. She does not recognise me - my clothes are too ladylike. *(to Josephine, approaching)* Gracious Lady-!

JOSEPHINE. What do I see -!?! *(recognising her.)* That's Sally!

SALLY. Sally Blackbird, former cook to your father, the defunct Professor, and now consistently first lover with travelling theatres.

JOSEPHINE. You are with the theatre?

SALLY. Fair to say only that I wish to leave it forever; I long for our pleasant previous relations; therefore my first errand was to visit your aunt, and my second to see your gracious lady herself, because I learned from the first that you needed a maid.

JOSEPHINE. I have just fired one, whom I disliked to the same degree as she was liked

by my husband.

SALLY. Impossible!? – How can one even notice a servant, if one has such a wife?

JOSEPHINE. You flatterer, you don't know how men are.

SALLY (*half to herself*). Now I also could say flatterer.

JOSEPHINE. I am doubly pleased that it is you - I need a confidant. Could you stay here right away?

SALLY. Of course, it's wonderful! You are now my gracious lady.

JOSEPHINE (*sighing*). Oh, unfortunately, lady! It was the unfortunate idea of playing the flute -- I should never have started. Where are the golden times of freedom! And my husband has great shortcomings.

SALLY. Men without shortcomings don't exist; thus either stay single or take one who has shortcomings.

JOSEPHINE. My husband has not enough spirit to my liking, he is, let's say it openly, a bit stupid.

SALLY. Is he rich?

JOSEPHINE. Have you ever seen a poor wood merchant?

SALLY. Rich and stupid?! - Oh you lucky woman!

JOSEPHINE. He is also quite puzzling, almost mysterious. Despite his stupidity, I have the suspicion that he is hiding something.

SALLY. What could that be?

JOSEPHINE. I can only think of a crime.

SALLY. It gives me the creeps!

JOSEPHINE. He is restless, avoids contacts, shuns acquaintances -

SALLY. Many criminals are like that, but -

JOSEPHINE. And in his sleep, in his sleep!

SALLY. Does he snore?

JOSEPHINE. Not always.

SALLY. Others also do this perfectly.

JOSEPHINE. He talks frequently in his sleep, not quite distinctly -

SALLY. Aha, only like that? "Mnamnamnam!" (*mumbles like somebody talking in his sleep.*) That means generally: "Oh, it's hot, unbearably hot!"

JOSEPHINE. But it can also mean: "If it shall be discovered, I am lost." And it nearly sounded so. (*terrified.*) Sally, if in the end he has committed -

SALLY. No, surely not! It could only be a very old murder, because the criminals responsible for the recent ones are all known.

JOSEPHINE. Whatever it is, you, my trusted confidant, you must help me to discover the secret.

SALLY. Oh, spying, that's my speciality!

JOSEPHINE. And now come, help me with my toilette; I have many more things I wish to confide in you. (*leaves with Sally through the left. door*)

### Fifth scene

LOATHER (*alone*).

LOATHER (*enters during the Ritornell of the following song through the centre door; he is rather vulgar and badly dressed*)

#### Loather's Song

##### 1.

The race of good humans is not yet extinct,  
 But seduced by bad people who all just stink-  
 A guy has money, a good business he'll start,  
 A man joints the company, is clever and smart-  
 He's rich. In many questions he is competent.  
 They conclude - the new guy the business soon brings to end.  
 He could have repaired his misdeed still;  
 Fled to Switzerland, but didn't pay the bill.  
 The last pennies from the till he has taken yet.  
 /:There are many good humans, but people awfully bad.:/

##### 2.

A bloke meets a woman, which in heaven was born,  
 Long ago her virtue she had forlorn.  
 He thinks: "Once I only shall have her love,  
 Her fluttering style I shall get rid of -"  
 As she nearly is perfect, arrive two fellows,  
 To be baron and count, two blown-up bellows.  
 And the reformed they easily confound,  
 Quits her lover and takes the count,  
 No doubt she has regretted a hundred times this step -  
 /:There are many good humans, but people awfully bad.:/

##### 3.

*(to be written, ex tempore)*

*(after the song.)* In exactly this way, I was also a victim of friendship and love. In these materialistic times, my marvellous materials shop could not possibly be ruined by one alone. I had hired an associate and because of him we went broke. After the bankruptcy settlement, I levied an emergency saving of ten thousand guilders, but I was still sorely afflicted so I had to seek a remedy for my spirits - naturally not in one of those luxury bath resorts because I would have been noticed as somebody who is bereft of funds. So I went to a small spa, a newly discovered one. That is, it was discovered by a doctor, who through chemical analysis found that a cubic meter of the waters contained three and a half grams of potassium iodide, a 29th of a milligram of sodium bicarbonate and four and three eighths of a milligram of sulphur sublimate. And therefore it was superior to all other bath resorts and through the mineral hydro-

