

RIMINI: A PLAY

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Rimini: A Play by Charles Colton

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CHARLES COLTON

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BY

CHARLES COLTON,

Author of "Richard Savage: A Play."



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1893.

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*Had I but known, dear friend, that fate had set
So close a limit to your days of life,
The present would be clear of all regret ;
For your content I would have left my strife
And labour in the world with willing mind :
Rare is affection, and such love for me
Again in man I do despair to find.
Lo ! from this concern I was roused rudely
By a swift stroke of death's, that does recline
Only where life is ; thereupon I knew
Less cause for acquiescence would be mine
If at work's loss time had been given you.
Lament not undone good without one's reach ;
The hour for kindly doing circles each,*

Rimini.

CHARACTERS.

Lanciotto (<i>Lord of Rimini</i>)	}	Guel
Paolo		
Guido		
Aretio (<i>A Page</i>)		
Alonzo		
Captain of the Castle	}	Ghib
Montagna		
Fazio		
Francesca		
Mera		
A Priest		
• Soldiers and Others.		

Rimini at the beginning of the fourteenth cen

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Terrace and Garden before Verruchio at Night. MERA advances from the Terrace. GUIDO, concealed in Garden, accompanies the following Words with a Guitar.*

Beauty in a woman—ah, me !
A gift past all compare,
Which gives the sway and sov'reignty
Kings would uncrown to share.

To her kind Charity's a slave,
Though poorest in the land ;
Her simple glance or smile can save
More than the freest hand.

Beware, beware, you who are fair,
And stray not into folly,
To make your homage but a tear,
Your rule but melancholy.

MERA.

Begone ! ignoble and untutor'd boy,
Who durst sing such grossness to a lady !
But safety lies in your obscurity,
Mocking the scourge——

GUIDO (*coming forward*).

Hush, Mera, you knew 'twas I.

MERA.

'Twas spoken without thought. Had I but paused,
I would have fix'd on you what no base slave——

RIMINI.

GUIDO.

O do not do those innocent lips such wrong !

MERA (*calling*).

Come, Fazio !

GUIDO.

Can my poor, harmless ditty
So grievously offend ?

MERA.

Ho, Fazio !

Enter FRANCESCA from House. Exit GUIDO by Gate.

FRANC.

He's gone. Call him again and speak kindly,
Something your playful dart has wounded him.

MERA.

Would, then, my sport were to the death ; or, if
The like from wanton kiss or fondling issued,
Some woish call would lure him back again.

FRANC.

Can a maiden's troth be a maid's mockery ?

MERA.

With these suitors, you should know, I have play
An all-eye-fixing game ; for Guido stands
For peace, and Fazio war. Now, our Duke
Has ever wished a lasting truce ; my brother,
Being weaker, does so too :
Therefore was I betrothèd to the Guelf.
But, by course, I've smiled and frowned ; then sli
him
I favoured, making all uncertainty.

FRANC.

At last you'll wed with Guido ; for, when men
Forgetfully do war, Heaven gave them women
To lead them back to peace.

MERA.

You advocate

A foe's suit to a friend.

FRANC.

No, the Guelfi
And the Ghibellini are not foes here
And at Ravenna.

MERA.

What do you dream of?

FRANC.

I was but thinking of these past few days.
Their events have raised a mound right in the ken
Of memory; one that will ever rear
Its head when others are vague in the mist
That follows at Time's heels. To lead them, yes.
We are no commodity to be given
To patch a peace.

MERA.

Would it have pleased you, madam,
To have had my lord Duke slaughter your kin
And seize upon the sov'reignty of Ravenna,
Which he was like to do had not your father
Changed him to friend and son?

FRANC.

From this I bear
There was no escape; it is the result
Of the beliefs and practice of our time;
Which are not to my mind, for they demand
Unceasingly some victim as myself,
Or one sword slain. Yet I was hugely wronged
By the expedient which my father used
To make me do his will. He should have said
The man is hunchbacked, hideous, and fearful,
Not have allowed Paolo, the beautiful,
To come as his brother, and woo me and wed,
Then lead me here gaily. Never was there day
Hope flushed at morn closed in such gloom as then.
When he entered our courtyard with his knights
I was at a window, and the sunlight
Rushed to greet him, and played about his armour,
Flashing forth rays, and wreathing him with halos
Till I could look no more. Later in hall,
Not clad in steel, but soberly in black,