

**ADRIENNE  
LECOUVREUR: A  
PLAY IN FIVE ACTS**

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Adrienne Lecouvreur: a play in five acts by Ernest Legouvé & Eugène Scribe

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**ERNEST LEGOUVÉ & EUGÈNE SCRIBE**

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LECOUVREUR: A  
PLAY IN FIVE ACTS**



ADRIENNE  
LECOUVREUR.

*A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS,*

WRITTEN BY MM. SCRIBE AND LEGOUVÉ,

ADAPTED BY

H. HERMAN

*(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society).*

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Produced at the Royal Court Theatre, Saturday,  
December 11th, 1880.

### CHARACTERS.

Maurice de Saxe ...	...	...	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON
Prince de Bouillon ...	...	...	Mr. J. D. BEVERIDGE
Abbé de Chazeuil ...	...	...	Mr. LIN BAYNE
Michonnet ( <i>Prompter</i> )	} <i>Sociétaires</i> }	...	Mr. G. W. ANSON
Poisson		...	Mr. J. W. LAWRENCE
Quinault		...	Mr. BRIAN DARLEY
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Servant ...	...	...	Mr. NEVILLE DOONE
Call-boy ...	...	...	Mr. R. RIVERS
Princess de Bouillon ...	...	...	Miss AMY ROSELLE
Duchess d'Aumont ...	...	...	Miss WINIFRED EMERY
Marquise de Sancerre ...	...	...	Miss BLANCHE GARNIER
Countess de Beauveau...	...	...	Miss DORINE O'BRIEN
Adrienne Lecouvreur ...	...	...	Mme. HELENA MODJESKA
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Mdlle. Jouvenot	} ...	...	Miss KATE VARRE
Mdlle. Dangeville		...	Miss KATE LEESON
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Maid ...	...	...	Miss JULIA ROSELLE
Servants, Actors, Actresses, Ladies and Noblemen.			

### SCENES.

ACT I.	THE PRINCESS'S BOUDOIR.
ACT II.	GREEN ROOM OF THE COMEDIE FRANÇAISE.
ACT III.	THE VILLA AT LA GRANGE BATELIERE.
ACT IV.	THE PRINCESS'S SALON.
ACT V.	ADRIENNE'S HOME.

TIME—1730.

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## ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR.

### ACT I.

SCENE.—*An elegantly furnished boudoir ; doors, C. and R. 3 E.*

PRINCESS and ABBÉ discovered. PRINCESS seated before glass, R., and ABBÉ behind her chair, attending.

PRIN. What, Abbé? No news whatever? Not a little wee bit of scandal?

AB. Alas! No.

PRIN. Your occupation's gone. It is your profession to know all the news. Give me that box! Come, try! I see, by the air of mystery you assume, that you know more than you pretend.

AB. Trifles, certainly! Will it be worth your while to know that Mademoiselle Lecouvreur and Mademoiselle Duclos will play in the same piece to-night, in "Bajazet"? The house will be crowded.

PRIN. Stop! One moment, Abbé. Would you place this spot on the cheek, or at the corner of the left eye?

AB. (*at back of chair*) If I were sure, Princess, that you would pardon the liberty, I might find courage to tell you that I am openly, radically opposed to the system of spots.

PRIN. Why, it is a revolution you would attempt! 'You, with your soft and timid air. I should never have thought you so courageous a priest.

AB. Timid! I am timid in your presence only.

PRIN. Nonsense! Well, you were saying just now—go on!

AB. That the performance this evening, will be all the more interesting, as Mademoiselles Lecouvreur and Duclos are rivals. Adrienne has the entire public on her side, whilst Mademoiselle Duclos is openly protected by certain great noblemen—and even by certain noble ladies—among them by—by her Highness the Princess de Bouillon—

PRIN. By me?

AB. Yes, and everybody is astonished at it, and they commence, in our world, even to smile—

PRIN. And why, pray?

AB. For reasons which I neither can nor dare mention—because my delicacy and my scruples—

PRIN. Scruples? You, Abbé? And you were saying just now there was nothing new. Finish! Go on!

AB. Well, madam—Princess! since you insist that I should tell you: you, the grand-daughter of Sobiesky, the

cousin of our Queen, you have for rival Mademoiselle Duclos, of the Comédie Française.