pepsin the calcifying fermentation became more or less neutralised and thus apparently the healing capacity of the water was increased by seven and three sixteenths percent and even nine and eleven sixteenths percent in the case of pathologies of the abdomen. – He who has any doubts about this is free do his own investigations. - I went there and what surprised me - although everything was bad – was that everything was as expensive as in the most famous resorts. There was also entertainment. The theatre was small, the artists were nothing at all. Let's say, they were not really artists, only players, so the evening would pass with the drama leaving a rather depressed imprint and so inspiring one to seek out the pub which had less pretensions. - All of a sudden a former star of the highest importance joined the lit-up roundabout of this ambulant enterprise. Right after her first performance, I boldly found the way to her dressing-room; it was not easy to approach her because of her artistic pride - she had more delusions than were warranted - as actors with small theatres often are, at the larger ones it's different! - Her second role was the Pompadour in "The Fool" which was played everywhere. There have been many who have pompadoured, but no other performance was comparable. No! - In one word, the next day I fell to her feet with the cry: "Pompadour!" She had already made advances to me before since she was rather coquettish - as they are at the small theatres, at the larger ones it's different! - We became lovers, and after several days were engaged - but my success was short-lived; soon some very rich foreigners came to the bath, Russians and Englishmen, I think, every one a learned Croesus, and she was - as they are at the small theatres, at the larger ones it's different! - unfaithful. With the rests of my assets I then became a wine salesman - that means that I travelled around a great deal and in my despair I drank a lot of wine. Jailed for debts, homeless, complete depravity were the enjoyable steps downwards - oh, it's a bitter feeling, being hungry so often and not knowing where one will be spending the night because of the thirst! I have suffered all this. There I had the idea of becoming a manservant. It's not exactly a tempting idea, but the truth is much wilder. I was a slave successively with two bosses - this is the third trial that I am attempting as a light-skinned Negro - somebody is coming - aha, my future boss.

### Sixth scene

LOGMAN. The previous.

*(Logman comes completely dressed with hat and stick through the right door.)*

LOATHER *(approaching)*. Your most submissive servant!

LOGMAN. What do you want?

LOATHER. Me! You have everything, what your heart desires, only no manservant.

LOGMAN *(to himself, scrutinising him)*. Curious individual! *(to Loather.)* Has somebody from the "service procurement agency" sent you?

LOATHER *(pulls out a piece of paper)*. The street number is right, second floor - but no name -

LOGMAN. All right, it's me. Do you have your references -? (*looks at him closer.*) Heavens -! (*nearly speechless.*) Damned -! Damned -!

LOATHER. Na? What's the matter with you? (*scrutinises him closely and bounces back with a half suppressed scream.*) Ah!

LOGMAN, LOATHER (*together, but everyone to himself*). That's -!

LOATHER (*to himself*). That's Frank, my former manservant -

LOGMAN (*to himself*). That's Loather, my former boss -

LOATHER (*surprised, to himself*). He has made it to the top!

LOGMAN (*surprised, to himself*). He is really run down! (*pulls rapidly his collar up, to hide his face.*) I fear that I'll have a stroke -!

LOATHER (*approaches him closely from the other side*). Devil's man! Don't you know me anymore?

LOGMAN (*in great confusion.*) You seem to be making an error - I am not the one that you seem to mean.

LOATHER. Do not hide yourself or I shall help you out of your dream.

LOGMAN (*straightens up with an effort and taking his courage*). Sir, I ask you to leave.

LOATHER. I shouldn't know my former manservant! - No nonsense, Frank, otherwise-! (*takes a menacing posture.*)

LOGMAN (*to himself*). No use, I cannot escape him. (*aloud to Loather*) O.K., it's me, but - for anything in the world – nobody must -

LOATHER. So really -!? He has become rich, the bloke -! That is rich -! And I am a beggar - it's also said: the greater -

LOGMAN (*afraid*). I ask you, Mister Loather, not to scream - if my wife hears, I shall be dead!

LOATHER. You have a wife? And you are afraid of her? That consoles me a little bit in my misfortune. So you have some problems.

LOGMAN. You err again; she is a young and beautiful wife.

LOATHER. And you are her husband - poor devil, now I even have pity for you.

LOGMAN. A wife from a very distinguished family, the daughter of a professor. She knows nothing of my previous life, I pretend to be the son of a land proprietor, otherwise I could never have appropriated her.

LOATHER. So you have lied about reality to obtain something unreal? Ah, there are lots of bad people, particularly among women.

LOGMAN. How dare you?, You are insulting my wife.

LOATHER. You are still the stupid bloke you always were.

LOGMAN (*insulted*). You talk in a tone -

LOATHER. My bad luck has put me in such a bad mood that I always tell the truth. Do not worry yourself that you will hear flattery from me.

LOGMAN. So you have really sunk down to being a manservant?

LOATHER. That is not oppressive for me anymore, since I shall become your manservant.

LOGMAN. You - my manservant -?

