

*The Banquet Hall. Enter Lianet.*

**LIANET**

I dwell in a Hell, conceived so perfect  
I can only place my Self within it,  
Proud in the loss of Precious Self-respect,  
Foul in Offences I fondly commit.

Without me, the World's a weeping Wound  
That festers and pesters at my sweet Heart.  
Society's Sickness strickens me doomed  
For failing to perform its feeble Part.

Love is the State that provokes all of this:  
'Pillar' of this hateful Place, Artifis.

This happy State of Bliss is Torturous  
When one is exposed to its Falsities;  
Its Wits are Fools finding it humourous  
This whole Edifice is Hypocrisies.

So's to take Sides, Artifis makes Divides,  
Splitting Us from its Enemies with Lies;  
Dichotomies are Coins of Two Twinned Sides  
Where Love's Perfect Sphere's crushed Flat till it dies.

*Exit Lianet. Enter various members of the Circle for the Banquet - Staining, Corlino, Alouis and others, plus Vaia of the Median who observes and takes notes as they mingle and converse.*

**STAINING**

Greetings, Corlino. Splendid Occasion!

**CORLINO**

Indeed – mostly Male, Noble, Elite;  
This is what I call Society, Sir!

**STAINING**

Our Circle depends on Extravagance –  
Without it, we'd rapidly become Squares.

**CORLINO**

Ha, and rightly said. –  
All agree, in this Lamentable Age  
Of Need, Want and wretched Global Squalor,  
It's a Noble and Precious Excess indeed  
That allows Greatness Surplus to squander!

**STAINING**

That's not funny.

**CORLINO**

Read it on a Cereal Packet. *(Turns to the others)*  
Now, sirs! I'm empty, may you fill me in:  
I need to taste freshest, juiciest Gossip –  
Like a dull Worker, starved of Incident,  
I hunger to know other People's Thrills:  
Who's kopping off, who's coming on, what spills.  
- Tell, tell!

**ALOUIS** Brother – though we approve your marrying,  
 We fear the good Woman of your Choosing  
 Is too much Good f'you, and too few Women.  
 If you plan to remain in the Circle,  
 Your Antics or Words must prove Noteworthy;  
 Final say's with our Median's Jury.

– But, let me provide your Satisfaction!  
 And the ripest forbidden Fruit for you  
 Shall come from your wayward Brother, Myself.  
 I am well known for my Inconstancy:  
 Well from here on let me be Consistent.  
 As I cannot commit my Attentions,  
 Or quell my predatory Intentions,  
 I intend to promise my Love universally:  
 All those fit Women shall own it freely.  
 Each could be made happiest Girl on Earth:  
 So why not offer that them all at once?  
 I shall quit this Party early and share  
 My undivided Attention: Myself.  
 I'll start off with Five and build up from there.

**CORLINO** Five-timing them all!

**ALOUIS** Well, only three just now, but I'll make up the Numbers.

**CORLINO** I tell you Brother, one into five don't go!

**ALOUIS** Assure you, one goes into each snugly,  
 And could multiply exponentially!  
 No Sense restricting exalted Pleasures:  
 I am gladly open to all Comers.

**CORLINO** You expect the Secret to keep from them?  
 The Median shares All from our Circle;  
 Your Ladies lie in the Loop, tight as Us!

**ALOUIS** Mmm, long may I stick tightly in their Loops! Ha -  
 But for imprudent Characters like Me  
 Our Median would expire instantly.  
 The chattering Classes need their Chatter;  
 News from the Continents is no Matter.  
 We idle Classes must be worth Int'rest,  
 Or we shall not be allowed to Parasite.

**STAINING** Much here passes for Wit, lacking Reason,  
 That formerly carried Pains of Treason!  
 I'm no Party to Abuse of our State;  
 This Kind of Humour is sub-second-Rate.  
 Your Condition rests upon Assumption;  
 Don't be so naïve that you dare believe  
 Artifis can support such Presumption.

- ALOUIS** - His Account of my Importance is flattering,  
But I think our State can withstand my Chattering.  
After all, it employs me to do Nothing else;  
Long as I manage a Scandal or Two a Year,  
My personal Place in the Circle is secure.
- VAIA** Ha, well. Sense will prevail, after Scandal has triumphed.  
Good Luck AloUIS; but I wish your Women better...
- ALOUIS** Oh, I wish they were too, but one can't have Everything. -  
Did you get that down?
- VAIA** Every syllable.
- CORLINO** Tell Us Staining, how proceeds your Life's Work, the  
*Universal History*?
- STAINING** Oh, I can't aspire to Universal;  
Aliens and Savages are exempt.  
*A Complete Account of Earthly Progress:*  
Achieving that's my Opportunity.  
Those fit for it, my Constituency.
- ALOUIS** Well, thank the State for such Aspiration!  
Just swell we take no Shame in Ambition!  
Having grossest Things come to Fruition  
Is a sure Sign of sound Disposition!  
*(Laughter)*
- STAINING** I see no Humour in this, Gentlemen!  
Just Stabilisation of History,  
That it may conform to Authority,  
Is a Project of crucial Importance  
Our Culture will ever benefit from.
- CORLINO** We do not mock you, Friend:  
We simply lack your penchant for sincerity.  
Among us Genius is known by flippancy.
- STAINING** I wish it was valued accordingly.