PRIN. You don't mean to say so?

AB. It's the news of the day; all our world knows it, excepting you, and as you might appear ridiculous in our world were you to remain ignorant of it, I found courage to inform you—

PRIN. That the Prince has given her a carriage and diamonds.

AB. Quite true.

PRIN. And a villa?

AB. True again.

PRIN. Just beyond the Boulevards, at La Grange Batelière.

AB. What! Princess, you knew it then?

PRIN. Long before you—(rises)—long before your world. Listen to me, my pretty Abbé. This for your instruction! M. de Bouillon, my husband, although a great nobleman, is a learned man; he adores the arts, and he revels in the sciences. He acquired this practice under the last régime.

AB. From inclination?

PRIN. No. To pay his court to the Regent, whose exact counterpart he strove to become, and in his efforts to imitate as faithfully as possible, he took care not to forget the gallantry of his hero. I was not excessively displeased at this. A lady can always call her time much more her own when her husband is occupied. And so that mine, though faithless, should still remain dependent upon me, I forgave Mademoiselle Duclos, who did nothing without my orders and kept me informed of everything. These were the terms on which she enjoyed my protection; you see that I kept my word.

AB. Excellent! Admirable! But, Princess, what do you gain by it?

PRIN. What do I gain by it? My husband, fearing discovery, trembles before the grand-daughter of Sobiesky, in case she might suspect—and I do suspect when I want to. What do I gain by it? Formerly he was very niggardly, now he refuses me nothing. (sits on couch) Does a light dawn upon you?

AB. Oh, yes, yes! I see.

PRIN. Your world then may pity me, and sigh about my position. And now, my dear Abbé, if you have nothing else to tell me—

AB. Oh, yes, madam, something else—

PRIN. Something else?

AB. Something that concerns me personally and this



time, I am quite sure that you have not the slightest idea of it. It is—

PRIN. That you love me.

AB. You knew that too! Is it possible? And you didn't tell me a word about it?

PRIN. Surely, I wasn't obliged to herald it.

AB. Ah, yes! certainly! (*about to kneel; she stops him*) It was for you that I became the intimate friend of your husband; and for you I listen to his chemical discussion, although I always fall asleep in doing so.

PRIN. Poor Abbé!

AB. Ah, those are the happiest moments of my life—I then hear him no more,—and I dream of you. Surely you will confess that such devotion merits some reward.

PRIN. Oh, yes! I have been told that success has often crowned less deserving efforts. But at the risk of appearing ungrateful—even to such unselfish merit, I cannot listen to you now. (*crosses to R.*)

PRINCE. (*outside*) My dear Duchess, you are quite right.  
(*DUCHESS laughs outside*)

PRIN. Silence! Somebody comes. It is my husband and the Duchess d'Aumont. By-the-by, did you not try your fortune there also?

AB. Alas yes! But I have been forestalled.

PRIN. That was unlucky. (*aside*) The poor Abbé is always too late.

*Enter PRINCE and DUCHESS; the PRINCESS meets the DUCHESS, and they shake hands.*

PRIN. What good fairy brings you so early?

PRINCE. The Duchess comes to ask you to render her a service.

PRIN. One pleasure the more. And where did you meet my husband, whom I have not seen since the day before yesterday?

DUCH. At my uncle's house, the Cardinal's.

PRINCE. Yes, the great Prime Minister is, like myself, a member of the Academy of Sciences, therefore, I dedicated to him my new treatise on chemistry—the book which astonished M. de Voltaire himself. "Never before," said he to me, "has such a work been written." These are his own words, and I believe every syllable of them.

PRIN. So do I, but the Cardinal Prime Minister?

PRINCE. I am coming to it. (*enter a SERVANT bringing a small casket*) Place that casket there. (*SERVANT places casket on table, and exits*) The Cardinal, who knows my talents, both as a statesman and a savant, has confided to me a commission as honourable as it is terrible—

PRIN. And what may that be, pray?

PRINCE. The analysis, both from a judicial and scientific point of view, of the substance contained in that casket—a mysterious powder of deadly properties, which has been found in the house of a lady of high birth, accused of attempted murder.