LOATHER. You wouldn't allow your former superior to be in need?

LOGMAN. You my -? No, that's not possible!

LOATHER. Why not? Everything is possible!

LOGMAN. I could never be really nasty to you.

LOATHER. I have not forbidden you to be polite.

LOGMAN. The old respect makes it impossible that I should allow you to clean my boots.

LOATHER. I am not particularly jealous about this service. Get them cleaned by whoever you want.

LOGMAN. I cannot take a man into my house who has hit me several times before.

LOATHER. Yes, that's right! I had to beat you several times - But I am not irreconcilable and have forgotten this years ago.

LOGMAN. But not me; it will always remain a vivid memory -

LOATHER. You came home every Sunday completely drunk, you dissolute slob!

LOGMAN. In a nutshell, that's completely impossible.

LOATHER. You miserable Parfumeur - (*correcting himself*) Parvenu, I meant to say. You want to throw out your former bread-giver without a job? Ah, there are lots of bad people in the world, particularly among former manservants! Unthankful lucky dog! Have you forgotten that I was always a good boss to you? That I always saw through your fingers and that you had long fingers?

LOGMAN. No slander, please!

LOATHER. You never stole anything worthwhile! You were incapable of being a criminal, but you always forgot to return the debit slip, or you mislaid coins, or you were not given the right change or you had lost the change. In a word, you were a soft thief, but over time this also made a difference.

LOGMAN (*furious, pointing to the door*). Out immediately!

LOATHER. Good, I'll go, but I shall tell the residents in the town a story, about how one can become a wood merchant. (*turns to leave.*)

LOGMAN (*wants to retain him, frightened*). Stop, stay here -!

LOATHER. Why? The population shall learn that you have served me for three years - not always faithfully and honestly - but still you have served me; and that you were then with the banker Reichenbach -

LOGMAN (*frightened clutching to him*). You shall not really do this -? If my wife - it would be terrible - if she, who is from such a terribly "distinguished family" - (*very friendly*) You shall work in my house as a manservant, if you really and absolutely wish, but you swear that you'll say not a word.

LOATHER. You are an idiot.

LOGMAN (*insulted*). Stop this -

LOATHER. Frank, you need only to ensure that I am always satisfied and then you have nothing to fear, because it is only when I am angry or depressed that I shall talk.

LOGMAN (*desperate, apart*). He is the devil's companion -!

LOATHER. And what is the salary? How much do I get?

LOGMAN (*somehow cautious*). A manservant gets eight guilders a month and his food.

LOATHER. Frank, you are a filthy bastard! You had ten guilders; am I worth less? What you were, I am too, you scoundrel, you!

LOGMAN (*furious*) I forbid you to address me in this way -! You are developing a rudeness -

LOATHER. Only developing? My rudeness dates back to long ago, and I have a historical right, to be rude to you.

LOGMAN (*again quietening down*). You have to understand that the present circumstances -

LOATHER. History has never been understanding. By the way, ten guilders a month and a guilder a day for food money and everything is all right.

LOGMAN. Food money what for? My people have everything you need in the house -

LOATHER. Not in my case, Frank; I would have to watch how you are served and I don't want to see how you devour, while I get only soup, beef and vegetables - this arouses my feelings, and I want to protect you from those. You can give me one guilder right away.

LOGMAN. One guilder? (*takes his wallet from his pocket and searches.*) I have only ten guilder bills.

LOATHER. O.K., so give me one, Frank, you can note it down.

LOGMAN. Yeah, it's true - (*gives him a bill*).

LOATHER (*puts it into his pocket*). So - but stop! I might need a few things - give me another tenner! (*reaches into Logman's wallet, which he has still open in his hand and helps himself*)

LOGMAN (*surprised*). You help yourself like that, high handed -

LOATHER. Do you think I take too much? Suspicious! Here it is back, the second tenner, keep it for me! You have to give me what I want, otherwise it bodes badly for my discretion, don't forget!

LOGMAN (*apart*). The scoundrel will be the death of me! (*aloud.*) And, my dear Loather, do not always call me by my first name.

LOATHER. This will only be between us, you dumb head! But you wanted to go out, why are you standing around?

LOGMAN. I only wanted to tell you that, if by accident you should meet my wife, please talk only extremely well and devoutly, because her nerves belong to the better world and you have no idea, how sensitive the nerves are in distinguished families.

LOATHER. It's all right, look after yourself!

LOGMAN (*to himself*). Awful bloke! (*leaves desperate by the centre door.*)

### Seventh scene

LOATHER (*looking after him*).

