

Enter ZAYDA unobserved.

Lochrine. But stay! Thou shouldst be faint for lack of food -

Neodie. Nay, let me minister unto his needs -

Zayda. (*coming forward*). Then go, beloved sisters. Gather fruits
And bring them here to him. Such frugal fare
Will have a daintier flavour than its own
When served by such fair hands!

Exeunt LOCRINE, NEODIE and the others.

Zayda. (*changing her manner*). We are alone!
One word of caution - shun my sisters all!

Lutin. Are all these lovely girls your sisters?

Zayda. All!
Rejoice that they are not thine own.

Lutin. I do.
I very much prefer them as they are!
You're a fine family.

Zayda. Fair to the eye,
But take good heed - they are not what they seem!
Lochrine, the fair - the beautiful Lochrine -
Is the embodiment of avarice;
Darine is vain beyond comparison;
Neodie is much older than she looks;
Camilla hath defective intellect;
Maia's a bitter shrew, Colombe's a thief;
And last and worst of all, I blush to own,
Our Queen Selene hath a tongue that stabs -
A traitor tongue that serves no better end
Than wag a woman's character away!

Lutin. I've stumbled into pretty company!
It seems you fairies have your faults.

Zayda. Alas!
All but myself. *My* soul is in my face;
I, only I, am what I seem to be;
I, only I, am worthy of esteem.
If thou will love me, I will dower thee
With wealth untold, long years and happy life,
Thou gallant churl, thou highly favoured boor,

Thou pleasant knave, thou strange epitome
Of all that's rugged, quaint, and picturesque!

Kissing him on the tip of his nose.

Lutin. You don't take long in coming to the point!

Zayda. Forgive my clumsy and ill-chosen words;
We gentle, simple fairies never loved
Until to-day.

Lutin. And when you *do* begin,
You fairies make up for the time you've lost!

The Fairies enter with fruit and wine. LUTIN sits and they group around him as he eats and drinks.

Neodie. Hast thou a wife?

Lutin. Well, yes - that is down there!
Up here, I am a bachelor - as yet.

Cora. And does she love thee?

Lutin. Well - we *do* fall out.
We did to-day.

Neodie. And how came that about?

Lutin. Why thus, to tell the truth, between ourselves -
(*whispering*) There was a lady in the case!

Zayda. (*much shocked*). Hush, hush!
Such stories are unfit for maiden's ears.
Confine thyself to matters that relate
To thine own sex. Thy master Ethais,
He fought with Phyllon. What was that about?

Lutin. Oh, it's the old, old story!

Locrine. Tell it!

Lutin. Well,
There was a lady in the case!

Zayda. (*shocked*). Then stop -
Go on with something else. Where was thou born?

Lutin. Why in Bulgaria - some years ago!
(*whispering*) There was a lady in *that* case!

Zayda. (*severely*).
There is a lady, sir, in every case!

It seems

Lutin. In all those cases they do interfere!

Exit ZAYDA, offended.\