PRIN. (*stepping forward*) How interesting ! (*advances*)

DUCH. Do let us see it. (*advances*)

PRINCE. Be careful, ladies. (*they retire*) If I am told truly, one grain of this powder thrown into a pair of gloves, or sprinkled over a flower, is sufficient to produce at first a vague stupor, then strong aberration of the cerebrum, and finally a delirium which ends in death. (*places casket on small table at back*) All this, however, will be scientifically demonstrated—for I will analyse this powder, make my experiments, and after that my report.

PRIN. Very well ; but all this scientific analysis does not explain to me your absence yesterday.

PRINCE. (*aside to ABBÉ*) Now I am in for it. Jealousy !

AB. (*aside*) Yes, the storm has been brewing.

PRINCE. (*aside*) You will see how I will weather it. (*aloud to PRINCESS*) You ask, madam, what I did yesterday. I was preparing a surprise for you. (*hands her a jewel case*)

PRIN. What is this ?

PRINCE. (*aside to ABBÉ*) You see !

PRIN. What superb diamonds !

PRINCE. (*to ABBÉ*) And as to the analysis of this diabolical powder, this is my argument, Abbé. (*speaks in dumb show*)

AB. (*aside*) Another lecture on chemistry.

PRIN. (*to DUCHESS*) Do look at this bracelet, my dear. Is it not in exquisite taste ?

DUCH. And so artistically mounted ! It is splendid.

PRIN. Come, Abbé ! come and admire !

AB. I ? admire ? I am listening here.

PRINCE. Yes, I am explaining, but he does not seem to understand. I must demonstrate it to him.

(*steps to table*)

ABE. No, no, thank you ! Quite unnecessary ! I prefer the argument to the demonstration.

PRIN. Now, whilst these gentlemen continue their scientific discussion, pray tell me what is the service you require from me ?

DUCH. I must confess to you, Princess, that there is one person whose genius I admire above all others,—whom I rave about—Mademoiselle Adrienne Lecouvreur.

PRIN. Well !

DUCH. Is it true that she will give a private recitation here to-morrow ? The Prince told me so just now.

PRINCE. (*going to LADIES*) We have invited her.

PRIN. Yes, that is true, although I do not share your enthusiasm, my dear Duchess, and much prefer Mademoiselle Duclos. But Mademoiselle Lecouvreur seems to be the idol of the moment and her recitations the events of the day.

AB. She is the fashion.

PRIN. Yes, that word explains all. And since Madame de Noailles, whom I cannot bear, made sure of securing her for her reception to-morrow, I invited her a week ago, and here is her answer.

DUCH. A letter from her! Ah, do let me look at her writing.

PRINCE. You were right, Duchess. This is adoration.

DUCH. I never miss one of her performances; but I have never seen her in private. They say she dresses most becomingly—and that her manners are so refined—so distinguished.

PRINCE. The Prince de Bourbon said of her, the other day, that she looked like a queen amidst comedians.

PRIN. A compliment which she answered by a turn of phrase which was impolite, if to the point. I alluded to it in my invitation; hear her reply: (*reading*) "If I had the imprudence to say before M. d'Argental that we, princesses of the stage, had the advantage over those of the Court, in playing only at night, whilst they acted all day, he was very wrong in repeating this to you, and I still more so for having said it, even in jest. You proved this to me, madam, by the kindness and frankness of your letter. It contains evidence of such dignity, charm, and princely grace, that I have placed it on my writing-table, to be able to compare the genuine with the imitation. I had promised myself not to recite in society again, as I am far from strong, and afraid of the increased fatigue. But how could a poor girl, like myself, refuse when *you* asked? You might have wrought me proud! If I am, madam, it is only of the honour of being your very humble and obedient servant, Adrienne."

DUCH. (*taking letter*) In excellent taste! None of us, I think, could write a letter better. May I keep it? I wonder no more that poor little D'Argental—(the son, I mean)—is in love with her.

AB. He has quite lost his head about her.

PRIN. It's in the family. The father, whom you know, with his old-fashioned wig and his coat of a century ago, went to Adrienne to ask her to restore the peace of mind of his son and—there, left his own.

DUCH. How lovely!

AB. And the story about the Bishop!

PRIN. There is a story about a Bishop?

AB. Yes. The Bishop met a charming young lady at the bedside of a sick woman he was visiting, and having offered