LOATHER. Plebeian! So rich, so dumb and so married! He has had such disgusting

good luck, but this marriage is the mute on the violins of which his heaven is full. If he were not that rich, she would not have married him. If he were not so dumb, he would not have married her. But since both happen to be the case, he has sown riches and stupidity, and he has harvested a nuisance of a wife. Thus one acquires ones home-nemesis for private martyrdom and this works for the great Nemesis in order not to lose credit of justice. - A pity that my exterior is not more suitable for leaving seductive impressions, this woman might experience - but I have still to impose a bit! - In tenure and physiognomy I have to let her guess that here stands somebody on the ruins of a famous past, show through a proud reserve that one disdains to deal with luxury-cloth - thus even the shabby and run-down acquires a sympathetic shade! - *(looking left.)* The door opens -! *(retreats slightly.)* A female person - flounces flutter - starched skirts rustle - it's her - this is the lady of the house.

### Eighth scene

SALLY. The previous.

SALLY *(enters through the side door left, without noticing Loather, to herself)*. Where are the theatre announcements -? *(searches among the newspapers which are piled up on the table at right hand; stands in such a way that Loather ca not see her face. Reading from the paper.)* "Seventy-fifth performance in the box subscription series -"

LOATHER *(to himself)*. I was also once half of a box subscriber; a hunchback gave me the even days of the series. - Where did those times go!

SALLY *(fanning through the journal)*. Ah, a great theft - this is interesting!

LOATHER *(to himself)*. Trifles are always stolen, purses, hearts, silver spoons, songs - it's really pleasant, when something more notable happens.

SALLY *(reading in the journal)*. "Two hundred ducats reward for the discovery of the culprit, who has stolen twenty thousand ducats from the house of the banker Reichenbach in burglary by force ." *(talks to herself)* Two hundred ducats-! That wouldn't be a bad deal to discover the thief.

LOATHER *(to himself)*. Crimes are her passion; this indicates a soft, romantic soul. *(aloud to Sally, advancing a bit.)* I have the honour, my graceful lady, a good morning - *(bows deeply)*.

SALLY *(surprised, to herself)*. "Graceful lady?" - *(scrutinising Loather.)* Who is this man?

LOATHER. Sorry, highly revered person present, your Sir husband has advanced me to first manservant.

SALLY *(surprised by Loather's voice)*. That voice! - but that's *(looks at him closely)* the Loather!

LOATHER *(surprised, apart)*. She knows me? *(looks at her closely.)* Heavens and earth -! It's her! - The Pompadour!

SALLY *(annoyed, to herself)*. He has just come into this house - I am embarrassed to have my subordinate past exposed.

LOATHER *(tragic)*. Thus we have to find ourselves again, I always knew you with so

much make-up and only as tubercular Pompadour, that unforgettable cheese-white artist! I have fallen into the low darkness of domestic slavery, while you are the proud wife of a wood merchant who creeps at your feet - oh women! I wish I had never given birth to you (*correcting himself.*), set eyes on you, I wanted to say.

SALLY (*to herself*). He thinks that I am the gracious lady, this could be useful. (*aloud.*) My manservant Loather, you should understand that it is impossible for you to stay in this house.

LOATHER. Really? But if it's just this, which I do not understand? Your husband has duly signed a contract with me.

SALLY. You are not really pretending that contracts are something binding? In future you should read the papers more often.

LOATHER. O awful soul, corrupted by modern politics!

SALLY. Think about it, it is for you a question of life or death - the grandfather of my husband and Othello were close friends.

LOATHER. What are you talking about, Sally!

SALLY (*approaches him imploringly*). Save my reputation, please!

LOATHER (*with brutal coldness*). Three steps distance, please!

SALLY. If it should become known that I loved, perhaps that I still love you- (*has approached him imploringly and flattering and puts her arm around his neck*) Tony -! (*with melting voice.*) Flee this house!

LOATHER (*looks at her tenderly for a moment, then anew his fury awakes in him*). There are a lot of bad people in the world, in particular among abdicated theatre princesses (*on the defensive.*) Don't try to court me! The play is no longer performed and if it should appear once again in repertory, it won't be a success.

SALLY. Think of my disgrace, if it should become known - me and a ... - but at these times those were previous relations; but I and a manservant -!

LOATHER (*bitterly*). What!? That's how talks a woman who has a husband who himself was previously - (*reconsidering himself*) not always in the wood business!? (*forgetting himself again.*) Who herself has a former - (*furious, to himself, apart*) Stupid lips! (*hits himself on this mouth.*) Enough - (*aloud*) you never loved me. It shall be my greatest pleasure, to bother you, to plague you insufferably.

SALLY. So you will not leave? Good, you barbarian, you shall remember this. (*to herself.*) Now I shall denounce him and the gracious lady will order her husband to proceed with immediate removal by the porter. (*leaves through the left door.*)

### Ninth scene

LOATHER (*alone*).

LOATHER. I believe, she has threatened me, before she turned around? Stupid worm, I could destroy her with a few multi-syllabic words! The previous relations of your husband, your previous relation with me, this all is so disreputable that I would tremble like an aspen leaf! Oh, I shall be for you all a terrifying manservant. (*with proud inner*

*satisfaction.*) Ah, there exist secrets that are good for propagating! (*leaves through the centre.*)

### Tenth scene

JOSEPHINE. SALLY. (*both enter discussing through the left door.*)

JOSEPHINE (*angrily*). That's him, -- hiring the first guy who runs into the house, without asking me.

SALLY. He is completely run down and on top of it, he always sneezes.

JOSEPHINE. What luck that you knew the fellow in his previous relations.

SALLY. I believe that between him and the gracious Sir there are strange circumstances - this new manservant dropped some words, as if it were a secret -

JOSEPHINE. With my husband?

SALLY. So it seemed to me.

JOSEPHINE. You see-?! Oh my premonitions! I maintain that my husband has a crime on his conscience -

SALLY. That would be terrifying, but grand! Think of it - if one day the whole story becomes history and you go to the theatre in ten years time, then you'll see how a play about the deeds of your gracious husband will push even "Crime and Punishment", "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet" off the scene!?

JOSEPHINE. It would be an incredible triumph, but -

SALLY. I know, what I wanted to say is that later glorification can only compensate scantily for the inconveniences that justice so recklessly distributes for the most notorious criminals. (*to herself.*) One cannot describe a certain tragic complication with more discretion.

JOSEPHINE. I am in a feverish tension -

SALLY. Silence - I hear somebody coming -

### Eleventh scene

LOGMAN. The previous.

LOGMAN (*enters through the centre door*). I have already found one, he shall be here right away!

JOSEPHINE. Is not necessary, I have already looked after it myself.

LOGMAN. But you gave me the order to -

JOSEPHINE (*pointing to Sally*). Here is the new maid.

LOGMAN. Mine isn't old either.

SALLY (*presenting herself*). I kiss the hand, your Highness.

LOGMAN. So it's that one? Aha -! (*apart.*) Very nice - unbelievable the charming servants they have these days!

SALLY (*apart*). I have the feeling that he is trying to pull something over on me.

JOSEPHINE (*to Logman*). Now, why are you looking so taken aback?

LOGMAN. You know, just thinking, what I'll do now with the one I have found.

JOSEPHINE. That is very easy, you send her away.

LOGMAN. That's true, it would be the simplest solution. But you know, I am thinking about a second thing that wouldn't be bad either - now and then it's too much for one alone.

Let's see which one cooks better and then we can keep the other for room service.

JOSEPHINE. No, no! That is no good.

LOGMAN. On the contrary, dear wife -

SALLY. I would prefer to be the only one in the house, I shall serve the gracious lady very well, (*somehow reprimanding Logman*) and you should not always say the contrary to the gracious lady.

LOGMAN. I wanted to say something else - yes right - (*to Josephine*) I already have a manservant too.

JOSEPHINE. Oh, I know. - (*commanding.*) You must send him away, immediately.

LOGMAN (*somewhat furious*). What the hell! Do I hire people only to send them away again? Look at him first.

JOSEPHINE. Not necessary!

SALLY. The gracious lady does not like him.

LOGMAN. Without looking at the fellow?

JOSEPHINE (*sharply insisting to Logman*). If one has a wife from a distinguished family, one does not take on run-down individuals -

LOGMAN (*somewhat embarrassed*). His recommendations -!

JOSEPHINE. Don't say anything, naturally -

SALLY. That he once had a large materials business -

JOSEPHINE. That he became a wine salesman -

SALLY. Or wanted to become one.

LOGMAN (*very preoccupied, apart*). Damn it, they know both -

JOSEPHINE. A man, who threatens with secrets that he could disclose -

LOGMAN (*insecure, apart*). That Satan's-Loather talked in the end -

JOSEPHINE (*observing Logman's insecurity, quietly to Sally*). You see his embarrassment -?

SALLY (*quietly to Josephine*). Every three seconds he changes colour - (*to Logman reproaching.*) The gracious lady is very angry with your highness.

LOGMAN (*apart*). Now this one also starts -!

JOSEPHINE. Oh, my nerves -! Come, Sally, take me to my room.

LOGMAN. But, my dear wife -!

JOSEPHINE (*screaming*). You send him away - (*suddenly with very faint voice*) or I go to my aunt -

SALLY (*reproachingly to Logman*). Such a wife has to be treated gently, it's not possible to scream at her. (*guides Josephine through the left door*)

### Twelfth scene

LOGMAN. Then LOATHER.

LOGMAN (*alone, waits till both have left, then exploding*). Heavens, cross and sacrament!

If my wife were not from such an excessively distinguished family, I would show her what nerves are! But, unfortunately -! And the perfidious Loather has apparently allowed himself some insinuations - he must leave on the spot -! (*startled, as he sees Loather entering, subdued.*) Oh God! Here he is -

LOATHER (*enters through the centre door*). What? You are already home?

LOGMAN. My errand was rapidly done; but you-

LOATHER. What have I done in the meantime, you want to know? I have looked at my room.

LOGMAN. Your room?

LOATHER. The place where your previous manservant lived; it's a rat hole! I shall look for another room.

LOGMAN. In my house? - I am sorry, but -

LOATHER (*looks at him with pitiful disdain*). Pitiful old man!

LOGMAN (*insulted*). Old man? What do you mean by that?

LOATHER. Nothing! I only enjoy discovering that there are so many bad people. (*with a nasty smile.*) Daughter from a "distinguished family". O.K. -!

LOGMAN (*jumps up*). Loather, where my wife is concerned, I do not -

LOATHER. Ah, you need a lot of patience! Just what concerns your wife-- I have the feeling that you are very indulgent.

LOGMAN (*settling and with proud quiet*). Mister Loather, I find it necessary to inform you that my wife has requested your immediate discharge -

LOATHER. And your empty room up there (*pointing to Logman's forehead*) has allowed the request. But I shall not leave, I retain my position.

LOGMAN. But sacrament! My wife does not want you and I can do nothing against her wishes.

LOATHER (*furious*). Your wife, the lacquered daughter of the professor, does not want me?

LOGMAN. Sir! (*straightening proudly and with insistence*) If you start again -

LOATHER (*breaking loose*). Ah, now the veil of the secret shall receive one tear after another and every time a new awful truth shall appear! You are a profound sheep head, but you are still partly a good fellow and presently my boss, to whom I owe a bit respect. (*approaches him and says secretly.*) Frank, I have to enlighten you - Frank, tremble before the discovery!

LOGMAN. Me? Tremble? - My soul - it seems to me -

LOATHER. Yes, you start already. Now know, you are cheated! - Your wife is not who you think.

LOGMAN (*surprised*). Why?

LOATHER. First, she is no professor's daughter.

LOGMAN. Ridiculous -

LOATHER. I know your Josephine's previous relations.

LOGMAN (*less dominant*). You know her?

LOATHER. Exactly! In a quiet hour she has confessed me that her father was a waiter.

LOGMAN (*horrified*). A waiter -!?

LOATHER. And her mother a laundry woman.

LOGMAN (*as above*). A laundry woman-!?

LOATHER. She herself was partly servant, partly cook.

LOGMAN. Awful -!

LOATHER. Something much more awful is still coming! An agent, both impresario and secret talent scout, found she had some stage talent and brought her as a sad first lover to the theatre.

LOGMAN. Mister Loather, I am ready to believe anything, but not that.

LOATHER. If I tell you, she has loved me as such; sad but true! We were even engaged.

LOGMAN. She with you?

LOATHER. Mutually; then she preferred to break the oath, and ran away with another one; I don't remember whether it was an Englishman or a Russian, because there were two. And still she loved me.

LOGMAN (*subdued*). You?

LOATHER. I even believe that she still has it in herself, this love for me.

LOGMAN. Still? This I have to forbid.

LOATHER. Yes, if one could forbid sentiments! Oh, there are many bad people in the world, in particular among the wives of wood merchants, who have been with the theatre. If you had heard her half an hour ago, this imploring, this conjuring that I should save myself from your jealousy - if you had seen her, how she stroked my hair, her arm around my neck – that was a sight! And how then -

LOGMAN (*furious*). I'll kill you, both of you!

LOATHER. Hold on, Frank! My behaviour was an exact copy of the pure Egyptian Joseph, as he said to his pharaonic-bureaucratic seductress: "I reject you, I a pious young man!" You have to buy me a coat so that in case of repetition it remains in her hands as a proof of my innocence.

LOGMAN (*fierce*). The miserable! (*reminding himself.*) But one thing is not clear here, her real aunt is here.

LOATHER. As if it were difficult to have an aunt. A guilder a day and rent some clothes and anyone can dress up as an aunt.

LOGMAN. But her manners, her education -?

LOATHER. Everything is disguise!

LOGMAN. It is too bad! Faking her parents, producing an artificial aunt, true love with a manservant -

LOATHER. Don't complain! You were one yourself!

LOGMAN (*decided*). I shall divorce her!

LOATHER. That's right! Away with harm!

### Thirteenth scene

SALLY. The previous.

SALLY (*comes from the left door, unseen from both*). Oh, so they are already together -!  
(*hides to listen behind an armchair.*)

LOGMAN (*to Loather*). You will have to appear at the trial as a witness.

LOATHER. Certainly, Frank! Swear! Anything! You shall be happy, Frank, I am indeed on your side.

SALLY (*behind the armchair, surprised to herself*). He calls the husband of the gracious lady by his first name, -!?

LOGMAN. But if she clears herself and reproaches me with the secret, which oppresses me so terribly -?

SALLY (*as above*). Aha, now comes the truth -!

LOATHER. She shall never learn anything from me. Compared with my silence the graveyard is a coffee party; and so nobody will know that first you were my helper in New Road -

SALLY (*as above*). First as a helper, then as a helper-helper -! (*hides again.*)

LOATHER. And that you started only then as a true -

LOGMAN (*frightened that somebody could hear it*). Oh, I ask you, be quiet! Do not remind me about it!

SALLY (*as above*). Terrifying! When he became something true he killed someone as his graduation master piece. (*hides again.*)

LOATHER. And Frank, nobody besides me knows that at the banker Reichenbach the offices and the cashier's room were -

LOGMAN (*as above*). By heavens, quiet! If somebody -

SALLY (*as above*). Oh my God. They have stolen the money of the Reichenbach Bank together! - A whole band! (*leaves rapidly through the left side door.*)

LOGMAN (*thinking that Loather had spoken*). What did you say?

LOATHER (*aloud*). Nothing!

LOGMAN (*afraid*). Don't scream, for heavens sake, the walls have ears.

LOATHER. Don't accuse the walls; you have ears that hear everything ten times louder; some people have all their development concentrated in just this organ. - Now call her, I will leave for the time being; you reproach her for her previous relations and if she denies it, you ring; I will appear then as an angel with a trumpet, and we shall have the Last Judgment on a reduced scale, which shall only be distinguishable from the real one by the exclusion of the public! (*leaves through the centre door.*)

### Fourteenth scene

LOGMAN plus JOSEPHINE and SALLY.

LOGMAN (*alone, in violent excitement*). Yes, I shall unmask her! I shall be a young Nero towards the false fakeress! (*Josephine and Sally enter by the left side door, without remarking Logman.*)

JOSEPHINE (*afraid*). Unbelievable! It cannot be, I tell you!

SALLY. But gracious lady, I have heard it quite clearly.

LOGMAN (*to himself*). She is here - my fury grows and replaces the lack of courage.

(*advancing, aloud.*) Sally, please leave us alone, I have to talk with my wife.

JOSEPHINE. Sally, you stay!

LOGMAN (*approaching Sally*). Na, shall you?

SALLY (*retreating frightened*). For heavens sake, your highness -! (*to herself.*) One never knows, what might happen.

JOSEPHINE (*to Logman*). What's this nonsense?

LOGMAN. You shall be informed, you European crocodile! (*walks back and forth, becoming more and more affirmative.*)

SALLY (*to herself*). I am going to see Loather, if I flatter and caress him, he shall admit everything. (*leaves rapidly through the centre door.*)

### Fifteenth scene

JOSEPHINE, LOGMAN.

JOSEPHINE. My husband, you shall answer a question.

LOGMAN. Wife, you shall answer several questions.

JOSEPHINE. One after the other.

LOGMAN. Since husband and wife are one body, they can also talk simultaneously.

JOSEPHINE. First - do you know the banker Reichenbach? (*fixes him sharply at this question.*)

LOGMAN (*startled, aside*). Reichenbach -? She knows everything, I am lost!

JOSEPHINE. Husband, your embarrassment - your confusion - Unlucky fellow! Was it really you -? Talk!

LOGMAN (*subdued*). If you know it already - yes - It was me; I have suffered many fears.

JOSEPHINE. So it's true!?! Oh, I am an unlucky woman! (*breaks in tears.*)

LOGMAN (*redressing himself*). What is finally so terrible? -

JOSEPHINE (*outraged*). What is so terrible? Brazen man! And already once before - (*fixing him sharply again*) in New Street -

LOGMAN (*as above*). Yes, there too-! (*after having regained his control, furiously.*) But - didn't you cheat me as much? I know you through and through (*fixes her sharply*).

Descendant of a waiter, shoot of a washer woman, nervous cook, ambulant comedian! (*approaching her more closely.*) You can choose now from your extensive repertory,

Griseldis and play it till eternity is bored to death with it! I divorce you, now on the spot!

JOSEPHINE (*retiring*). Heavens, he has gone crazy! - Help! Help! (*fleeing from his fury.*)

He will kill me -! Help! Help! (*runs screaming through the left side door.*)

LOGMAN (*alone*). Unmasking on the largest scale has been executed. - Loather is right, there are bad people in the world! - Nobody in the world is going to talk me into a professor's daughter anymore.

### Sixteenth scene

LOGMAN. LOATHER.

LOATHER (*enters through the centre door*). Listen, Frank, there are limits to indecency - but how your wife is pressing me!

LOGMAN (*without taking notice of Loather, more to himself*). Few have ever been so destroyed!

LOATHER. It's disagreeable, if one is so persecuted with affection. She always wants to know secrets which I myself do not know.

LOGMAN. There is no secret anymore, I have confessed everything freely.

LOATHER. What?

LOGMAN. My previous relations that I was a manservant .

LOATHER. Nothing else?

LOGMAN. What else?

LOATHER. Manservant, that would be the least. She suspects you - one cannot even say it, it's too stupid, and people are so bad -

LOGMAN. Talk up, without -!

LOATHER. I would also enter here into the play - she believes - one can say this only with some paraphrasing - she believes that at the bank Reichenbach we have done a fifty-fifty mammon-possession-inequality-distribution experiment.

LOGMAN. She believes that I am a criminal?!

LOATHER. It's very bad! People like you have to be honest at least.

LOGMAN. Second reason for a divorce!

LOATHER. I have communicated her in short your entire biography, your previous plebeian sort, your later incredible luck -

LOGMAN. And she?

LOATHER. She became more and more affective, I was afraid that I could not save myself.

LOGMAN (*furious*). Million-heavens-thousand, now that's the end! I am a tiger, a grim spotted tiger! (*runs furiously through the left side door.*)

LOATHER (*alone, looking after him*). Now he'll become a tiger! This is the greatest encroachment to which free trade has ever led. Tiger! There are so many other animals much closer; why wander into distant regions -

### Seventeenth scene

LOATHER, JOSEPHINE, LOGMAN.

LOGMAN. Out, miserable hypocrite! (*pulls Josephine by the hand through the left side door.*) Out! Here, (*pointing on Loather*) look at him, look at this man and turn pale!

JOSEPHINE (*very angry*). But what's going on now?!

LOATHER (*to himself*). What does he want with this woman?

LOGMAN (*grim*). Loather, talk! Wife, confess! Did you persecute this fellow with your love?

JOSEPHINE (*despairingly, apart*). He is crazy!

LOATHER (*to Logman*). But you, Frank, you make a mistake! This one is not the one!

LOGMAN (*as above*). A confession, wife! Do you know this man? (*pointing to Loather.*)

LOATHER (*worried to Logman*). But, Frank, your fantasy chases the last remains of reason out of your head. This is not your wife.

LOGMAN. What!?

LOATHER. This lady is unknown to me to the utmost degree.

JOSEPHINE. I have never seen this character before now.

LOATHER (*insulted*). Character? No insults! I was (*pointing to Logman*) that man's boss.

LOGMAN (*indignant to Loather*). So you wanted to make fun of me!? (*pulls him tightly*) Miserable freewheeler, out!

LOATHER. But, Frank, be reasonable!

LOGMAN. Don't call me by my first name! (*holds him tightly*)

LOATHER. Let me loose, I'll remember that you were my manservant, and when such images come alive, (*menacing*) then -!

LOGMAN (*letting him loose*). It is a complete confusion!

### Eighteenth scene

SALLY. The previous.

SALLY (*enters through the centre door.*) Heavens, what's all that screaming -!?

LOATHER (*runs towards her and pulls her in the forefront*). This is the Pompadour! She is the obtrusive person! She is the waiter's daughter! (*to Logman.*) She is your wife!

JOSEPHINE. Sally!?

LOGMAN. That's our new cook!?

LOATHER (*surprised*). Cook -!?

SALLY. I have to clear up everything. I have made believe to mister Loather that I was the gracious lady, so that he did not find out how badly I had fallen from the situation where he had met and learned to love me.

LOATHER (*apart*). I have met her to learn to "love"?

LOGMAN (*to Josephine*). Wife, angel, can you forgive me?

JOSEPHINE. Back! Think about the cashier's room of Reichenbach -!

LOATHER. He had to sweep it every day, as well as the offices.

SALLY (*to Josephine*). The relation of your husband to the bank Reichenbach was only that of a servant.

LOATHER. Like the previous one in my place in New Street.

LOGMAN (*to Josephine*). Exactly, my angel, I was -

JOSEPHINE. I knew a long time ago what your previous job was, but never spoke about it – for reasons of delicacy.

LOGMAN. Oh delicate wife! (*kisses her Hand with joy and talks with her quietly.*)

LOATHER (*to himself*). Now he has martyred himself for nothing - no, it's unbelievable what bad people there are among humans -!

SALLY (*to Loather*). Don't you allow youthful recklessness as an excuse -?

LOATHER. Pompadour, don't I appear to you as if I were your "Fool"?

LOGMAN (*to Josephine, which quietly had exposed her plan*). And how I shall agree! You super-clever angel, you!

JOSEPHINE (*to Loather and Sally*). You both must understand that because of your previous relations you cannot stay in this house.

LOATHER. That I do not understand.

JOSEPHINE (*to Loather*). In a small town a few dozen miles away, you shall start a new business. Myself and my husband shall provide the necessary funds.

LOATHER (*joyfully surprised*). Now I begin to understand!

JOSEPHINE (*to Logman*). Only that way shall we be sure that it won't become public.

LOATHER. I am again my own boss, and this one (*pointing to Sally*) shall become my own wife, if she'll take a one-eyed man.

JOSEPHINE, LOGMAN, SALLY. A one-eyed man-?

LOATHER. Apparently, because I shall have to close the other on account of the "Previous Relations".

LOGMAN. That is the most important!

LOATHER. No, the most important thing is (*to the public*) that nobody shall reproach us our "previous relations".

***The curtain falls.***